

An Eagle Flight

A Filipino Novel Adapted from Noli Me Tangere

José Rizal

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A Filipino Novel Adapted from Noli Me Tangere

Author: José Rizal

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An Eagle Flight

I have in this rough work shaped out a man
Whom this beneath-world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment: my free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax; no levell'd malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold;
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no track behind.

TIMON OF ATHENS—*Act 1, Scene 1.*

An Eagle Flight

A Filipino Novel

Adapted from

“Noli Me Tangere”

By
Dr. José Rizal

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MCM

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Introduction

José Rizal

In that horrible drama, the Philippine revolution, one man of the purest and noblest character stands out pre-eminently—José Rizal—poet, artist, philologue, novelist, above all, patriot; his influence might have changed the whole course of events in the islands, had not a blind and stupid policy brought about the crime of his death.

This man, of almost pure Tagalo race, was born in 1861, at Calamba, in the island of Luzon, on the southern shore of the Laguna de Bay, where he grew up in his father's home, under the tutorage of a wise and learned native priest, Leontio.

The child's fine nature, expanding in the troublous latter days of a long race bondage, was touched early with the fire of genuine patriotism. He was eleven when the tragic consequences of the Cavité insurrection destroyed any lingering illusions of his people, and stirred in them a spirit that has not yet been allayed.

The rising at Cavité, like many others in the islands, was a protest against the holding of benefices by friars—a thing forbidden by a decree of the Council of Trent, but authorized in the Philippines, by papal bulls, until such time as there should be a sufficiency of native priests. This time never came. As the friars held the best agricultural lands, and had a voice—and that the most authoritative—in civil affairs, there developed in the rural districts a veritable feudal system, bringing in its train the arrogance and tyranny that like conditions develop. It became impossible for the civil authorities to carry out measures in opposition to the friars. “The Government is an arm, the head is the convent,” says the old philosopher of Rizal's story.

The rising at Cavité miscarried, and vengeance fell. Dr. Joseph Burgos, a saintly old priest, was put to death, and three other native priests with him, while many

prominent native families were banished. Never had the better class of Filipinos been so outraged and aroused, and from this time on their purpose was fixed, not to free themselves from Spain, not to secede from the church they loved, but to agitate ceaselessly for reforms which none of them longer believed could be realized without the expulsion of the friars. In the school of this purpose, and with the belief on the part of his father and Leontio that he was destined to use his life and talents in its behalf, José was trained, until he left his home to study in Manila. At the College of the Jesuits he carried off all the honors, with special distinction in literary work. He wrote a number of odes; and a melodrama in verse, the work of his thirteenth year, was successfully played at Manila. But he had to wear his honors as an Indian among white men, and they made life hard for him. He specially aroused the dislike of his Spanish college mates by an ode in which he spoke of his patria. A Tagalo had no native land, they contended—only a country.

At twenty Rizal finished his course at Manila, and a few months later went to Madrid, where he speedily won the degrees of Ph.D. and M.D.; then to Germany—taking here another degree, doing his work in the new language, which he mastered as he went along; to Austria, where he gained great skill as an oculist; to France, Italy, England—absorbing the languages and literature of these countries, doing some fine sculpture by way of diversion. But in all this he was single-minded; he never lost the voice of his call; he felt more and more keenly the contrast between the hard lot of his country and the freedom of these lands, and he bore it ill that no one of them even knew about her, and the cancer eating away her beauty and strength. At the end of this period of study he settled in Berlin, and began his active work for his country.

Four years of the socialism and license of the universities had not distorted Rizal's political vision; he remained, as he had grown up, an opportunist. Not then, nor at any time, did he think his country ready for self-government. He saw as her best present good her continued union to Spain, "through a stable policy based upon justice and community of interests." He asked only for the reforms promised again and again by the ministry, and as often frustrated. To plead for the lifting of the hand of oppression from the necks of his people, he now wrote his first novel, "Noli Me Tangere."

The next year he returned to the Philippines to find himself the idol of the natives and a thorn in the flesh of friars and greedy officials. The reading of his

book was proscribed. He stayed long enough to concern himself in a dispute of his townspeople with the Dominicans over titles to lands; then finding his efforts vain and his safety doubtful, he left for Japan. Here he pursued for some time his usual studies; came thence to America, and then crossed to England, where he made researches in the British Museum, and edited in Spanish, “Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas,” by Dr. Antonio de Morga, an important work, neglected by the Spaniards, but already edited in English by Dean Stanley.

After publishing this work, in Paris, Rizal returned to Spain, where, in 1890, he began a series of brilliant pleas for the Philippines, in the *Solidaridad*, a liberal journal published at Barcelona and afterward at Madrid. But he roused little sympathy or interest in Spain, and his articles, repeated in pamphlets in the Philippines, served to make his position more dangerous at home.

Disheartened but steadfast, he retired to Belgium, to write his second novel, “El Filibusterismo.” “Noli Me Tangere” is a poet’s story of his people’s loves, faults, aspirations, and wrongs; “El Filibusterismo” is the work of a student of statecraft, pointing out the way to political justice and the development of national life. Inspired, it would seem, by his own creation of a future for his country, he returned to the *Solidaridad*, where, in a series of remarkable articles, he forecast the ultimate downfall of Spain in the Philippines and the rise of his people. This was his crime against the Government: for the spirit which in a Spanish boy would not permit a Tagalo to have a patria, in a Spaniard grown could not brook the suggestion of colonial independence, even in the far future.

And now having poured out these passionate pleas and splendid forecasts, Rizal was homesick for this land of his. He went to Hong-Kong. Calamba was in revolt. His many friends at the English port did everything to keep him; but the call was too persistent. December 23d, 1891, he wrote to Despujols, then governor-general of the Philippines: “If Your Excellency thinks my slight services could be of use in pointing out the evils of my country and helping heal the wounds reopened by the recent injustices, you need but to say so, and trusting in your honor as a gentleman, I will immediately put myself at your disposal. If you decline my offer, ... I shall at least be conscious of having done all in my power, while seeking the good of my country, to preserve her union to Spain through a stable policy based upon justice and community of interests.”

The governor expressed his gratitude, promised protection, and Rizal sailed for

Manila. But immediately after his landing he was arrested on a charge of sedition, whose source made the governor's promise impotent. Nothing could be proved against Rizal; but it was not the purpose of his enemies to have him acquitted. A half-way sentence was imposed, and he was banished to Dapitan, on the island of Mindanao. Despujols was recalled to Spain.

In this exile Rizal spent four years, beloved by the natives, teaching them agriculture, treating their sick (the poor without charge), improving their schools, and visited from time to time by patients from abroad, drawn here by his fame as an oculist. Among these last came a Mr. Taufer, a resident of Hong-Kong, and with him his foster-child, Josephine Bracken, the daughter of an Irish sergeant. The pretty and adventurous girl and the banished patriot fell in love with each other.

These may well have been among the happiest years of Rizal's life. He had always been an exile in fact: now that he was one in name, strangely enough he was able for the first time to live in peace among his brothers under the skies he loved. He sang, in his pathetic content:

“Thou dear illusion with thy soothing cup!
I taste, and think I am a child again.

Oh! kindly tempest, favoring winds of heaven,
That knew the hour to check my shifting flight,
And beat me down upon my native soil,...

Always about his philological studies, he began here a work that should be of peculiar interest to us: a treatise on Tagalog verbs, in the English language. Did his knowledge of America's growing feeling toward Cuba lead him to foresee—as no one else seems to have done—her appearance in the Philippines, or was he thinking of England?

At Hong-Kong, and in his brief stays at Manila, Rizal had established the Liga Filipina, a society of educated and progressive islanders, whose ideas of needed reforms and methods of attaining them were at one with his own. His banishment was a warning of danger and checked the society's activity.

The Liga was succeeded, in the sense only of followed, by the Katipunan,—a native word also meaning league. The makers of this “league,” though avowing the same purpose as the members of the other, were men of very different stamp. Their initiation was a blood-rite: they sought immediate independence; they preached a campaign of force, if not of violence. That a recent reviewer should have connected Dr. Rizal’s name with the Katipunan is difficult to understand. Not alone are his writings, acts, and character against such a possibility, but so also is the testimony of the Spanish archives: for not only was it admitted at his final trial that he was not suspected of any connection with the Katipunan, but his well-known disapproval of that society’s premature and violent action was even made a point against him. He was so much the more dangerous to the state because he had the sagacity to know that the times were not yet ripe for independence, and the honesty and purity of purpose to make only demands which the state herself well knew to be just.

When the rebellion of 1896 broke out, Rizal, still at Dapitan, knew that his life would not long be worth a breath of his beloved Philippine air. He asked, therefore, of the Government permission to go to Cuba as an army surgeon. It was granted, and he was taken to Manila—ovations all along his route—and embarked on the *Isla de Panay* for Barcelona. He carried with him the following letter from General Blanco, then governor-general of the Philippines, to the Minister of War at Madrid:

MANILA, August 30th, 1896.

ESTEEMED GENERAL AND DISTINGUISHED FRIEND:

I recommend to you with genuine interest, Dr. José Rizal, who is leaving for the Peninsula, to place himself at the disposal of the Government as volunteer army surgeon to Cuba. During the four years of his exile at Dapitan, he has conducted himself in the most exemplary manner, and he is in my opinion the more worthy of pardon and consideration, in that he is in no way connected with the extravagant attempts we are now deploring, neither those of conspirators nor of the secret societies that have been formed.

I have the pleasure to reassure you of my high esteem, and remain,

Your affectionate friend and comrade,

RAMON BLANCO.

But as soon as the *Isla* was on the seas, despatches began to pass between Manila and Madrid, and before she reached her port the promises, acceptances,

and recommendations of the Government officials were void. Upon landing, Rizal was immediately arrested and confined in the infamous Montjuich prison. Despujols was now military governor of Barcelona. The interview of hours which he is said to have had with his Filipino prisoner must have been dramatic. Rizal was at once re-embarked, on the *Colon*, and returned to Manila, a state prisoner. Blanco was recalled, and Poliavieja, a sworn friend of the clericals, was sent out.

Rizal was tried by court-martial, on a charge of sedition and rebellion. His guilt was manifestly impossible. Except as a prisoner of the state, he had spent only a few weeks in the Philippines since his boyhood. His life abroad had been perfectly open, as were all his writings. The facts stated in General Blanco's letter to the Minister of War were well known to all Rizal's accusers. The best they could do was to aver that he had written "depreciative words" against the Government and the Church. Some testimony was given against him by men who, since the American occupation, have made affidavit that it was false and forced from them by torture. Rizal made a splendid defence, but he was condemned, and sentenced to the death of a traitor. On that day José Rizal y Mercado and Josephine Bracken were married. Then the sweetness and strength of his character and his singleness of purpose made a beautiful showing. In the night, which his bride spent on her knees outside his prison, he wrote a long poem of farewell to his patria adorado, fine in its abnegation and exquisite in the wanderings of its fancy. He received the ministrations of a Jesuit priest. He was perfectly calm. "What is death to me?" he said; "I have sown, others are left to reap." At dawn he was shot.



The poem in which he left a record of his last thoughts was the following:

My Last Thought.

Land I adore, farewell! thou land of the southern sun's
choosing!
Pearl of the Orient seas! our forfeited Garden of Eden!
Joyous I yield up for thee my sad life, and were it far

brighter,
Young, rose-strewn, for thee and thy happiness still would
I give it.
Far afield, in the din and rush of maddening battle,
Others have laid down their lives, nor wavered nor paused
in the giving.
What matters way or place—the cyprus, the lily, the
laurel,
Gibbet or open field, the sword or inglorious torture,
When 'tis the hearth and the country that call for the life's
immolation?

Dawn's faint lights bar the east, she smiles through the
cowl of the darkness,
Just as I die. Hast thou need of purple to garnish her
pathway?
Here is my blood, on the hour! pour it out, and the sun in
his rising
Mayhap will touch it with gold, will lend it the sheen of
his glory.

Dreams of my childhood and youth, and dreams of my
strong young manhood,
What were they all but to see, thou gem of the Orient
ocean!
Tearless thine eyes so deep, unbent, unmarred thy sweet
forehead.

Vision I followed from far, desire that spurred on and
consumed me!
Greeting! my parting soul cries, and greeting again!... O
my country!
Beautiful is it to fall, that the vision may rise to fulfilment,
Giving my life for thy life, and breathing thine air in the
death-throe;
Sweet to eternally sleep in thy lap, O land of
enchantment!

If in the deep, rich grass that covers my rest in thy bosom,
Some day thou seest upspring a lowly, tremulous
blossom,
Lay there thy lips, 'tis my soul; may I feel on my forehead
descending,
Deep in the chilly tomb, the soft, warm breath of thy
kisses.
Let the calm light of the moon fall around me, and dawn's
fleeting splendor;
Let the winds murmur and sigh, on my cross let some bird
tell its message;
Loosed from the rain by the brazen sun, let clouds of soft
vapor
Bear to the skies, as they mount again, the chant of my
spirit.
There may some friendly heart lament my parting
untimely,
And if at eventide a soul for my tranquil sleep prayeth,
Pray thou too, O my fatherland! for my peaceful reposing.
Pray for those who go down to death through unspeakable
torments;
Pray for those who remain to suffer such torture in
prisons;
Pray for the bitter grief of our mothers, our widows, our
orphans;
Oh, pray too for thyself, on the way to thy final
redemption.

When our still dwelling-place wraps night's dusky mantle
about her,
Leaving the dead alone with the dead, to watch till the
morning,
Break not our rest, and seek not to lay death's mystery
open.
If now and then thou shouldst hear the string of a lute or a
zithern,
Mine is the hand, dear country, and mine is the voice that

is singing.

When my tomb, that all have forgot, no cross nor stone
marketh,

There let the laborer guide his plough, there cleave the
earth open.

So shall my ashes at last be one with thy hills and thy
valleys.

Little 'twill matter then, my country, that thou shouldst
forget me!

I shall be air in thy streets, and I shall be space in thy
meadows.

I shall be vibrant speech in thine ears, shall be fragrance
and color,

Light and shout, and loved song forever repeating my
message.

Rizal's own explanation of the lofty purpose of his searching story of his
Tagalog fatherland was in these words of his dedicatory preface:

To My Country

The records of human suffering make known to us the existence of ailments of such nature that the slightest touch irritates and causes tormenting pains. Whenever, in the midst of modern civilizations, I have tried to call up thy dear image, O my country! either for the comradeship of remembrance or to compare thy life with that about me, I have seen thy fair face disfigured and distorted by a hideous social cancer.

Eager for thy health, which is our happiness, and seeking the best remedy for thy pain, I am about to do with thee what the ancients did with their sick: they exposed them on the steps of their temples, that every one who came to adore the divinity within might offer a remedy.

So I shall strive to describe faithfully thy state without extenuation; to lift a corner of the covering that hides thy sore; sacrificing everything to truth, even the love of thy glory, while loving, as thy son, even thy frailties and sins.

JOSÉ RIZAL.

An Eagle Flight

l.

The House on the Pasig.

It was toward the end of October. Don Santiago de los Santos, better known as Captain Tiago, was giving a dinner; and though, contrary to custom, he had not announced it until that very afternoon, it had become before evening the sole topic of conversation, not only at Binondo, but in the other suburbs of Manila, and even in the city itself. Captain Tiago passed for the most lavish of entertainers, and it was well known that the doors of his home, like those of his country, were closed to nobody and nothing save commerce and all new or audacious ideas. The news spread, therefore, with lightning rapidity in the world of the sycophants, the unemployed and idle, whom heaven has multiplied so generously at Manila.

The dinner was given in a house of the Calle de Anloague, which may yet be recognized, if an earthquake has not demolished it. This house, rather large and of a style common to the country, stood near an arm of the Pasig, called the Boco de Binondo, a rio which, like all others of Manila, washing along the multiple output of baths, sewers, and fishing grounds serves as a means of transport, and even furnishes drinking-water, if such be the humor of the Chinese carrier. Scarcely at intervals of a half-mile is this powerful artery of the quarter where the traffic is most important, the movement most active, dotted with bridges; and these, in ruins at one end six months of the year and inapproachable the remaining six at the other, give horses a pretext for plunging into the water, to the great surprise of preoccupied mortals in carriages dozing tranquilly or philosophizing on the progress of the century.

The house of Captain Tiago was rather low and on lines sufficiently incorrect. A grand staircase with green balustrades, carpeted at intervals, led from the vestibule, with its squares of colored faience, to the main floor, between Chinese pedestals ornamented with fantastic designs, supporting vases and jardinières of

flowers.

At the top of the staircase was a large apartment, called here *caida*, which for this night served at once as dining- and music-room. In the centre, a long table, luxuriously set, seemed to promise to diners-out the most soothing satisfaction, at the same time threatening the timid girl—the *dalaga*—who for six mortal hours must submit to the companionship of strange and diverse people.

In contrast to these mundane preparations, richly colored pictures of religious subjects hung about the walls, and at the end of the apartment, imprisoned in ornate and splendid Renaissance carving, was a curious canvas of vast dimensions, bearing the inscription, “Our Lady of Peace and of Safe Journeys, Venerated at Antipolo.” The ceiling was prettily decorated with jewelled Chinese lamps, cages without birds, spheres of crystal faced with colored foil, faded air plants, *botetes*, etc. On the river side, through fantastic arches, half Chinese, half European, were glimpses of a terrace, with trellises and arbors, illuminated by little colored lanterns. Brilliant chandeliers, reflected in great mirrors, lighted the apartment. On a platform of pine was a superb grand piano. In a panel of the wall, a large portrait in oil represented a man of agreeable face, in frock coat, robust, straight, symmetrical as the gavel between his jewelled fingers.

The crowd of guests almost filled the room; the men separated from the women, as in Catholic churches and synagogues. An old cousin of Captain Tiago’s was receiving alone. Her appearance was kindly, but her tongue not very flexible to the Castilian. She filled her rôle by offering to the Spaniards trays of cigarettes and *buyos*, and giving the Filipinos her hand to kiss. The poor old lady, wearied at last, profited by the sound of breaking china to go out hurriedly, grumbling at *maladroits*. She did not reappear.

Whether the pictures roused a spirit of devotion, whether the women of the Philippines are exceptional, the feminine part of the assembly remained silent. Scarcely was heard even a yawn, stifled behind a fan. The men made more stir. The most interesting and animated group was formed by two monks, two Spanish provincials, and an officer, seated round a little table, on which were wine and English biscuits.

The officer, an old lieutenant, tall and morose, looked a Duke of Alba, retired into the Municipal Guard. He spoke little and dryly. One of the monks was a

young Dominican, handsome, brilliant, precociously grave; it was the curate of Binondo. Consummate dialectician, he could escape from a *distinguo* like an eel from a fisherman's nets. He spoke seldom, and seemed to weigh his words.

The other monk talked much and gestured more. Though his hair was turning gray, he seemed to have preserved all his vigor. His carriage, his glance, his large jaws, his herculean frame, gave him the air of a Roman patrician in disguise. Yet he seemed genial, and if the timbre of his voice was autocratic, his frank and merry laugh removed any disagreeable impression, so far even that one pardoned his appearing in the salon with unshod feet.

One of the provincials, a little man with a black beard, had nothing remarkable about him but his nose, which, to judge from its size, ought not to have belonged to him entire. The other, young and blond, seemed newly arrived in the country. The Franciscan was conversing with him somewhat warmly.

"You will see," said he, "when you have been here several months; you will be convinced that to legislate at Madrid and to execute in the Philippines is not one and the same thing."

"But——"

"I, for example," continued Brother Dámaso, raising his voice to cut off the words of his objector, "I, who count twenty-three years of plane and palm, can speak with authority. I spent twenty years in one pueblo. In twenty years one gets acquainted with a town. San Diego had six thousand souls. I knew each inhabitant as if I'd borne and reared him—with which foot this one limped, how that one's pot boiled—and I tell you the reforms proposed by the Ministers are absurd. The Indian is too indolent!"

"Ah, pardon me," said the young man, speaking low and drawing nearer; "that word rouses all my interest. Does it really exist from birth, this indolence of the native, or is it, as some travellers say, only an excuse of our own for the lack of advancement in our colonial policy?"

"Bah! ask Señor Laruja, who also knows the country well; ask him if the ignorance and idleness of the Indians are not unparalleled?"

“In truth!” the little dark man made haste to affirm; “nowhere will you find men more careless.”

“Nor more corrupt, nor more ungrateful.”

“Nor more ill-bred.”

The young man looked about uneasily. “Gentlemen,” said he, still speaking low, “it seems to me we are the guests of Indians, and that these young ladies——”

“Bah, you are too timid: Santiago does not consider himself an Indian, besides, he isn’t here. These are the scruples of a newcomer. Wait a little. When you have slept in our strapped beds, eaten the tinola, and seen our balls and fêtes, you’ll change your tone. And more, you will find that the country is going to ruin; she is ruined already!”

“What does your reverence mean?” cried the lieutenant and Dominican together.

“The evil all comes from the fact that the Government sustains wrong-doers in the face of the ministers of God,” continued the Franciscan, raising his voice and facing about. “When a curate rids his cemetery of a malefactor, no one, not even the king, has the right to interfere; and a wretched general, a petty general from nowhere——”

“Father, His Excellency is viceroy,” said the officer, rising. “His Excellency represents His Majesty the king.”

“What Excellency?” retorted the Franciscan, rising in turn. “Who is this king? For us there is but one King, the legitimate——”

“If you do not retract that, Father, I shall make it known to the governor-general,” cried the lieutenant.

“Go to him now, go!” retorted Father Dámaso; “I’ll loan you my carriage.”

The Dominican interposed.

“Señores,” said he in a tone of authority, “you should not confuse things, nor seek offence where there is none intended. We must distinguish in the words of

Father Dámaso those of the man from those of the priest. The latter per se can never offend, because they are infallible. In the words of the man, a sub-distinction must be made, into those said ab irato, those said ex ore, but not in corde, and those said in corde. It is these last only that can offend, and even then everything depends. If they were not premeditated in mente, but simply arose per accidens in the heat of the conversation——”

At this interesting point there joined the group an old Spaniard, gentle and inoffensive of aspect. He was lame, and leaned on the arm of an old native woman, smothered in curls and frizzes, preposterously powdered, and in European dress. With relief every one turned to salute them. It was Doctor de Espadaña and his wife, the Doctora Doña Victorina. The atmosphere cleared.

“Which, Señor Laruja, is the master of the house?” asked the young provincial. “I haven’t been presented.”

“They say he has gone out.”

“No presentations are necessary here,” said Brother Dámaso; “Santiago is a good fellow.”

Er hat das Pulfer nicht erfunden. “He didn’t invent gunpowder,” added Laruja.

“What, you too, Señor de Laruja?” said Doña Victorina over her fan. “How could the poor man have invented gunpowder when, if what they say is true, the Chinese made it centuries ago?”

“The Chinese? ’Twas a Franciscan who invented it,” said Brother Dámaso.

“A Franciscan, no doubt; he must have been a missionary to China,” said the Señora, not disposed to abandon her idea.

“Who is this with Santiago?” asked the lieutenant. Every one looked toward the door, where two men had just entered. They came up to the group around the table.

II.

Crisóstomo Ibarra.

One was the original of the portrait in oil, and he led by the hand a young man in deep black. “Good evening, señores; good evening, fathers,” said Captain Tiago, kissing the hands of the priests, “I have the honor of presenting to you Don Crisóstomo Ibarra.”

At the name of Ibarra there were smothered exclamations. The lieutenant, forgetting to salute the master of the house, surveyed the young man from head to foot. Brother Dámaso seemed petrified. The arrival was evidently unexpected. Señor Ibarra exchanged the usual phrases with members of the group. Nothing marked him from other guests save his black attire. His fine height, his manner, his movements, denoted sane and vigorous youth. His face, frank and engaging, of a rich brown, and lightly furrowed—trace of Spanish blood—was rosy from a sojourn in the north.

“Ah!” he cried, surprised and delighted, “my father’s old friend, Brother Dámaso!”

All eyes turned toward the Franciscan, who did not stir.

“Pardon,” said Ibarra, puzzled. “I am mistaken.”

“You are not mistaken,” said the priest at last, in an odd voice; “but your father was not my friend.”

Ibarra, astonished, drew slowly back the hand he had offered, and turned to find himself facing the lieutenant, whose eyes had never left him.

“Young man, are you the son of Don Rafael Ibarra?”

Crisóstomo bowed.

“Then welcome to your country! I knew your father well, one of the most honorable men of the Philippines.”

“Señor,” replied Ibarra, “what you say dispels my doubts as to his fate, of which as yet I know nothing.”

The old man’s eyes filled with tears. He turned away to hide them, and moved off into the crowd.

The master of the house had disappeared. Ibarra was left alone in the middle of the room. No one presented him to the ladies. He hesitated a moment, then went up to them and said:

“Permit me to forget formalities, and salute the first of my countrywomen I have seen for years.”

No one spoke, though many eyes regarded him with interest. Ibarra turned away, and a jovial man, in native dress, with studs of brilliants down his shirt-front, almost ran up to say:

“Señor Ibarra, I wish to know you. I am Captain Tinong, and live near you at Tondo. Will you honor us at dinner to-morrow?”

“Thank you,” said Ibarra, pleased with the kindness, “but to-morrow I must leave for San Diego.”

“What a pity! Well then, on your return——”

“Dinner is served,” announced a waiter of the Café La Campana.

The guests began to move toward the table, not without much ceremony on the part of the ladies, especially the natives, who required a great deal of polite urging.

III.

The Dinner.

The two monks finding themselves near the head of the table, like two candidates for a vacant office, began politely resigning in each other's favor.

"This is your place, Brother Dámaso."

"No, yours, Brother Sibyla."

"You are so much the older friend of the family."

"But you are the curate of the quarter."

This polite contention settled, the guests sat down, no one but Ibarra seeming to think of the master of the house.

"What," said he, "you're not to be with us, Don Santiago?"

But there was no place: Lucullus was not dining with Lucullus.

"Don't trouble yourself," said Captain Tiago, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. "This feast is a thank-offering for your safe return. Ho, there! bring the tinola! I've ordered the tinola expressly for you, Crisóstomo."

"When did you leave the country?" Laruja asked Ibarra.

"Seven years ago."

"Then you must have almost forgotten it."

"On the contrary, it has been always in my thoughts; but my country seems to have forgotten me."

“Why do you say that?” asked the old lieutenant.

“Because for several months I have had no news, so that I do not even know how and when my father died.”

The lieutenant could not repress a groan.

“And where were you that they couldn’t telegraph you?” asked Doña Victorina. “When we were married, we sent despatches to the peninsula.”

“Señora, I was in the far north,” said Ibarra.

“You have travelled much,” said the blond provincial; “which of the European countries pleased you most?”

“After Spain, my second country, the nations that are free.”

“And what struck you as most interesting, most surprising, in the general life of nations—the genius of each, so to put it?” asked Laruja.

Ibarra reflected.

“Before visiting a country I carefully studied its history, and, except the different motives for national pride, there seems to me nothing surprisingly characteristic in any nation. Given its history, everything appears natural; each people’s wealth and misery seem in direct proportion to its freedom and its prejudices, and in consequence, in proportion to the self-sacrifice or selfishness of its progenitors.”

“Did you discover nothing more startling than that?” demanded the Franciscan, with a mocking laugh. “It was hardly worth while squandering money for so slight returns. Not a schoolboy but knows as much.”

The guests eyed one another, fearful of what might follow. Ibarra, astonished, remained silent a moment, then said quietly:

“Señores, do not wonder at these words of Brother Dámaso. He was my curate when I was a little boy, and with his reverence the years don’t count. I thank him for thus recalling the time when he was often an honored guest at my father’s table.”

Brother Sibyla furtively observed the Franciscan, who was trembling slightly. At the first possible opportunity Ibarra rose.

“You will pardon me if I excuse myself,” he said. “I arrived only a few hours ago, and have matters of importance to attend to. The dinner is over. I drink little wine, and scarcely taste liquors.” And raising a glass as yet untouched, “Señores,” he said, “Spain and the Philippines forever!”

“You’re not going!” said Santiago in amazement. “Maria Clara and her friends will be with us in a moment. What shall I say to her?”

“That I was obliged to go,” said Ibarra, “and that I’m coming early in the morning.” And he went out.

The Franciscan unburdened himself.

“You saw his arrogance,” he said to the blond provincial. “These young fellows won’t take reproof from a priest. That comes of sending them to Europe. The Government ought to prohibit it.”

That night the young provincial added to his “Colonial Studies,” this paragraph: “In the Philippines, the least important person at a feast is he who gives it. You begin by showing your host to the door, and all goes merrily.... In the present state of affairs, it would be almost a kindness to prohibit young Filipinos from leaving their country, if not even from learning to read.”

IV.

Heretic and Filibuster.

Ibarra stood outside the house of Captain Tiago. The night wind, which at this season brings a bit of freshness to Manila, seemed to blow away the cloud that had darkened his face. Carriages passed him like streaks of light, hired calashes rolled slowly by, and foot-passengers of all nationalities jostled one another. With the rambling gait of the preoccupied or the idle, he took his way toward the Plaza de Binondo. Nothing was changed. It was the same street, with the same blue and white houses, the same white walls with their slate-colored fresco, poor imitations of granite. The church tower showed the same clock with transparent face. The Chinese shop had the same soiled curtains, the same iron triangles. One day, long ago, imitating the street urchins of Manila, he had twisted one of these triangles: nobody had ever straightened it. “How little progress!” he murmured; and he followed the Calle de la Sacristia, pursued by the cry of sherbet venders.

“Marvellous!” he thought; “one would say my voyage was a dream. Santo Dios! the street is as bad as when I went away.”

While he contemplated this marvel of urban stability in an unstable country, a hand fell lightly on his shoulder. He looked up and recognized the old lieutenant. His face had put off its expression of sternness, and he smiled kindly at Crisóstomo.

“Young man,” he said, “I was your father’s friend: I wish you to consider me yours.”

“You seem to have known my father well,” said Crisóstomo; “perhaps you can tell me something of his death.”

“You do not know about it?”

“Nothing at all, and Don Santiago would not talk with me till to-morrow.”

“You know, of course, where he died.”

“Not even that.”

Lieutenant Guevara hesitated.

“I am an old soldier,” he said at last, in a voice full of compassion, “and only know how to say bluntly what I have to tell. Your father died in prison.”

Ibarra sprang back, his eyes fixed on the lieutenant’s.

“Died in prison? Who died in prison?”

“Your father,” said the lieutenant, his voice still gentler.

“My father—in prison? What are you saying? Do you know who my father was?” and he seized the old man’s arm.

“I think I’m not mistaken: Don Rafael Ibarra.”

“Yes, Don Rafael Ibarra,” Crisóstomo repeated mechanically.

“You will soon learn that for an honest man to keep out of prison is a difficult matter in the Philippines.”

“You mock me! Why did he die in prison?”

“Come with me; we will talk on the way.”

They walked along in silence, the officer stroking his beard in search of inspiration.

“As you know,” he began, “your father was the richest man of the province, and if he had many friends he had also enemies. We Spaniards who come to the Philippines are seldom what we should be. I say this as truthfully of some of your ancestors as of others. Most of us come to make a fortune without regard to the means. Well, your father was a man to make enemies among these adventurers, and he made enemies among the monks. I never knew exactly the

ground of the trouble with Brother Dámaso, but it came to a point where the priest almost denounced him from the pulpit.

“You remember the old ex-artilleryman who collected taxes? He became the laughing-stock of the pueblo, and grew brutal and churlish accordingly. One day he chased some boys who were annoying him, and struck one down. Unfortunately your father interfered. There was a struggle and the man fell. He died within a few hours.

“Naturally your father was arrested, and then his enemies unmasked. He was called heretic, filibustero, his papers were seized, everything was made to accuse him. Any one else in his place would have been set at liberty, the physicians finding that the man died of apoplexy; but your father’s fortune, his honesty, and his scorn of everything illegal undid him. When his advocate, by the most brilliant pleading, had exposed these calumnies, new accusations arose. He had taken lands unjustly, owed men for imaginary wrongs, had relations with the tulisanes, by which his plantations and herds were unmolested. The affair became so complicated that no one could unravel it. Your father gave way under the strain, and died suddenly—alone—in prison.”

They had reached the quarters.

The lieutenant hesitated. Ibarra said nothing, but grasped the old man’s long, thin hand; then turned away, caught sight of a coach, and signalled the driver.

“Fonda de Lala,” he said, and his words were scarcely audible.

v.

A Star in the Dark Night.

Ibarra went up to his chamber, which faced the river, threw himself down, and looked out through the open window. Across the river a brilliantly lighted house was ringing with joyous music. Had the young man been so minded, with the aid of a glass he might have seen, in that radiant atmosphere, a vision. It was a young girl, of exceeding beauty, wearing the picturesque costume of the Philippines. A semicircle of courtiers was round her. Spaniards, Chinese, natives, soldiers, curates, old and young, intoxicated with the light and music, were talking, gesturing, disputing with animation. Even Brother Sibyla deigned to address this queen, in whose splendid hair Doña Victorina was wreathing a diadem of pearls and brilliants. She was white, too white perhaps, and her deep eyes, often lowered, when she raised them showed the purity of her soul. About her fair and rounded neck, through the transparent tissue of the piña, winked, as say the Tagals, the joyous eyes of a necklace of brilliants. One man alone seemed unreached by all this light and loveliness; it was a young Franciscan, slim, gaunt, pale, who watched all from a distance, still as a statue.

But Ibarra sees none of this. Another spectacle appears to his fancy, commands his eyes. Four walls, bare and dank, enclose a narrow cell, lighted by a single streak of day. On the moist and noisome floor is a mat; on the mat an old man dying. Beaten down by fever, he lies and looks about him, calling a name, in strangling voice, with tears. No one—a clanking chain, an echoed groan somewhere; that was all. And away off in the bright world, laughing, singing, drenching flowers with wine, a young man.... One by one the lights go out in the festal house: no more of noise, or song, or harp; but in Ibarra's ears always the agonizing cry.

Silence has drawn her deep breath over Manila; all its life seems gone out, save that a cock's crow alternates with the bells of clock towers and the melancholy

watch-cry of the guard. A quarter moon comes up, flooding with its pale light the universal sleep. Even Ibarra, wearied more perhaps with his sad thoughts than his long voyage, sleeps too. Only the young Franciscan, silent and motionless just now at the feast, awake still. His elbow on the window-place of his little cell, his chin sunk in his palm, he watches a glittering star. The star pales, goes out, the slender moon loses her gentle light, but the monk stays on; motionless, he looks toward the horizon, lost now behind the morning mists, over the field of Bagumbayan, over the sleeping sea.

VI.

Captain Tiago and Maria.

While our friends are still asleep or breakfasting, we will sketch the portrait of Captain Tiago. We have no reason to ignore him, never having been among his guests. Short, less dark than most of his compatriots, of full face and slightly corpulent, Captain Tiago seemed younger than his age. His rounded cranium, very small and elongated behind, was covered with hair black as ebony. His eyes, small and straight set, kept always the same expression. His nose was straight and finely cut, and if his mouth had not been deformed by the use of tobacco and buyo, he had not been wrong in thinking himself a handsome man.

He was reputed the richest resident of Binondo, and had large estates in La Pampanga, on the Laguna de Bay, and at San Diego. From its baths, its famous gallera, and his recollections of the place, San Diego was his favorite pueblo, and here he passed two months every year. He had also properties at Santo Cristo, in the Calle de Anloague, and in the Calle Rosario; the exploitation of the opium traffic was shared between him and a Chinese, and, needless to say, brought him great gains. He was purveyor to the prisoners at Bilibid, and furnished zacate to many Manila houses. On good terms with all authority, shrewd, pliant, daring in speculation, he was the sole rival of a certain Perez in the awards of divers contracts which the Philippine Government always places in privileged hands. From all of which it resulted that Captain Tiago was as happy as can be a man whose small head announces his native origin. He was rich, and at peace with God, with the Government, and with men.

That he was at peace with God could not be doubted. One has no motive for being at enmity with Him when one is well in the land, and has never had to ask Him for anything. From the grand salon of the Manila home, a little door, hid behind a silken curtain, led to a chapel—something obligatory in a Filipino house. There were Santiago's Lares, and if we use this word, it is because the

master of the house was rather a poly- than a monotheist. Here, in sculpture and oils, were saints, martyrdoms, and miracles; a chapter could scarcely enumerate them all. Before these images Santiago burned his candles and made his requests known.

That he was at peace with the Government, however difficult the problem, could not be doubted either. Incapable of a new idea, and contented with his lot, he was disposed to obey even to the lowest functionary, and to offer him capons, hams, and Chinese fruits at all seasons. If he heard the natives maligned, not considering himself one, he chimed in and said worse: one criticised the Chinese merchants or the Spaniards, he, who thought himself pure Iberian, did it too. He was for two years gobernadorcillo of the rich association of half-breeds, in the face of protestations from many who considered him a native. The impious called him fool; the poor, pitiless and cruel; his inferiors, a tyrant.

As to his past, he was the only son of a rich sugar merchant, who died when Santiago was still at school. He had then to quit his studies and give himself to business. He married a young girl of Santa Cruz, who brought him social rank and helped his fortunes.

The absence of an heir in the first six years of marriage made Captain Tiago's thirst for riches almost blameworthy. In vain all this time did Doña Pia make novenas and pilgrimages and scatter alms. But at length she was to become a mother. Alas! like Shakespeare's fisherman who lost his songs when he found a treasure, she never smiled again, and died, leaving a beautiful baby girl, whom Brother Dámaso presented at the font. The child was called Maria Clara.

Maria Clara grew, thanks to the care of good Aunt Isabel. Her eyes, like her mother's, were large, black, and shaded by long lashes; sparkling and mirthful when she laughed; when she did not, thoughtful and profound, even sad. Her curly hair was almost blond, her nose perfect; and her mouth, small and sweet like her mother's, was flanked by charming dimples. The little thing, idol of every one, lived amid smiles and love. The monks fêted her. They dressed her in white for their processions, mingled jasmine and lilies in her hair, gave her little silver wings, and in her hands blue ribbons, the reins of fluttering white doves. She was so joyous, had such a candid baby speech, that Captain Tiago, enraptured with her, passed his time in blessing the saints.

In the lands of the sun, at thirteen or fourteen, the child becomes a woman. At this age full of mysteries, Maria Clara entered the convent of Santa Catalina, to remain several years. With tears she parted from the sole companion of her childish games, Crisóstomo Ibarra, who in turn was soon to leave his home. Some years after his departure, Don Rafael and Captain Tiago, knowing the inclinations of their children, agreed upon their marriage. This arrangement was received with eager joy by two hearts beating at two extremities of the world.

VII.

Idylle.

The sky was blue. A fresh breeze stirred the leaves and shook the nodding “angels’ heads,” the aerial plants, and the many other adornments of the terrace. Maria and Crisóstomo were there, alone together for the first time since his return. They began with charming futilities, so sweet to those who understand, so meaningless to others. She is sister to Cain, a little jealous; she says to her lover: “Did you never forget me among the many beautiful women you have seen?”

He too, he is brother to Cain, a bit subtle.

“Could I ever forget you!” he answered, gazing into the dark eyes. “Your remembrance made powerless that lotus flower, Europe, which steps out of the memory of many of my countrymen the hopes and wrongs of our land. It seemed as if the spirit, the poetic incarnation of my country was you, frank and lovely daughter of the Philippines! My love for you and that for her fused in one.”

“I know only your pueblo, Manila and Antipolo,” replied the young girl, radiant; “but I have always thought of you, and though my confessor commanded it, I was never able to forget you. I used to think over all our childish plays and quarrels. Do you remember the day you were really angry? Your mother had taken us to wade in the brook, behind the reeds. You put a crown of orange flowers on my head and called me Chloe. But your mother took the flowers and ground them with a stone, to mix with *gogo*, for washing our hair. You cried. ‘Stupid,’ said she, ‘you shall see how good your hair smells!’ I laughed; at that you were angry and wouldn’t speak to me, while I wanted to cry. On the way home, when the sun was very hot, I picked some sage leaves for your head. You smiled your thanks, and we were friends again.”

Ibarra opened his pocketbook and took out a paper in which were some leaves,

blackened and dry, but fragrant still.

“Your sage leaves,” he replied to her questioning look.

In her turn, she drew out a little white satin purse.

“Hands off!” as he reached out for it, “there’s a letter in it!”

“My letter of good-by?”

“Have you written me any others, señor mio?”

“What is in it?”

“Lots of fibs, excuses of a bad debtor,” she laughed. “If you’re good I will read it to you, suppressing the gallantries, though, so you won’t suffer too much.” And lifting the paper to hide her face, she began:

“‘My——’ I’ll not read what follows, because it’s a fib”; and she ran her eyes over several lines. “In spite of my prayers, I must go. ‘You are no longer a boy,’ my father said, ‘you must think of the future. You have to learn things your own country cannot teach you, if you would be useful to her some day. What, almost a man and I see you in tears?’ Upon that I confessed my love for you. He was silent, then placing his hand on my shoulder he said in a voice full of emotion: ‘Do you think you alone know how to love; that it costs your father nothing to let you go away from him? It is not long since we lost your mother, and I am growing old, yet I accept my solitude and run the risk of never seeing you again. For you the future opens, for me it shuts; the fire of youth is yours, frost touches me, and it is you who weep, you who do not know how to sacrifice the present to a to-morrow good for you and for your country.’”

Ibarra’s agitation stopped the reading; he had become very pale and was walking back and forth.

“What is it? You are ill!” cried Maria, going toward him.

“With you I have forgotten my duty; I should be on my way to the pueblo. Tomorrow is the Feast of the Dead.”

Maria was silent. She fixed on him her great, thoughtful eyes, then turned to pick some flowers.

“Go,” she said, and her voice was deep and sweet; “I keep you no longer. In a few days we shall see each other again. Put these flowers on your father’s grave.”

A little later, Captain Tiago found Maria in the chapel, at the foot of a statue of the Virgin, weeping. “Come, come,” said he, to console her; “burn some candles to St. Roch and St. Michael, patrons of travellers, for the tulisanes are numerous: better spend four réales for wax than pay a ransom.”

VIII.

Reminiscences.

Ibarra's carriage was crossing one of the most animated quarters of Manila. The street life that had saddened him the night before, now, in spite of his sorrow, made him smile. Everything awakened a world of sleeping recollections.

These streets were not yet paved, so if the sun shone two days continuously, they turned to powder which covered everything. But let it rain a day, you had a mire, reflecting at night the shifting lamps of the carriages and bespattering the foot-passengers on the narrow walks. How many women had lost their embroidered slippers in these muddy waves!

The good and honorable pontoon bridge, so characteristically Filipino, doing its best to be useful in spite of natural faults, and rising or falling with the caprices of the Pasig,—that brave bridge was no more. The new Spanish bridge drew Ibarra's attention. Carriages passed continuously, drawn by groups of dwarf horses, in splendid harness. In these sat at ease government clerks going to their bureaus, officers, Chinese, self-satisfied and ridiculously grave monks, canons. In an elegant victoria, Ibarra thought he recognized Father Dámaso, deep in thought. From an open carriage, where his wife and two daughters accompanied him, Captain Tinong waved a friendly greeting.

Then came the Botanical Gardens, then old Manila, still enclosed in its ditches and walls; beyond that the sea; beyond that, Europe, thought Ibarra. But the little hill of Bagumbayan drove away all fancies. He remembered the man who had opened the eyes of his intelligence, taught him to find out the true and the just. It was an old priest, and the holy man had died there, on that field of execution!

To these thoughts he replied by murmuring: "No, after all, first the country, first the Philippines, daughters of Spain, first the Spanish home-land!"

His carriage rolled on. It passed a cart drawn by two horses whose hempen harness told of the back country. Sometimes there sounded the slow and heavy tread of a pensive carabao, drawing a great tumbrel; its conductor, on his buffalo skin, accompanying, with a monotonous and melancholy chant, the strident creaking of the wheels. Sometimes there was the dull sound of a native sledge's worn runners. In the fields grazed the herds, and among them white herons gravely promenaded, or sat tranquil on the backs of sleepy oxen beatifically chewing their cuds of prairie grass. Let us leave the young man, wholly occupied now with his thoughts. The sun which makes the tree-tops burn, and sends the peasants running, when they feel the hot ground through their thick shoes; the sun which halts the countrywoman under a clump of great reeds, and makes her think of things vague and strange—that sun has no enchantment for him.

While the carriage, staggering like a drunken man over the uneven ground, passes a bamboo bridge, mounts a rough hillside or descends its steep slope, let us return to Manila.

IX.

Affairs of the Country.

Ibarra had not been mistaken. It was indeed Father Dámaso he had seen, on his way to the house which he himself had just left.

Maria Clara and Aunt Isabel were entering their carriage when the monk arrived. "Where are you going?" he asked, and in his preoccupation he gently tapped the young girl's cheek.

"To the convent to get my things," said she.

"Ah! ah! well, well! we shall see who is the stronger, we shall see!" he murmured, as he left the two women somewhat surprised and went up the steps.

"He's probably committing his sermon," said Aunt Isabel. "Come, we are late!"

We cannot say whether Father Dámaso was committing a sermon, but he must have been absorbed in important things, for he did not offer his hand to Captain Tiago.

"Santiago," he said, "we must have a serious talk. Come into your office."

Captain Tiago felt uneasy. He answered nothing, but followed the gigantic priest, who closed the door behind them.

While they talk, let us see what has become of Father Sibyla.

The learned Dominican, his mass once said, had set out for the convent of his order, which stands at the entrance to the city, near the gate bearing alternately, according to the family reigning at Madrid, the name of Magellan or Isabella II.

Brother Sibyla entered, crossed several halls, and knocked at a door.

“Come in,” said a faint voice.

“God give health to your reverence,” said the young Dominican, entering. Seated in a great armchair was an old priest, meagre, jaundiced, like Rivera’s saints. His eyes, deep-sunken in their orbits, were arched with heavy brows, intensifying the flashes of their dying light.

Brother Sibyla was moved. He inclined his head, and seemed to wait.

“Ah!” gasped the sick man, “they recommend an operation! An operation at my age! Oh, this country, this terrible country! You see what it does for all of us, Hernando!”

“And what has your reverence decided?”

“To die! Could I do otherwise? I suffer too much, but—I’ve made others suffer. I’m paying my debt. And you? How are you? What do you bring me?”

“I came to talk of the mission you gave me.”

“Ah! and what is there to say?”

“They’ve told us fairy tales,” answered Brother Sibyla wearily. “Young Ibarra seems a sensible fellow. He is not stupid at all, and thoroughly manly.”

“Is it so!”

“Hostilities began yesterday.”

“Ah! and how?”

Brother Sibyla briefly recounted what had passed between Brother Dámaso and Crisóstomo.

“Besides,” he said in conclusion, “the young man is going to marry the daughter of Captain Tiago, who was educated at the convent of our sisters. He is rich; he would not go about making himself enemies and compromise at once his happiness and his fortune.”

The sick man moved his hand in sign of assent.

“Yes, you are right. He should be ours, body and soul. But if he declare himself our enemy, so much the better!”

Brother Sibyla looked at the old man in surprise.

“For the good of our sacred order, you understand,” he added, breathing with difficulty; “I prefer attack to the flatteries and adulations of friends; besides, those are bought.”

“Your reverence believes that?”

The old man looked at him sadly.

“Remember this well,” he went on, catching his breath; “our power lasts as long as it’s believed in. If we’re attacked, the Government reasons: ‘They are assailed because in them is seen an obstacle to liberty: therefore we must support them!’”

“But if the Government should listen to our enemies, if it should come to covet what we have amassed—if there should be a man hardy enough——”

“Ah! then beware!”

Both were silent.

“And too,” the sick man continued, “we have need of attack to show us our faults and make us better them. Too much flattery deceives us; we sleep; and more, it makes us ridiculous, and the day we become ridiculous we fall as we have fallen in Europe. Money will no longer come to our churches. No one will buy scapulary, penitential cords, anything; and when we cease to be rich, we can no longer convince the conscience. And the worst is, that we’re working our own destruction. For one thing, this immoderate thirst for gain, which I’ve combated in vain in all our chapters, this thirst will be our ruin. I fear we are already declining. God blinds whom He will destroy.”

“We shall always have our lands.”

“But every year we raise their price, and force the Indian to buy of others. The

people are beginning to murmur. We ought not to increase the burdens we've already laid on their shoulders."

"So your reverence believes that the revenues——"

"Talk no more of money," interrupted the old man with aversion. "You say the lieutenant threatened Father Dámaso?"

"Yes, Father," replied Sibyla, half smiling; "but this morning he told me the sherry had mounted to his head, and he thought it must have been the same with Brother Dámaso. 'And your threat?' I asked jestingly. 'Father,' said he, 'I know how to keep my word when it doesn't smirch my honor; I was never an informer—and that's why I am only a lieutenant.'"



Though the lieutenant had not carried out his threat to go to Malacañang, the captain-general none the less knew what had happened. A young officer told the story.

"From whom do you have it?" demanded His Excellency, smiling.

"From De Laruja."

The captain-general smiled again, and added:

"Woman's tongue, monk's tongue doesn't wound. I don't wish to get entangled with these men in skirts. Besides, the provincial made light of my orders; to punish this priest I demanded that his parish be changed. Well, they gave him a better. Monkishness! as we say in Spain."

Alone, His Excellency ceased to smile.

"Oh! if the people were not so dense, how easy to bridle their reverences! But every nation merits its lot!"

Meanwhile Captain Tiago finished his conference with Father Dámaso.

"And now you are warned," said the Franciscan upon leaving. "This would have

been avoided if you hadn't equivocated when I asked you how the matter stood. Don't make any more false moves, and trust her godfather."

Captain Tiago took two or three turns about the room, reflecting and sighing. Then suddenly, as if a happy thought had struck him, running to the oratory, he extinguished the two candles lighted for the safeguard of Ibarra.

X.

The Pueblo.

Almost on the banks of the lake, in the midst of meadows and streams, is the pueblo of San Diego. It exports sugar, rice, coffee, and fruits, or sells these articles of merchandise at low prices to Chinese traders.

When, on a clear day, the children climb to the top stage of the moss-grown and vine-clad church tower, there are joyous exclamations. Each picks out his own little roof of *nipa*, tile, zinc, or palm. Beyond they see the rio, a monstrous crystal serpent asleep on a carpet of green. Trunks of palm trees, dipping and swaying, join the two banks, and if, as bridges, they leave much to be desired for trembling old men and poor women who must cross with heavy baskets on their heads, on the other hand they make fine gymnastic apparatus for the young.

But what besides the rio the children never fail to talk about is a certain wooded peninsula in this sea of cultivated land. Its ancient trees never die, unless the lightning strikes their high tops. Dust gathers layer on layer in their hollow trunks, the rain makes soil of it, the birds bring seeds, a tropical vegetation grows there in wild freedom: bushes, briars, curtains of netted bind-weed, spring from the roots, reach from tree to tree, hang swaying from the branches, and Flora, as if yet unsatisfied, sows on the trees themselves; mosses and fungi live on the creased bark, and graceful aerial guests pierce with their tendrils the hospitable branches.

This wood is the subject of a legend.

When the pueblo was but a group of poor cabins, there arrived one day a strange old Spaniard with marvellous eyes, who scarcely spoke the Tagal. He wished to buy lands having thermal springs, and did so, paying in money, dress, and jewelry. Suddenly he disappeared, leaving no trace. The people of the pueblo had begun to think of him as a magician, when one day his body was found hanging

high to the branch of a giant fig tree. After it had been buried at the foot of the tree, no one cared much to venture in that quarter.

A few months later there arrived a young Spanish halfbreed, who claimed to be the old man's son. He settled, and gave himself to agriculture. Don Saturnino was taciturn and of violent temper, but very industrious. Late in life he married a woman of Manila, who bore him Don Rafael, the father of Crisóstomo.

Don Rafael, from his youth, was much beloved. He rapidly developed his father's lands, the population multiplied, the Chinese came, the hamlet grew to a pueblo, the native curate died and was replaced by Father Dámaso. And all this time the people respected the sepulchre of the old Spaniard, and held it in superstitious awe. Sometimes, armed with sticks and stones, the children dared run near it to gather wild fruits; but while they were busy at this, or stood gazing at the bit of rope still dangling from the limb, a stone or two would fall from no one knew where. Then with cries of "The old man! the old man!" they threw down sticks and fruit, ran in all directions, between the rocks and bushes, and did not stop till they were out of the woods, all pale and breathless, some crying, few daring to laugh.

XI.

The Sovereigns.

Who was the ruler of the pueblo? Not Don Rafael during his lifetime, though he possessed the most land, and nearly every one owed him. As he was modest, and gave little value to his deeds, no party formed around him, and we have seen how he was deserted and attacked when his fortunes fell.

Was it Captain Tiago? It is true his arrival was always heralded with music, he was given banquets by his debtors, and loaded with presents; but he was laughed at in secret, and called Sacristan Tiago.

Was it by chance the town mayor, the gobernadorcillo? Alas! he was an unfortunate, who governed not, but obeyed; did not dispose, but was disposed of. And yet he had to answer to the alcalde for all these dispositions, as if they emanated from his own brain. Be it said in his favor that he had neither stolen nor usurped his honors, but that they cost him five thousand pesos and much humiliation.

Perhaps then it was God? But to most of these good people, God seemed one of those poor kings surrounded by favorites to whom their subjects always take their supplications, never to them.

No, San Diego was a sort of modern Rome. The curate was the pope at the Vatican; the alferez of the civil guard, the King in the Quirinal. Here as there, difficulties arose from the situation.

The present curate, Brother Bernardo Salvi, was the young and silent Franciscan we have already seen. In mode of life and in appearance he was very unlike his predecessor, Brother Dámaso. He seemed ill, was always thoughtful, accomplished strictly his religious duties, and was careful of his reputation. Through his zeal, almost all his parishioners had speedily become members of

the Third Order of St. Francis, to the great dismay of the rival order, that of the Holy Rosary. Four or five scapularies were suspended around every neck, knotted cords encircled all the waists, and the innumerable processions of the order were a joy to see. The head sacristan took in a small fortune, selling—or giving as alms, to put it more correctly—all the paraphernalia necessary to save the soul and combat the devil. It is well known that this evil spirit, who once dared attack God face to face, and accuse His divine word, as the book of Job tells us, is now so cowardly and feeble that he flees at sight of a bit of painted cloth, and fears a knotted cord.

Brother Salvi again greatly differed from Brother Dámaso—who set everything right with fists or ferrule, believing it the only way to reach the Indian—in that he punished with fines the faults of his subordinates, rarely striking them.

From his struggles with the curate, the *alférez* had a bad reputation among the devout, which he deserved, and shared with his wife, a hideous and vile old Filipino woman named Doña Consolacion. The husband avenged his conjugal woes on himself by drinking like a fish; on his subordinates, by making them exercise in the sun; and most frequently on his wife, by kicks and drubbings. The two fought famously between themselves, but were of one mind when it was a question of the curate. Inspired by his wife, the officer ordered that no one be abroad in the streets after nine at night. The priest, who did not like this restriction, retorted in lengthy sermons, whenever the *alférez* went to church. Like all impenitents, the *alférez* did not mend his ways for that, but went out swearing under his breath, arrested the first sacristan he met, and made him clean the yard of the barracks. So the war went on. All this, however, did not prevent the *alférez* and the curate chatting courteously enough when they met.

And they were the rulers of the pueblo of San Diego.

XII.

All Saints' Day.

The cemetery of San Diego is in the midst of rice-fields. It is approached by a narrow path, powdery on sunny days, navigable on rainy. A wooden gate and a wall half stone, half bamboo stalks, succeed in keeping out men, but not the curate's goats, nor the pigs of his neighbors. In the middle of the enclosure is a stone pedestal supporting a great wooden cross. Storms have bent the strip of tin on which were the I. N. R. I., and the rain has washed off the letters. At the foot of the cross is a confused heap of bones and skulls thrown out by the grave-digger. Everywhere grow in all their vigor the bitter-sweet and rose-bay. Some tiny flowerets, too, tint the ground—blossoms which, like the mounded bones, are known to their Creator only. They are like little pale smiles, and their odor scents of the tomb. Grass and climbing plants fill the corners, cover the walls, adorning this otherwise bare ugliness; they even penetrate the tombs, through earthquake fissures, and fill their yawning gaps.

At this hour two men are digging near the crumbling wall. One, the grave-digger, works with the utmost indifference, throwing aside a skull as a gardener would a stone. The other is preoccupied; he perspires, he breathes hard.

“Oh!” he says at length in Tagalo. “Hadn't we better dig in some other place? This grave is too recent.”

“All the graves are the same, one is as recent as another.”

“I can't endure this!”

“What a woman! You should go and be a clerk! If you had dug up, as I did, a boy of twenty days, at night, in the rain——”

“Uh-h-h! And why did you do that?”

The grave-digger seemed surprised.

“Why? How do I know, I was ordered to.”

“Who ordered you?”

At this question the grave-digger straightened himself, and examined the rash young man from head to foot.

“Come! come! You’re curious as a Spaniard. A Spaniard asked me the same question, but in secret. I’m going to say to you what I said to him: the curate ordered it.”

“Oh! and what did you do with the body?”

“The devil! if I didn’t know you, I should take you for the police. The curate told me to bury it in the Chinese cemetery, but it’s a long way there, and the body was heavy. ‘Better be drowned,’ I said to myself, ‘than lie with the Chinese,’ and I threw it into the lake.”

“No, no, stop digging!” interrupted the younger man, with a cry of horror, and throwing down his spade he sprang out of the grave.

The grave-digger watched him run off signing himself, laughed, and went to work again.

The cemetery began to fill with men and women in mourning. Some of them came for a moment to the open grave, discussed some matter, seemed not to be agreed, and separated, kneeling here and there. Others were lighting candles; all began to pray devoutly. One heard sighing and sobs, and over all a confused murmur of “*requiem æternam*.”

A little old man, with piercing eyes, entered uncovered. At sight of him some laughed, others frowned. The old man seemed to take no account of this. He went to the heap of skulls, knelt, and searched with his eyes. Then with the greatest care he lifted the skulls one by one, wrinkling his brows, shaking his head, and looking on all sides. At length he rose and approached the grave-digger.

“Ho!” said he.

The other raised his eyes.

“Did you see a beautiful skull, white as the inside of a cocoanut?”

The grave-digger shrugged his shoulders.

“Look,” said the old man, showing a piece of money; “it’s all I have, but I’ll give it to you if you find it.”

The gleam of silver made the man reflect. He looked toward the heap and said:

“It isn’t there? No? Then I don’t know where it is.”

“You don’t know? When those who owe me pay, I’ll give you more. ’Twas the skull of my wife, and if you find it——”

“It isn’t there? Then I know nothing about it, but I can give you another.”

“You are like the grave you dig,” cried the old man, furious. “You know not the value of what you destroy! For whom is this grave?”

“How do I know? For a dead man!” replied the other with temper.

“Like the grave, like the grave,” the old man repeated with a dry laugh. “You know neither what you cast out nor what you keep. Dig! dig!” And he went toward the gate.

Meanwhile the grave-digger had finished his task, and two mounds of fresh, reddish earth rose beside the grave. Drawing from his pocket some buyo, he regarded dully what was going on around him, sat down, and began to chew.

At that moment a carriage, which had apparently made a long journey, stopped at the entrance to the cemetery. Ibarra got out, followed by an old servant, and silently made his way along the path.

“It is there, behind the great cross, señor,” said the servant, as they approached the spot where the grave-digger was sitting.

Arrived at the cross, the old servant looked on all sides, and became greatly confused. "It was there," he muttered; "no, there, but the ground has been broken."

Ibarra looked at him in anguish.

The servant appealed to the grave-digger.

"Where is the grave that was marked with a cross like this?" he demanded; and stooping, he traced a Byzantine cross on the ground.

"Were there flowers growing on it?"

"Yes, jasmine and pansies."

The grave-digger scratched his ear and said with a yawn:

"Well, the cross I burned."

"Burned! and why?"

"Because the curate ordered it."

Ibarra drew his hand across his forehead.

"But at least you can show us the grave."

"The body's no longer there," said the grave-digger calmly.

"What are you saying!"

"Yes," the man went on, with a smile, "I put a woman in its place, eight days ago."

"Are you mad?" cried the servant; "it isn't a year since he was buried."

"Father Dámaso ordered it; he told me to take the body to the Chinese cemetery; I——"

He got no farther, and started back in terror at sight of Crisóstomo's face.

Crisóstomo seized his arm. “And you did it?” he demanded, in a terrible voice.

“Don’t be angry, señor,” replied the grave-digger, pale and trembling. “I didn’t bury him with the Chinese. Better be drowned than that, I thought to myself, and I threw him into the water.”

Ibarra stared at him like a madman. “You’re only a poor fool!” he said at length, and pushing him away, he rushed headlong for the gate, stumbling over graves and bones, and painfully followed by the old servant.

“That’s what the dead bring us,” grumbled the gravedigger. “The curate orders me to dig the man up, and this fellow breaks my arm for doing it. That’s the way with the Spaniards. I shall lose my place!”

XIII.

The Little Sacristans.

The little old man of the cemetery wandered absent-minded along the streets.

He was a character of the pueblo. He had once been a student in philosophy, but abandoned his course at the demands of his mother. The good woman, finding that her son had talent, feared lest he become a savant and forget God; she let him choose, therefore, between studying for the priesthood and leaving the college of San José. He was in love, took the latter course, and married. Widowed and orphaned within a year, he found in books a deliverance from sadness, idleness, and the *gallera*. Unhappily he studied too much, bought too many books, neglected to care for his fortune, and came to financial ruin. Some people called him Don Astasio, or Tasio the philosopher; others, and by far the greater number, Tasio the fool.

The afternoon threatened a tempest. Pale flashes of lightning illumined the leaden sky; the atmosphere was heavy and close.

Arrived at the church door, Tasio entered and spoke to two little boys, one ten years old perhaps, the other seven.

“Coming with me?” he asked. “Your mother has ready a dinner fit for curates.”

“The head sacristan won’t let us leave yet,” said the elder. “We’re going into the tower to ring the bells.”

“Take care! don’t go too near the bells in the storm,” said Tasio, and, head down, he went off, thinking, toward the outskirts of the town.

Soon the rain came down in torrents, the thunder echoed clap on clap, each detonation preceded by an awful zig-zag of fire. The tempest grew in fury, and,

scarce able to ride on the shifting wind, the plaintive voices of the bells rang out a lamentation.

The boys were in the tower, the younger, timid, in spite of his great black eyes, hugging close to his brother. They resembled one another, but the elder had the stronger and more thoughtful face. Their dress was poor, patched, and darned. The wind beat in the rain a little, where they were, and set the flame of their candle dancing.

“Pull your rope, Crispin,” said the elder to his little brother.

Crispin pulled, and heard a feeble plaint, quickly silenced by a thunder crash. “If we were only home with mama,” he mourned, “I shouldn’t be afraid.”

The other did not answer. He watched the candle melt, and seemed thoughtful.

“At least, no one there would call me a thief; mama would not have it. If she knew they had beaten me——” The elder gave the great cord a sharp pull; a deep, sonorous tone trembled out.

“Pay what they say I stole! Pay it, brother!”

“Are you mad, Crispin? Mama would have nothing to eat; they say you stole two onces, and two onces make thirty-two pesos.”

The little fellow counted thirty-two on his fingers.

“Six hands and two fingers. And each finger makes a peso, and each peso how many cuartos?”

“A hundred sixty.”

“And how much is a hundred sixty?”

“Thirty-two hands.”

Crispin regarded his little paws.

“Thirty-two hands,” he said, “and each finger a cuarto! O mama! how many

cuartos! and with them one could buy shoes, and a hat for the sun, and an umbrella for the rain, and clothes for mama.”

Crispin became pensive.

“What I’m afraid of is that mama will be angry with you when she hears about it.”

“You think so?” said Crispin, surprised. “But I’ve never had a cuarto except the one they gave me at Easter. Mama won’t believe I stole; she won’t believe it!”

“But if the curate says so——”

Crispin began to cry, and said through his sobs:

“Then go alone, I won’t go. Tell mama I’m sick.”

“Crispin, don’t cry,” said his brother. “If mama seems to believe what they say, you’ll tell her that the sacristan lies, that the curate believes him, that they say we are thieves because our father——”

A head came out of the shadows in the little stairway, and as if it had been Medusa’s, it froze the words on the children’s lips.

The head was long and lean, with a shock of black hair. Blue glasses concealed one sightless eye. It was the chief sacristan who had thus stolen upon the children.

“You, Basilio, are fined two réales for not ringing regularly. And you, Crispin, stay to-night till you find what you’ve stolen.”

“We have permission,” began Basilio; “our mother expects us at nine.”

“You won’t go at nine o’clock either; you shall stay till ten.”

“But, señor, after nine one can’t pass through the streets——”

“Are you trying to dictate to me?” demanded the sacristan, and he seized Crispin’s arm.

“Señor, we have not seen our mother for a week,” entreated Basilio, taking hold of his brother as if to protect him.

With a stroke on the cheek the sacristan made him let go, and dragged off Crispin, who commenced to cry, let himself fall, tried to cling to the floor, and besought Basilio to keep him. But the sacristan, dragging the child, disappeared in the shadows.

Basilio stood mute. He heard his little brother’s body strike against the stairs; he heard a cry, blows, heart-rending words, growing fainter and fainter, lost at last in the distance.

“When shall I be strong enough?” he murmured, and dashed down the stairs.

He reached the choir and listened. He could still hear his little brother’s voice; then over the cry, “Mama!—Brother!” a door shut. Trembling, damp with sweat, holding his mouth with his hand to stifle a cry, he stood a moment looking about in the dim church. The doors were closed, the windows barred. He went back to the tower, did not stop at the second stage, where the bells were rung, but climbed to the third, loosed the ropes that held the tongues of the bells, then went down again, pale, his eyes gleaming, but without tears.

The rain commenced to slacken and the sky to clear. Basilio knotted the ropes, fastened an end to a beam of the balcony, and, forgetting to blow out the candle, glided down into the darkness.

Some minutes later voices were heard in a street of the pueblo, and two rifle shots rang out; but it raised no alarm, and all again became silent.

XIV.

Sisa.

Nearly an hour's walk from the pueblo lived the mother of Basilio and Crispin, wife of a man who passed his time in lounging or watching cock-fights while she struggled to bring up their children. The husband and wife saw each other rarely, and their interviews were painful. To feed his vices, he had robbed her of her few trinkets, and when the unhappy Sisa had nothing more with which to satisfy his caprices he began to abuse her. Without much strength of will, dowered with more heart than reason, she only knew how to love and to weep. Her husband was a god, her children were angels. He, who knew how much he was adored and feared, like other false gods, grew more and more arbitrary and cruel.

The stars were glittering in the sky cleared by the tempest. Sisa sat on the wooden bench, her chin in her hand, watching some branches smoulder on her hearth of uncut stones. On these stones was a little pan where rice was cooking, and among the cinders were three dry sardines.

She was still young, and one saw she had been beautiful. Her eyes, which, with her soul, she had given to her sons, were fine, deep, and fringed with dark lashes; her face was regular; her skin pure olive. In spite of her youth, suffering, hunger sometimes, had begun to hollow her cheeks. Her abundant hair, once her glory, was still carefully dressed—but from habit, not coquetry.

All day Sisa had been thinking of the pleasure coming at night. She picked the finest tomatoes in her garden—favorite dish of little Crispin; from her neighbor, Tasio, she got a fillet of wild boar and a wild duck's thigh for Basilio, and she chose and cooked the whitest rice on the threshing-floor.

Alas! the father arrived. Good-by to the dinner! He ate the rice, the fillet of wild boar, the duck's thigh, and the tomatoes. Sisa said nothing, happy to see her husband satisfied, and so much happier that, having eaten, he remembered he

had children and asked where they were. The poor mother smiled. She had promised herself to eat nothing—there was not enough left for three; but the father had thought of his sons, that was better than food.

Sisa, left alone, wept a little; but she thought of her children, and dried her tears. She cooked the little rice she had left, and the three sardines.

Attentive to every sound, she now sat listening: a footfall strong and regular, it was Basilio's; light and unsteady, Crispin's.

But the children did not come.

To pass the time, she hummed a song. Her voice was beautiful, and when her children heard her sing "Kundiman" they cried, without knowing why. To-night her voice trembled, and the notes came tardily.

She went to the door and scanned the road. A black dog was there, searching about. It frightened Sisa, and she threw a stone, sending the dog off howling.

Sisa was not superstitious, but she had so often heard of black dogs and presentiments that terror seized her. She shut the door in haste and sat down by the light. She prayed to the Virgin, to God Himself, to take care of her boys, and most for the little Crispin. Then, drawn away from prayer by her sole preoccupation, she thought no longer of aught but her children, of all their ways, which seemed to her so pleasing. Then the terror returned. Vision or reality, Crispin stood by the hearth, where he often sat to chatter to her. He said nothing, but looked at her with great, pensive eyes, and smiled.

"Mother, open! Open the door, mother!" said Basilio's voice outside.

Sisa shuddered, and the vision disappeared.

XV.

Basilio.

Life is a Dream.

Basilio had scarcely strength to enter and fall into his mother's arms. A strange cold enveloped Sisa when she saw him come alone. She wished to speak, but found no words; to caress her son, but found no force. Yet at the sight of blood on his forehead, her voice came, and she cried in a tone which seemed to tell of a breaking heartstring:

“My children!”

“Don't be frightened, mama; Crispin stayed at the convent.”

“At the convent? He stayed at the convent? Living?”

The child raised his eyes to hers.

“Ah!” she cried, passing from the greatest anguish to the utmost joy. She wept, embraced her child, covered with kisses his wounded forehead.

“And why are you hurt, my son? Did you fall?”

Basilio told her he had been challenged by the guard, ran, was shot at, and a ball had grazed his forehead.

“O God! I thank Thee that Thou didst save him!” murmured the mother.

She went for lint and vinegar water, and while she bandaged his wound:

“Why,” she asked, “did Crispin stay at the convent?”

Basilio looked at her, kissed her, then little by little told the story of the lost money; he said nothing of the torture of his little brother. Mother and child mingled their tears.

“Accuse my good Crispin! It’s because we are poor, and the poor must bear everything,” murmured Sisa. Both were silent a moment.

“But you have not eaten,” said the mother. “Here are sardines and rice.”

“I’m not hungry, mama; I only want some water.”

“Yes, eat,” said the mother. “I know you don’t like dry sardines, and I had something else for you; but your father came, my poor child.”

“My father came?” and Basilio instinctively examined his mother’s face and hands.

The question pained the mother; she sighed.

“You won’t eat? Then we must go to bed; it is late.”

Sisa barred the door and covered the fire. Basilio murmured his prayers, and crept on the mat near his mother, who was still on her knees. She was warm, he was cold. He thought of his little brother, who had hoped to sleep this night close to his mother’s side, trembling with fear in some dark corner of the convent. He heard his cries as he had heard them in the tower; but Nature soon confused his ideas and he slept.

In the middle of the night Sisa wakened him.

“What is it, Basilio? Why are you crying?”

“I was dreaming. O mama! it was a dream, wasn’t it? Say it was nothing but a dream!”

“What were you dreaming?”

He did not answer, but sat up to dry his tears.

“Tell me the dream,” said Sisa, when he had lain down again. “I cannot sleep.”

“It is gone now, mama; I don’t remember it all.”

Sisa did not insist: she attached no importance to dreams.

“Mama,” said Basilio after a moment of silence, “I’m not sleepy either. I had a project last evening. I don’t want to be a sacristan.”

“What?”

“Listen, mama. The son of Don Rafael came home from Spain to-day; he should be as kind as his father. Well, to-morrow I find Crispin, get my pay, and say I’m not going to be a sacristan. Then I’ll go see Don Crisóstomo and ask him to make me a buffalo-keeper. Crispin could go on studying with old Tasio. Tasio’s better than the curate thinks; I’ve often seen him praying in the church when no one else was there. What shall I lose in not being a sacristan? One earns little and loses it all in fines. I’ll be a herdsman, mama, and take good care of the cows and *carabaos*, and make my master love me; then perhaps he’ll let us have a cow to milk: Crispin loves milk. And I could fish in the rivers and go hunting when I get big. And by and by perhaps I could have a little land and sow sugar-cane. We could all live together, then. And old Tasio says Crispin is very bright. By and by we would send him to study at Manila, and I would work for him. Shall we, mama? He might be a doctor; what do you say?”

“What can I say, except that you are right,” answered Sisa, kissing her son.

Basilio went on with his projects, talking with the confidence of a child. Sisa said yes to everything. But little by little sleep came back to the child’s lids, and this time he did not cry in his dreams: that Ole-Luk-Oie, of whom Andersen tells us, unfurled over his head the umbrella with its lining of gay pictures. But the mother, past the age of careless slumbers, did not sleep.

XVI.

At the Manse.

It was seven o'clock when Brother Salvi finished his last mass. He took off his priestly robes without a word to any one.

"Look out!" whispered the sacristans; "it is going to rain fines! And all for the fault of those children!"

The father came out of the sacristy and crossed to the manse. On the porch six or seven women sat waiting for him, and a man was walking to and fro. The woman rose, and one bent to kiss his hand, but the priest made such a gesture of impatience that she stopped short.

"He must have lost a real miser," she cried mockingly, when he had passed. "This is something unheard of: refuse his hand to the zealous Sister Rufa?"

"He was not in the confessional this morning," said a toothless old woman, Sister Sipa. "I wanted to confess, so as to get some indulgences."

"I have gained three plenary indulgences," said a young woman of pleasing face, "and applied them all to the soul of my husband."

"You have done wrong," said Sister Rufa, "one plenary is enough; you should not squander the holy indulgences. Do as I do."

"I said to myself, the more there are the better," replied young sister Juana, smiling; "but what do you do?"

Sister Rufa did not respond at once; she chewed her *buyo*, and scanned her audience attentively; at length she decided to speak.

"Well, this is what I do. Suppose I gain a year of indulgences; I say: Blessed

Señor Saint Dominic, have the kindness to see if there is some one in purgatory who has need of precisely a year. Then I play heads or tails. If it falls heads, no; if tails, yes. If it falls heads, I keep the indulgence, and so I make groups of a hundred years, for which there is always use. It's a pity one can't loan indulgences at interest. But do as I do, it's the best plan."

At this point Sisa appeared. She said good morning to the women, and entered the manse.

"She's gone in, let us go too," said the sisters, and they followed her.

Sisa felt her heart beat violently. She did not know what to say to the curate in defence of her child. She had risen at daybreak, picked all the fine vegetables left in her garden, and arranged them in a basket with platane leaves and flowers, and had been to the river to get a fresh salad of *pakô*. Then, dressed in the best she had, the basket on her head, without waking her son, she had set out for the pueblo.

She went slowly through the manse, listening if by chance she might hear a well-known voice, fresh and childish. But she met no one, heard nothing, and went on to the kitchen.

The servants and sacristans received her coldly, scarcely answering her greetings.

"Where may I put these vegetables?" she asked, without showing offence.

"There—wherever you want to," replied the cook curtly.

Sisa, half-smiling, placed all in order on the table, and laid on top the flowers and the tender shoots of the *pakô*; then she asked a servant who seemed more friendly than the cook:

"Do you know if Crispin is in the sacristy?"

The servant looked at her in surprise.

"Crispin?" said he, wrinkling his brows; "isn't he at home?"

“Basilio is, but Crispin stayed here.”

“Oh, yes, he stayed, but he ran off afterward with all sorts of things he’d stolen. The curate sent me to report it at the quarters. The guards must be on their way to your house by this time.”

Sisa could not believe it; she opened her mouth, but her lips moved in vain.

“Go find your children,” said the cook. “Everybody sees you’re a faithful woman; the children are like their father!”

Sisa stifled a sob, and, at the end of her strength, sat down.

“Don’t cry here,” said the cook still more roughly, “the curate is ill; don’t bother him! Go cry in the street!”

The poor woman got up, almost by force, and went down the steps with the sisters, who were still gossiping of the curate’s illness. Once on the street she looked about uncertain; then, as if from a sudden resolution, moved rapidly away.

XVII.

Story of a Schoolmaster.

The lake, girt with hills, lies tranquil, as if it had not been shaken by yesterday's tempest. At the first gleam of light which wakes the phosphorescent spirits of the water, almost on the bounds of the horizon, gray silhouettes slowly take shape. These are the barks of fishermen drawing in their nets; *cascos* and *paraos* shaking out their sails.

From a height, two men in black are silently surveying the lake. One is Ibarra, the other a young man of humble dress and melancholy face.

"This is the place," said the stranger, "where the gravedigger brought us, Lieutenant Guevara and me."

Ibarra uncovered, and stood a long time as if in prayer.

When the first horror at the story of his father's desecrated grave had passed, he had bravely accepted what could not be undone. Private wrongs must go unavenged, if one would not add to the wrongs of the country: Ibarra had been trained to live for these islands, daughters of Spain. In his country, too, a charge against a monk was a charge against the Church, and Crisóstomo was a loyal Catholic; if he knew how in his mind to separate the Church from her unworthy sons, most of his fellow-countrymen did not. And, again, his intimate life was all here. The last of his race, his home was his family; he loved ideally, and he loved the goddaughter of the malevolent priest. He was rich, and therefore powerful still—and he was young. Ibarra had taken up his life again as he had found it.

His prayer finished, he warmly grasped the young man's hand.

"Do not thank me," said the other; "I owe everything to your father. I came here unknown; your father protected me, encouraged my work, furnished the poor

children with books. How far away that good time seems!”

“And now?”

“Ah! now we get along as best we can.”

Ibarra was silent.

“How many pupils have you?”

“More than two hundred on the list—in the classes, fifty-five.”

“And how is that?”

The schoolmaster smiled sadly.

“It is a long story.”

“Don’t think I ask from curiosity,” said Ibarra. “I have thought much about it, and it seems to me better to try to carry out my father’s ideas than to weep or to avenge his death. I wish to inspire myself with his spirit. That is why I ask this question.”

“The country will bless your memory, señor, if you carry out the splendid projects of your father. You wish to know the obstacles I meet? In a word, the plan of instruction is hopeless. The children read, write, learn by heart passages, sometimes whole books, in Castilian, without understanding a single word. Of what use is such a school to the children of our peasants!”

“You see the evil, what remedy do you propose?”

“I have none,” said the young man; “one cannot struggle alone against so many needs and against certain influences. I tried to remedy the evil of which I just spoke; I tried to carry out the order of the Government, and began to teach the children Spanish. The beginning was excellent, but one day Brother Dámaso sent for me. I went up immediately, and I said good-day to him in Castilian. Without replying, he burst into laughter. At length he said, with a sidelong glance: ‘What *buenos dias! buenos dias!* It’s very pretty. You know Spanish?’ and he began to laugh again.”

Ibarra could not repress a smile.

“You laugh,” said the teacher, “and I, too, now; but I assure you I had no desire to then. I started to reply, I don’t know what, but Brother Dámaso interrupted:

“‘Don’t wear clothes that are not your own,’ he said in Tagal; ‘be content to speak your own language. Do you know about Ciruela? Well, Ciruela was a master who could neither read nor write, yet he kept school.’ And he left the room, slamming the door behind him. What was I to do? What could I, against him, the highest authority of the pueblo, moral, political, and civil; backed by his order, feared by the Government, rich, powerful, always obeyed and believed. To withstand him was to lose my place, and break off my career without hope of another. Every one would have sided with the priest. I should have been called proud, insolent, no Christian, perhaps even anti-Spanish and *filibustero*. Heaven forgive me if I denied my conscience and my reason, but I was born here, must live here, I have a mother, and I abandoned myself to my fate, as a cadaver to the wave that rolls it.”

“And you lost all hope? You have tried nothing since?”

“I was rash enough to try two more experiments, one after our change of curates; but both proved offensive to the same authority. Since then I have done my best to convert the poor babies into parrots.”

“Well, I have cheerful news for you,” said Ibarra. “I am soon to present to the Government a project that will help you out of your difficulties, if it is approved.”

The school-teacher shook his head.

“You will see, Señor Ibarra, that your projects—I’ve heard something of them—will no more be realized than were mine!”

XVIII.

The Story of a Mother.

Sisa was running toward her poor little home. She had experienced one of those convulsions of being which we know at the hour of a great misfortune, when we see no possible refuge and all our hopes take flight. If then a ray of light illumine some little corner, we fly toward it without stopping to question.

Sisa ran swiftly, pursued by many fears and dark presentiments. Had they already taken her Basilio? Where had her Crispin hidden?

As she neared her home, she saw two soldiers coming out of the little garden. She lifted her eyes to heaven; heaven was smiling in its ineffable light; little white clouds swam in the transparent blue.

The soldiers had left her house; they were coming away without her children. Sisa breathed once more; her senses came back.

She looked again, this time with grateful eyes, at the sky, furrowed now by a band of *garzas*, those clouds of airy gray peculiar to the Philippines; confidence sprang again in her heart; she walked on. Once past those dreadful men, she would have run, but prudence checked her. She had not gone far, when she heard herself called imperiously. She turned, pale and trembling in spite of herself. One of the guards beckoned her.

Mechanically she obeyed: she felt her tongue grow paralyzed, her throat parch.

“Speak the truth, or we’ll tie you to this tree and shoot you,” said one of the guards.

Sisa could do nothing but look at the tree.

“You are the mother of the thieves?”

“The mother of the thieves?” repeated Sisa, without comprehending.

“Where is the money your sons brought home last night?”

“Ah! the money——”

“Give us the money, and we’ll let you alone.”

“Señores,” said the unhappy woman, gathering her senses again, “my boys do not steal, even when they’re hungry; we are used to suffering. I have not seen my Crispin for a week, and Basilio did not bring home a cuarto. Search the house, and if you find a réal, do what you will with us; the poor are not all thieves.”

“Well then,” said one of the soldiers, fixing his eyes on Sisa’s, “follow us!”

“I—follow you?” And she drew back in terror, her eyes on the uniforms of the guards. “Oh, have pity on me! I’m very poor, I’ve nothing to give you, neither gold nor jewelry. Take everything you find in my miserable cabin, but let me—let me—die here in peace!”

“March! do you hear? and if you don’t go without making trouble, we’ll tie your hands.”

“Let me walk a little way in front of you, at least,” she cried, as they laid hold of her.

The soldiers spoke together apart.

“Very well,” said one, “when we get to the pueblo, you may. March on now, and quick!”

Poor Sisa thought she must die of shame. There was no one on the road, it is true; but the air? and the light? She covered her face, in her humiliation, and wept silently. She was indeed very miserable; every one, even her husband, had abandoned her; but until now she had always felt herself respected.

As they neared the pueblo, fear seized her. In her agony she looked on all sides,

seeking some succor in nature—death in the river would be so sweet. But no! She thought of her children; here was a light in the darkness of her soul.

“Afterward,” she said to herself,—“afterward, we will go to live in the heart of the forest.”

She dried her eyes, and turning to the guards:

“We are at the pueblo,” she said. Her tone was indescribable; at once a complaint, an argument, and a prayer.

The soldiers took pity on her; they replied with a gesture. Sisa went rapidly forward, then forced herself to walk tranquilly.

A tolling of bells announced the end of the high mass. Sisa hastened, in the hope of avoiding the crowd from the church, but in vain. Two women she knew passed, looked at her questioningly; she bowed with an anguished smile, then, to avoid new mortifications, she fixed her eyes on the ground.

At sight of her people turned, whispered, followed with their eyes, and though her eyes were turned away, she divined, she felt, she saw it all. A woman who by her bare head, her dress, and her manners showed what she was, cried boldly to the soldiers:

“Where did you find her? Did you get the money?”

Sisa seemed to have taken a blow in the face. The ground gave way under her feet.

“This way!” cried a guard.

Like an automaton whose mechanism is broken she turned quickly, and, seeing nothing, feeling nothing but instinct, tried to hide herself. A gate was before her; she would have entered but a voice still more imperious checked her. While she sought to find whence the voice came, she felt herself pushed along by the shoulders. She closed her eyes, took two steps, then her strength left her and she fell.

It was the barracks. In the yard were soldiers, women, pigs, and chickens. Some

of the women were helping the men mend their clothes or clean their arms, and humming ribald songs.

“Where is the sergeant?” demanded one of the guards angrily. “Has the alférez been informed?”

A shrug of the shoulders was the sole response; no one would take any trouble for the poor woman.

Two long hours she stayed there, half mad, crouched in a corner, her face hidden in her hands, her hair undone. At noon the alférez arrived. He refused to believe the curate’s accusations.

“Bah! monks’ tricks!” said he; and ordered that the woman be released and the affair dropped.

“If he wants to find what he’s lost,” he added, “let him complain to the nuncio! That’s all I have to say.”

Sisa, who could scarcely move, was almost carried out of the barracks. When she found herself in the street, she set out as fast as she could for her home, her head bare, her hair loose, her eyes fixed. The sun, then in the zenith, burned with all his fire: not a cloud veiled his resplendent disc. The wind just moved the leaves of the trees; not a bird dared venture from the shade of the branches.

At length Sisa arrived. Troubled, silent, she entered her poor cabin, ran all about it, went out, came in, went out again. Then she ran to old Tasio’s, knocked at the door. Tasio was not there. The poor thing went back and commenced to call, “Basilio! Crispin!” standing still, listening attentively. An echo repeating her calls, the sweet murmur of water from the river, the music of the reeds stirred by the breeze, were the sole voices of the solitude. She called anew, mounted a hill, went down into a ravine; her wandering eyes took a sinister expression; from time to time sharp lights flashed in them, then they were obscured, like the sky in a tempest. One might have said the light of reason, ready to go out, revived and died down in turn.

She went back, and sat down on the mat where they had slept the night before—she and Basilio—and raised her eyes. Caught in the bamboo fence on the edge of

the precipice, she saw a piece of Basilio's blouse. She got up, took it, and examined it in the sunlight. There were blood spots on it, but Sisa did not seem to see them. She bent over and continued to look at this rag from her child's clothing, raised it in the air, bathing it in the brazen rays. Then, as if the last gleam of light within her had finally gone out, she looked straight at the sun, with wide-staring eyes.

At length she began to wander about, crying out strange sounds. One hearing her would have been frightened; her voice had a quality the human larynx would hardly know how to produce.

The sun went down; night surprised her. Perhaps Heaven gave her sleep, and an angel's wing, brushing her pale forehead, took away that memory which no longer recalled anything but griefs. The next day Sisa roamed about, smiling, singing, and conversing with all the beings of great Nature.



Three days passed, and the inhabitants of San Diego had ceased to talk or think of unhappy Sisa and her boys. Maria Clara, who, accompanied by Aunt Isabel, had just arrived from Manila, was the chief subject of conversation. Every one rejoiced to see her, for every one loved her. They marvelled at her beauty, and speculated about her marriage with Ibarra. On this evening, Crisóstomo presented himself at the home of his fiancée; the curate arrived at the same moment. The house was a delicious little nest among orange-trees and ylang-ylang. They found Maria by an open window, overlooking the lake, surrounded by the fresh foliage and delicate perfume of vines and flowers.

"The winds blow fresh," said the curate; "aren't you afraid of taking cold?"

"I don't feel the wind, father," said Maria.

"We Filipinos," said Crisóstomo, "find this season of autumn and spring together delicious. Falling leaves and budding trees in February, and ripe fruit in March, with no cold winter between, is very agreeable. And when the hot months come we know where to go."

The priest smiled, and the conversation turned to the pueblo and the festival of

its patron saint, which was near.

“Speaking of fêtes,” said Crisóstomo to the curate, “we hope you will join us in a picnic to-morrow, near the great fig-tree in the wood. The arrangements are all made as you wished, Maria. A small party is to start for the fishing-ground before sunrise,” he went on to the curate, “and later we hope to be joined by all our friends of the pueblo.”

The curate said he should be happy to come after his services were said. They chatted a few moments longer, and then Ibarra excused himself to finish giving his invitations and make his final arrangements.

As he left the house a man saluted him respectfully.

“Who are you?” asked Crisóstomo.

“You would not know my name, señor; I have been trying to see you for three days.”

“And what do you want?”

“Señor, my wife has gone mad, my children are lost, and no one will help me find them. I want your aid.”

“Come with me,” said Ibarra.

The man thanked him, and they disappeared together in the darkness of the unlighted streets.

XIX.

The Fishing Party.

The stars were yet brilliant in the sapphire vault, and in the branches the birds were still asleep when a merry party went through the streets of the pueblo, toward the lake, lighted by the glimmer of the pitch torches here called huepes.

There were five young girls, walking rapidly, holding each other by the hand or waist, followed by several elderly ladies, and servants bearing gracefully on their heads baskets of provisions. To see these girls' faces, laughing with youth, to judge by their abundant black hair flying free in the wind, and the ample folds of their garments, we might take them for divinities of the night fleeing at the approach of day; but they were Maria Clara and her four friends, the merry Sinang, her cousin, the calm Victoria, beautiful Iday, and pensive Neneng. They talked with animation, pinched each other, whispered in each other's ears, and pealed out merry rounds of laughter.

After a while there came to meet the party a group of young men, carrying torches of reeds. They were walking, silent, to the sound of a guitar.

When the two groups met, the girls became serious and grave. The men, on the contrary, talked, laughed, and asked six questions to get half a reply.

"Is the lake smooth? Do you think we shall have a fine day?" demanded the mamas.

"Don't be disturbed, señoras, I'm a splendid swimmer," said a tall, slim fellow, a merry-looking rascal with an air of mock gravity.

But they were already at the borders of the lake, and cries of delight escaped the lips of the women. They saw two great barks, bound together, picturesquely decked with garlands of flowers and various-colored festoons of fluffy drapery.

Little paper lanterns hung alternating with roses, pinks, pineapples, bananas, and guavas. Rudders and oars were decorated too, and there were mats, rugs, and cushions to make comfortable seats for the ladies. In the boat, most beautifully trimmed, were a harp, guitars, accordeons, and a carabao's horn; in the other burned a ship's fire; and tea, coffee and salabat—a tea of ginger sweetened with honey—were making for the first breakfast.

“The women here, the men there,” said the mamas, embarking; “move carefully, don't stir the boat or we shall capsize!”

“And we're to be in here all alone?” pouted Sinang.

Slowly the boats left the beach, reflecting in the mirror of the lake the many lights of their lanterns. In the east were the first streaks of dawn.

Comparative silence reigned. The separation established by the ladies seemed to have dedicated youth to meditation. The water was perfectly tranquil, the fishing-grounds were near; it was soon decided to abandon the oars, and breakfast. Day had come, and the lanterns were put out.

It was a beautiful morning. The light falling from the sky and reflected from the water made radiant the surface of the lake, and bathed everything in an atmosphere of clearness saturated with color, such as some marines suggest. Everybody, even the mamas, laughed and grew merry. “Do you remember, when we were girls—” they began to each other; and Maria and her young companions exchanged smiling glances.

One man alone remained a stranger to this gayety—it was the helmsman. Young, of athletic build, his melancholy eyes and the severe lines of his lips gave an interest to his face, and this was heightened by his long black hair falling naturally about his muscular neck. His wrists of steel managed like a feather the large and heavy oar which served as rudder to guide the two barks.

Maria Clara had several times met his eyes, but he quickly turned them away to the shores or the mountains. Pitying his solitude, she offered him some cakes. With a certain surprise he took one, refusing the others, and thanked her in a voice scarcely audible. No one else seemed to think of him.

The early breakfast done, the party moved off toward the fishing enclosures. There were two, a little distance apart, both the property of Captain Tiago. In advance, a flock of white herons could be seen, some moving among the reeds, some flying here and there, skimming the water with their wings, and filling the air with their strident cries. Maria Clara followed them with her eyes, as, at the approach of the two barks, they flew away from the shore.

“Do these birds have their nests in the mountains?” she asked the helmsman, less perhaps from the wish to know than to make the silent fellow talk.

“Probably, señora,” he replied, “but no one has ever yet seen them.”

“They have no nests, then?”

“I suppose they must have; if not, they are unhappy indeed.”

Maria Clara did not catch the note of sadness in his voice.

“Well?”

“They say, señora, that the nests of these birds are invisible, and have the power to render invisible whoever holds them; that as the soul can be seen only in the mirror of the eyes, so these nests can be seen only in the mirror of the water.”

Maria Clara became pensive. But they had come to the first baklad, as the enclosures are called. The old sailor in charge attached the boats to the reeds, while his son prepared to mount with lines and nets.

“Wait a moment,” cried Aunt Isabel, “the fish must come directly out of the water into the pan.”

“What, good Aunt Isabel!” said Albino reproachfully, “won’t you give the poor things a moment in the air?”

Andeng, Maria’s foster-sister, was a famous cook. She began to prepare rice water, the tomatoes, and the camias; the young men, perhaps to win her good graces, aided her, while the other girls arranged the melons, and cut paayap into cigarette-like strips.

To while away the time Iday took up the harp, the instrument most often played in this part of the islands. She played well, and was much applauded. Maria thanked her with a kiss.

“Sing, Victoria, sing the ‘Marriage Song,’” demanded the ladies. This is a beautiful Tagal elegy of married life, but sad, painting its miseries rather than its joys. The men clamored for it too, and Victoria had a lovely voice; but she was hoarse. So Maria Clara was begged to sing.

“All my songs are sad,” she said.

“Never mind,” said her companions, and without more urging she took the harp and sang in a rich and vibrant voice, full of feeling.

The chant ceased, the harp became mute; yet no one applauded; they seemed listening still. The young girls felt their eyes fill with tears; Ibarra seemed disturbed; the helmsman, motionless, was gazing far away.

Suddenly there came a crash like thunder. The women cried out and stopped their ears. It was Albino, filling with all the force of his lungs the carabao’s horn. There needed nothing more to bring back laughter, and dry tears.

“Do you wish to make us deaf, pagan?” cried Aunt Isabel.

“Señora,” he replied, “I’ve heard of a poor trumpeter who, from simply playing on his instrument, became the husband of a rich and noble lady.”

“So he did—the Trumpeter of Säckingen!” laughed Ibarra.

“Well,” said Albino, “we shall see if I am as happy!” and he began to blow again with still more force. There was a panic: the mamas attacked him hand and foot.

“Ouch! ouch!” he cried, rubbing his hurts; “the Philippines are far from the borders of the Rhine! For the same deed one is knighted, another put in the san-benito!”

At last Andeng announced the kettle ready for the fish.

The fisherman’s son now climbed the weir or “purse” of the enclosure. It was

almost circular, a yard across, so arranged that a man could stand on top to draw out the fish with a little net or with a line.

All watched him, some thinking they saw already the quiver of the little fishes and the shimmer of their silver scales.

The net was drawn up; nothing in it; the line, no fish adorned it. The water fell back in a shower of drops, and laughed a silvery laugh. A cry of disappointment escaped from every mouth.

“You don’t understand your business,” said Albino, climbing up by the young man; and he took the net. “Look now! Ready, Andeng!”

But Albino was no better fisherman. Everybody laughed.

“Don’t make a noise, you’ll drive away the fish. The net must be broken.” But every mesh was intact.

“Let me try,” said Léon, the fiancée of Iday. “Are you sure no one has been here for five days?”

“Absolutely sure.”

“Then either the lake is enchanted or I draw out something.”

He cast the line, looked annoyed, dragged the hook along in the water and murmured:

“A crocodile!”

“A crocodile!”

The word passed from mouth to mouth amid general stupefaction.

“What’s to be done?”

“Capture him!”

But nobody offered to go down. The water was deep.

“We ought to drag him in triumph at our stern,” said Sinang; “he has eaten our fish!”

“I’ve never seen a crocodile alive,” mused Maria Clara.

The helmsman got up, took a rope, lithely climbed the little platform, and in spite of warning cries dived into the weir. The water, troubled an instant, became smooth; the abyss closed mysteriously.

“Heaven!” cried the women, “we are going to have a catastrophe!”

The water was agitated: a combat seemed to be going on below. Above, there was absolute silence. Ibarra held his blade in a convulsive grasp. Then the struggle seemed to end, and the young man’s head appeared. He was saluted with joyous cries. He climbed the platform, holding in one hand an end of the rope. Then he pulled with all his strength, and the monster came in view. The rope was round its neck and the fore part of its body; it was large, and on its back could be seen green moss—to a crocodile what white hair is to man. It bellowed like an ox, beat the reeds with its tail, crouched, and opened its jaws, black and terrifying, showing its long and saw-like teeth. No one thought of aiding the helmsman. When he had drawn the reptile out of the water he put his foot on it, closed with his robust hand the redoubtable jaws, and tried to tie the muzzle. The creature made a last effort, arched its body, beat about with its powerful tail, and escaping, plunged outside the enclosure into the lake, dragging its vanquisher after it. The helmsman was a dead man. A cry of horror escaped from every mouth.

Like a flash, another body disappeared in the water. There scarce was time to see it was Ibarra’s. If Maria Clara did not faint, it was that the natives of the Philippines do not yet know how.

The waters grew red. Then the young fisherman leaped in, his father followed him. But they had scarcely disappeared, when Ibarra and the helmsman came to the surface, clinging to the crocodile’s body. Its white belly was lacerated, Ibarra’s knife was in the gorge.

Many arms stretched out to help the two young men from the water. The mamas, hysterical, wept, laughed, and prayed. Ibarra was unharmed. The helmsman had

a slight scratch on the arm.

“I owe you my life,” said he to Ibarra, who was being wrapped in mantles and rugs.

“You are too intrepid,” said Ibarra. “Another time do not tempt God.”

“If you had not come back!” murmured Maria Clara, pale and trembling.

The ladies did not approve of going to the second baklad; to their minds the day had begun ill; there could not fail to be other misfortunes; it were better to go home.

“But what misfortune have we had?” said Ibarra. “The crocodile alone has the right to complain.”

At length the mamas were persuaded, and the barks took their course toward the second baklad.

XX.

In the Woods.

There had not been much hope in this second baklad. Every one expected to find there the crocodile's mate; but the net always came up full. The fishing ended, the boats were turned toward the shore. There was the party of the townspeople whom Ibarra had invited to meet his guests of the morning, and lunch with them under improvised tents beside a brook, in the shade of the ancient trees of the wooded peninsula. Music was resounding in the place, and water sang in the kettles. The body of the crocodile, in tow of the boats, turned from side to side; sometimes presenting its belly, white and torn, sometimes its spotted back and mossy shoulders. Man, the favorite of nature, is little disturbed by his many fratricides.

The party dispersed, some going to the baths, some wandering among the trees. The silent young helmsman disappeared. A path with many windings crossed the thicket of the wood and led to the upper course of the warm brook, formed from some of the many thermal springs on the flanks of the Makiling. Along the banks of the stream grew wood flowers, many of which have no Latin names, but are none the less known to golden bugs, to butterflies, shaded, jewelled, and bronzed, and to thousands of coleopters powdered with gold and gleaming with facets of steel. The hum of these insects, the song of birds, or the dry sound of dead branches catching in their fall, alone broke the mysterious silence. Suddenly the tones of fresh, young voices were added to the wood notes. They seemed to come down the brook.

"We shall see if I find a nest!" said a sweet and resonant voice. "I should like to see him without his seeing me. I should like to follow him everywhere."

"I don't believe in heron's nests," said another voice; "but if I were in love, I should know how at once to see and to be invisible."

It was Maria Clara, Victoria, and Sinang walking in the brook. Their eyes were on the water, where they were searching for the mysterious nest. In blouses striped with dainty colors, their full bath skirts wet to the knees, outlining the graceful curves of their bodies, they moved along, seeking the impossible, meanwhile picking flowers along the banks. Soon the little stream bent its course, and the tall reeds hid the charming trio and cut off the sound of their voices.

A little farther on, in the middle of the stream, was a sort of bath, well enclosed, its roof of leafy bamboo; palm leaves, flowers, and streamers decked its sides. From here, too, came girls' voices. Farther on was a bamboo bridge, and beyond that the men were bathing, while a multitude of servants were busy plucking fowls, washing rice, roasting pigs. In the clearing on the opposite bank a group of men and women had formed under a great canvas roof, attached in part to the branches of the ancient trees, in part to pickets. There chatted the curate, the alférez, the vicar, the gobernadorcillo, the lieutenant, all the chief men of the town, including the famous orator, Captain Basilio, father of Sinang and opponent of Don Rafael Ibarra in a lawsuit not yet ended.

"We dispute a point at law," Crisóstomo had said in inviting him, "but to dispute is not to be enemies," and the famous orator had accepted the invitation.

Bottles of lemonade were opened and green cocoanut shells were broken, so that those who came from the baths might drink the fresh water; the girls were given wreaths of ylang-ylang and roses to perfume their unbound hair.

The lunch hour came. The curate, the alférez, the gobernadorcillo, some captains, and the lieutenant sat at a table with Ibarra. The mamas allowed no men at the table with the girls.

"Have you learned anything, señor alférez, about the criminal who attacked Brother Dámaso?" said Brother Salvi.

"Of what criminal are you speaking?" asked the alférez, looking at the father over his glass of wine.

"What? Why, the one who attacked Brother Dámaso on the highway day before yesterday."

“Father Dámaso has been attacked?” asked several voices.

“Yes; he is in bed yet. It is thought the maker of the assault is Elias, the one who threw you into the swamp some time ago, señor alférez.”

The alférez reddened with shame, if it were not from emptying his glass of wine.

“But I supposed you were informed,” the curate went on; “I said to myself that the alférez of the Municipal Guard——”

The officer bit his lip.

At that moment a woman, pale, thin, miserably dressed, appeared, like a phantom, in the midst of the feast.

“Give the poor woman something to eat,” said the ladies.

She kept on toward the table where the curate was seated. He turned, recognized her, and the knife fell from his hand.

“Give the woman something to eat,” ordered Ibarra.

“The night is dark and the children are gone,” murmured the poor woman. But at sight of the alférez she became frightened and ran, disappearing among the trees.

“Who is it?” demanded several voices.

“Isn’t her name Sisa?” asked Ibarra with interest.

“Your soldiers arrested her,” said the lieutenant to the alférez, with some bitterness; “they brought her all the way across the pueblo for some story about her sons that nobody could clear up.”

“What!” demanded the alférez, turning to the curate. “It is perhaps the mother of your sacristans?”

The curate nodded assent.

“They have disappeared, and there hasn’t been the slightest effort to find them,” said Don Filipo severely, looking at the gobernadorcillo, who lowered his eyes.

“Bring back the woman,” Crisóstomo ordered his servants.

“They have disappeared, did you say?” demanded the alférez. “Your sacristans have disappeared, Father Salvi?”

The curate emptied his glass and made another affirmative sign.

“Ho, ho! father,” cried the alférez with a mocking laugh, rejoiced at the prospect of revenge. “Your reverence loses a few pesos, and my sergeant is routed out to find them; your two sacristans disappear, your reverence says nothing; and you also, señor gobernadorcillo, you also——”

He did not finish, but broke off laughing, and buried his spoon in the red flesh of a papaw.

The curate began with some confusion:

“I was responsible for the money.”

“Excellent reply, reverend pastor of souls!” interrupted the alférez, his mouth full. “Excellent reply, holy man!”

Ibarra was on the point of interfering, but the priest recovered himself.

“Do you know, señor alférez,” he asked, “what is said about the disappearance of these children? No? Then ask your soldiers.”

“What!” cried the alférez, thus challenged, abandoning his mocking tone.

“They say that on the night when they disappeared shots were heard in the pueblo.”

“Shots?” repeated the alférez, looking at the faces around him. There were several signs of assent.

Brother Salvi went on with a sarcastic smile:

“Come! I see that you do not know how to arrest criminals, that you are unaware of what your soldiers do, but that you are ready to turn yourself into a preacher

and teach others their duty.”

“Señores,” interrupted Ibarra, seeing the alférez grow pale, “I wish to know what you think of a project I’ve formed. I should like to give the mother into the care of a good physician. I’ve promised the father to try to find his children.”

The return of the servants without Sisa gave a new turn to the conversation. The luncheon was finished. While the tea and coffee were being served the guests separated into groups, the elders to play cards or chess, while the girls, curious to learn their destiny, posed questions to the “Wheel of Fortune.”

“Come, Señor Ibarra!” cried Captain Basilio, a little gayer than usual; “we’ve had a case in court for fifteen years and no judge is able to solve it; let’s see if we cannot end it at chess.”

“In a moment, with great pleasure,” said Ibarra; “the alférez is leaving us.”

As soon as the officer had gone the men grouped around the two players. It was to be an interesting game. The elder ladies meanwhile had surrounded the curate, to talk with him of the things of religion; but Brother Salvi seemed to judge the time unfitting and made but vague replies, his rather irritated glance being directed almost everywhere except toward his questioners.

The chess players began with much solemnity.

“If the game is a tie, the affair is forgotten!” said Ibarra.

In the midst of the play he received a despatch. His eyes shone and he became pale, but he put the message in his pocket without opening it.

“Check!” he cried. Captain Basilio had no recourse but to hide his king behind the queen.

“Check!” said Ibarra, threatening with his castle.

Captain Basilio asked a moment to reflect.

“Willingly,” said Ibarra; “I, too, should like a moment,” and excusing himself he went toward the group round the “Wheel of Fortune.”

Iday had the disc on which were the forty-eight questions, Albino the book of replies.

“Ask something,” they all cried to Ibarra, as he came up. “The one who has the best answer is to receive a present from the others.”

“And who has had the best so far?”

“Maria Clara!” cried Sinang. “We made her ask whether her lover is constant and true, and the book said——”

But Maria, all blushes, put her hand over Sinang’s mouth.

“Give me the ‘Wheel’ then,” said Crisóstomo, smiling. And he asked:

“Shall I succeed in my present undertaking?”

“What a stupid question!” pouted Sinang.

The corresponding answer was found in the book. “‘Dreams are dreams,’” read Albino.

Ibarra brought out his telegram and opened it, trembling.

“This time your wheel lies!” he cried. “Read!”

“‘Project for school approved.’ What does that mean?” they asked.

“This is my present,” said he, giving the despatch to Maria Clara. “I’m to build a school in the pueblo; the school is my offering.” And the young fellow ran back to his game of chess.

After making this present to his fiancée, Ibarra was so happy that he played without reflection, and, thanks to his many false moves, the captain re-established himself, and the game was a draw. The two men shook hands with effusion.

While they were thus making an end of the long and tedious suit, the sudden appearance of a sergeant and four armed guards, bayonets fixed, broke rudely in

upon the merry-makers.

“Whoever stirs is a dead man!” cried the sergeant.

In spite of this bluster, Ibarra went up to him and asked what he wanted.

“We want a criminal named Elias, who was your helmsman this morning,” replied the officer, still threatening.

“A criminal? The helmsman? You must be mistaken.”

“No, señor, this Elias is accused of having raised his hand against a priest. You admit questionable people to your fêtes.”

Ibarra looked him over from head to foot and replied with great coldness.

“I am in no way accountable to you for my actions. Every one is welcome at my fêtes.” And he turned away.

The sergeant, finding he was making no headway, ordered his men to search on all sides. They had the helmsman’s description on paper.

“Notice that this description answers well for nine-tenths of the natives,” said Don Filipo; “see that you make no mistakes!”

Quiet came back little by little. There were no end of questions.

“So this is the Elias who threw the alférez into the swamp,” said Léon.

“He’s a tulisane then?” asked Victoria, trembling.

“I think not, for I know that he once fought against the tulisanes.”

“He hasn’t the face of a criminal,” said Sinang.

“No; but his face is very sad,” said Maria. “I did not see him smile all the morning.”

The day was ending, and in the last rays of the setting sun everybody left the wood, passing in silence the tomb of Ibarra’s ancestor. Farther on conversation

again became animated, gay, full of warmth, under these branches little used to merry-making. But the trees appeared sad, and the swaying bindweed seemed to say: “Adieu, youth! Adieu, dream of a day!”

XXI.

With the Philosopher.

The next morning, Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra, after visiting his land, turned his horse toward old Tasio's.

Complete quiet reigned in the old man's garden; scarcely did the swallows make a sound as they flew round the roof. The old walls of the house were mossy, and ivy framed the windows. It seemed the abode of silence.

Ibarra tied his horse, crossed the neat garden, almost on tiptoe, and entered the open door. He found the old man in his study, surrounded by his collections of insects and leaves, his maps, manuscript, and books. He was writing, and so absorbed in his work that he did not notice the entrance of Ibarra until the young man, loath to disturb him, was leaving as quietly as he had come.

"What! you were there?" he cried, looking at Crisóstomo with a certain astonishment.

"Don't disturb yourself; I see you are busy——"

"I was writing a little, but it is not at all pressing. Can I be of service to you?"

"Of great service," said Ibarra, approaching; "but—you are deciphering hieroglyphics!" he exclaimed in surprise, catching sight of the old man's work.

"No, I'm writing in hieroglyphics."

"Writing in hieroglyphics? And why?" demanded the young man, doubting his senses.

"So that no one can read me."

Ibarra looked at him attentively, wondering if he were not a little mad after all.

“And why do you write if you do not wish to be read?”

“I write not for this generation, but for future ages. If the men of to-day could read my books, they would burn them; the generation that deciphers these characters will understand, and will say: ‘Our ancestors did not all sleep.’ But you have something to ask of me, and we are talking of other things.”

Ibarra drew out some papers.

“I know,” he said, “that my father greatly valued your advice, and I have come to ask it for myself.”

And he briefly explained his project for the school, unrolling before the stupefied philosopher plans sent from Manila. “Whom shall I consult first, in the pueblo, whose support will avail me most? You know them all, I am almost a stranger.”

Old Tasio examined with tearful eyes the drawings before him.

“You are going to realize my dream,” he said, greatly moved; “the dream of a poor fool. And now the first advice I give you is never to ask advice of me.”

Ibarra looked at him in surprise.

“Because, if you do,” he continued with bitter irony, “all sensible people will take you for a fool, too. For all sensible people think those who differ with them fools; they think me one, and I am grateful for it, because the day they see in me a reasonable being woe is me! That day I shall lose the little liberty I now enjoy at the expense of my reputation. The gobernadorcillo passes with them for a wise man because having learned nothing but to serve chocolate and to suffer the caprices of Brother Dámaso, he is now rich and has the right to trouble the life of his fellow-citizens. ‘There is a man of talent!’ says the crowd. ‘He has sprung from nothing to greatness.’ But perhaps I am really the fool and they are the wise men. Who can say?”

And the old man shook his head as though to dismiss an unwelcome thought.

“The second thing I advise is to consult the curate, the gobernadorcillo, all the people of position in the pueblo. They will give you bad advice, unintelligible, useless. But to ask advice is not to follow it. All you need is to make it understood that you are working in accordance with their ideas.”

Ibarra reflected, then replied:

“No doubt your counsel is good, but it is very hard to take. May I not offer my own ideas to the light of day? Cannot the good make its way anywhere? Has truth need of the dross of error?”

“No one likes the naked truth,” replied the old man. “It is good in theory, easy in the ideal world of which youth dreams. You say you are a stranger to your country; I believe it. The day that you arrived here, you began by wounding the self-esteem of a priest. God grant this seemingly small thing has not decided your future. If it has, all your efforts will break against the convent walls, without disturbing the monk, swaying his girdle, or making his robe tremble. The alcalde, under one pretext or another, will deny you to-morrow what he grants you to-day; not a mother will let her child go to your school, and the result of all your efforts will be simply negative.”

“I cannot help feeling your fears exaggerated,” said Ibarra. “In spite of all you say, I cannot believe in this power; but even admitting it to be so great, the most intelligent of the people would be on my side, and also the Government, which is animated by the best intentions, and wishes the veritable good of the Philippines.”

“The Government! the Government!” murmured the philosopher, raising his eyes. “However great its desire to better the country, however generous may have been the spirit of the Catholic kings, the Government sees, hears, judges nothing more than the curate or the provincial gives it to see, hear, or judge. The Government is convinced that its tranquillity comes through the monks; that if it is upheld, it is because they uphold it; that if it live, is it because they consent to let it, and that the day when they fail it, it will fall like a manikin that has lost its base. The monks hold the Government in hand by threatening a revolt of the people they control; the people, by displaying the power of the Government. So long as the Government has not an understanding with the country, it will not free itself from this tutelage. The Government looks to no vigorous future; it’s an

arm, the head is the convent. Through its inertia, it allows itself to be dragged from abyss to abyss; its existence is no more than a shadow. Compare our system of government with the systems of countries you have visited——”

“Oh!” interrupted Ibarra, “that is going far. Let us be satisfied that, thanks to religion and the humanity of our rulers, our people do not complain, do not suffer like those of other countries.”

“The people do not complain because they have no voice; if they don’t revolt, it is because they are lethargic; if you say they do not suffer, it is because you have not seen their heart’s blood. But the day will come when you will see and hear. Then woe to those who base their strength on ignorance and fanaticism; woe to those who govern through falsehood, and work in the night, thinking that all sleep! When the sun’s light shows the sham of all these phantoms, there will be a frightful reaction; all this strength conserved for centuries, all this poison distilled drop by drop, all these sighs strangled, will find the light and the air. Who pay these accounts which the people from time to time present, and which History preserves for us in its bloody pages?”

“God will never permit such a day to come!” replied Ibarra, impressed in spite of himself. “The Filipinos are religious, and they love Spain. There are abuses, yes, but Spain is preparing reforms to correct them; her projects are now ripening.”

“I know; but the reforms which come from the head are annulled lower down, thanks to the greedy desire of officials to enrich themselves in a short time, and to the ignorance of the people, who accept everything. Abuses are not to be corrected by royal decrees, not where the liberty of speech, which permits the denunciation of petty tyrants, does not exist. Projects remain projects; abuses, abuses. Moreover, if by chance some one coming to occupy an office begins to show high and generous ideas, immediately he hears on all sides—while to his back he is held a fool: ‘Your Excellency does not know the country, Your Excellency does not know the character of the Indians, Your Excellency will ruin them, Your Excellency will do well to consult this one and that one,’ and so forth, and so on. And as in truth His Excellency does not know the country, which hitherto he had supposed to be in America, and since, like all men, he has his faults and weaknesses, he allows himself to be convinced. Don’t ask for miracles; don’t ask that he who comes here a stranger to make his fortune should interest himself in the welfare of the country. What does it mean to him, the

gratitude or the execration of a people he does not know, among whom he has neither attachments nor hopes? To make glory sweet to us, its plaudits must resound in the ears of those we love, in the atmosphere of our home, of the country that is to preserve our ashes; we wish this glory seated on our tomb, to warm a little with its rays the cold of death, to keep us from being reduced to nothingness quite. But we wander from the question.”

“It is true I did not come to argue this point; I came to ask advice, and you tell me to bow before grotesque idols.”

“Yes, and I repeat it; you must either lower your head or lose it.”

“Lower my head or lose it!” repeated Ibarra, thoughtful. “The dilemma is hard. Is it impossible to reconcile love of my country and love of Spain? Must one abase himself to be a good Christian; prostitute his conscience to achieve a good work? I love my country; I love Spain; I am a Catholic, and keep pure the faith of my fathers; but I see in all this no reason for delivering myself into the hands of my enemies.”

“But the field where you would sow is in the keeping of your enemies. You must begin by kissing the hand which——”

Ibarra did not let him finish.

“Kiss their hands! You forget that among them are those who killed my father and tore his body from the grave; but I, his son, do not forget, and if I do not avenge, it is because of my allegiance to religion!”

The old philosopher lowered his eyes.

“Señor Ibarra,” he said slowly, “if you are going to keep the remembrance of these things, things I cannot counsel you to forget, abandon this enterprise and find some other means of benefiting your compatriots. This work demands another man.”

Ibarra saw the force of these words, but he could not give up his project. The remembrance of Maria Clara was in his heart; he must make good his offering to her.

“If I go on, does your experience suggest nothing but this hard road?” he asked in a low voice.

Old Tasio took his arm and led him to the window. A fresh breeze was blowing, courier of the north wind. Below lay the garden.

“Why must we do as does that slender stalk, charged with buds and blossoms?” said the philosopher, pointing out a superb rose-tree. “The wind makes it tremble, and it bends, as if to hide its precious charge. If the stalk stood rigid, it would break, the wind would scatter the flowers, and the buds would die without opening. The gust of wind passed, the stalk rises again, proudly wearing her treasure. Who accuses her for having bowed to necessity? To lower the head when a ball whistles is not cowardice. What is reprehensible is defying the shot, to fall and rise no more.”

“And will this sacrifice bear the fruit I seek? Will they have faith in me? Can the priest forget his own offence? Will they sincerely aid me to spread that instruction which is sure to dispute with the convents the wealth of the country? Might they not feign friendship, simulate protection, and, underneath, wound my enterprise in the heel, that it fall more promptly than if attacked face to face? Admitting your views, one might expect anything.”

The old man reflected, then he said:

“If this happens, if the enterprise fails, you will have the consolation of having done what you could. Something will have been gained. Your example will embolden others, who fear only to commence.”

Ibarra weighed these reasonings, examined the situation, and saw that with all his pessimism the old man was right.

“I believe you,” he said, grasping his hand. “It was not in vain that I came to you for counsel. I will go straight to the curate, who, after all, may be a fair-minded man. They are not all like the persecutor of my father. I go with faith in God and man.”

He took leave of Tasio, mounted, and rode away, followed by the regard of the pessimistic old philosopher, who stood muttering to himself:

“We shall see, we shall see how the fates unroll the drama begun in the cemetery!”

This time the wise Tasio was wrong; the drama had begun long before.

XXII.

The Meeting at the Town Hall.

It was a room of twelve or fifteen by eight or ten yards. The whitewashed walls were covered with charcoal drawings, more or less ugly, more or less decent. In the corner were a dozen old shot-guns and some rusty swords, the arms of the cuadrilleros.

At one end, draped with soiled red curtains, was a portrait of His Majesty the King, and on the platform underneath an old fauteuil opened its worn arms; before this was a great table, daubed with ink, carved and cut with inscriptions and monograms, like the tables of a German students' inn. Lamé chairs and tottering benches completed the furniture.

In this hall meetings were held, courts sat, tortures were inflicted. At the moment the authorities of the pueblo and its vicinity were met there. The party of the old did not mingle with the party of the young; the two represented the Conservatives and Liberals.

"My friends," Don Filipo, the chief of the Liberals, was saying to a little group, "we shall vanquish the old men this time; I'm going to present their plan myself, with exaggerations, you may imagine."

"What are you saying?" demanded his surprised auditors.

"Listen," said Don Filipo. "This morning I ran across old Tasio. He said to me: 'Your enemies are more opposed to your person than to your ideas. Is there something you don't want to have go through? Propose it yourself. If it's as desirable as a mitre, they will reject it. Then let the most modest young fellow among you present what you really want. To humiliate you, your enemies will help to carry it.' Hush! Keep the secret."

The gobernadorcillo had come in. Conversation ceased, all took places, and silence reigned.

The captain, as the gobernadorcillo is called, sat down in the chair under the king's portrait. His look was harried. He coughed, passed his hand over his cranium, coughed again, and at length began in a failing voice:

“Señores, I've taken the risk of convening you all—hem, hem!—because we are to celebrate, the twelfth of this month, the feast of our patron, San Diego—hem, hem!”

At this point of his discourse a cough, dry and regular, reduced him to silence.

Then from among the elders arose Captain Basilio:

“Will your honors permit me,” said he, “to speak a word under these interesting circumstances? I speak first, though many of those present have more right than I, but the things I have to say are of such importance that they should neither be left aside nor said last, and for that reason I wish to speak first, to give them the place they merit. Your honors will, then, permit me to speak first in this assembly, where I see very distinguished people, like the señor, the present gobernadorcillo; his predecessor, my distinguished friend, Don Valentine; his other predecessor, Don Julio; our renowned captain of the cuadrilleros, Don Melchior, and so many others, whom, for brevity, I will not mention, and whom you see here present. I entreat your honors to give me the floor before any one else speaks. Am I happy enough to have the assembly accede to my humble request?” And the speaker bowed respectfully, half smiling.

“You may speak, we shall hear you with pleasure!” cried his flattering friends, who held him a great orator. The old men hemmed with satisfaction and rubbed their hands.

Captain Basilio wiped the sweat from his brow and continued:

“Since your honors have been so kind and complaisant toward my humble self as to grant me the right of speech before all others here present, I shall profit by this permission, so generously accorded, and I shall speak. I imagine in my imagination that I find myself in the midst of the very venerable Roman senate

—senatus populusque Romanus, as we said in those good old times which, unhappily for humanity, will never come back,—and I will ask the patres conscripti—as the sage Cicero would say if he were in my place—I would ask them, since time presses, and time is golden as Solomon says, that in this important matter each one give his opinion clearly, briefly, and simply. I have done.”

And satisfied with himself and with the attention of the house the orator sat down, not without directing toward his friends a look which plainly said: “Ha! Did I speak well? Ha!”

“Now the floor belongs to any one who—hem!” said the gobernadorcillo, without being able to finish his sentence.

To judge by the general silence, no one wished to be one of the patres conscripti. Don Filipino profited thereby and rose.

The Conservatives looked at one another with significant nods and gestures.

“Señores, I will present my project for the fête,” he began.

“We cannot accept it!” said an uncompromising Conservative.

“We vote against it!” cried another adversary.

Don Filipino could not repress a smile.

“We have a budget of 3,500 pesos. With this sum we can assure a fête that will surpass any we have yet seen in our own province or in others.”

There were cries of “Impossible!” Such a pueblo spent 4,000 pesos; another, 5,000!

“Listen, señores, and you will be convinced,” continued Don Filipino, unshaken. “I propose that in the middle of the plaza we erect a grand theatre, costing 150 pesos.”

“Not enough! Say 160!”

“Observe, gentlemen, 200 pesos for the theatre. I propose that arrangements be made with the Comedy Company of Tondo for seven representations, seven consecutive evenings, at 200 pesos an evening. Seven representations, at 200 pesos each, makes 1,400 pesos. Observe, señor director, 1,400 pesos.”

Old and young looked at one another in surprise. Only those in the secret remained unmoved.

“I further propose magnificent fireworks; not those little rockets and crackers that amuse nobody but children and old maids, but great bombs, colossal rockets. I propose, then, 200 bombs at two pesos each, and 200 rockets at the same price. Observe, señores, 1,000 pesos for bombs and——”

The Conservatives could not contain themselves. They got up and conferred with one another.

“And further, to show our neighbors that we are not people who must count their expenditures, I propose, first, four great preachers for the two feast days; second, that each day we throw into the lake 200 roasted fowls, 100 stuffed capons, and 50 sucking pigs, as did Sylla, contemporary of Cicero, to whom Captain Basilio alluded.”

“That’s it! Like Sylla!” repeated Captain Basilio, flattered.

The astonishment grew.

“As many rich people will come to the fêtes, each bringing thousands of pesos and his best cocks, I propose fifteen days of the galleria, the liberty of open gaming houses——”

Cries rising from all sides drowned his voice; there was a veritable tumult. The gobernadorcillo, more crushed than ever, did nothing to quell it; he waited for order to establish itself.

Happily Captain Valentine, most moderate of the Conservatives, rose and said:

“What the lieutenant proposes seems to us extravagant. So many bombs and so much comedy could only be proposed by a young man, like the lieutenant, who could pass all his evenings at the theatre and hear countless detonations without

becoming deaf. And what of these fowls thrown into the lake? Why should we imitate Sylla and the Romans? Did they ever invite us to their fêtes? I'm an old man, and I've never received any summons from them!"

"The Romans live at Rome with the Pope," Captain Basilio whispered.

This did not disconcert Don Valentine.

"At all events," he went on, "the project is inadmissible, impossible; it's a folly!"

Don Filippo must needs retire his project.

Satisfied with the defeat of their enemy, the Conservatives were not displeased to see another young man rise, the municipal head of a group of fifty or sixty families, known as a balangay.

He modestly excused himself for speaking. With delicate blandishments he referred to the "ideas so elegantly expressed by Captain Basilio," upon which the delighted captain made signs to show him how to gesture and to change position: then he unfolded his project: to have something absolutely new, and to spend the 3,500 pesos in such a way as to benefit their own province.

"That's it!" interrupted the young men; "that's what we want!"

What did they care about seeing the King of Bohemia cut off the heads of his daughters! They were neither kings nor barbarians, and if they did such things themselves, would be hung high on the field of Bagumbayan. He proposed that two native plays be given which dealt with the manners of the times. There were two he had in mind, works of their best writers. They demanded only native costumes, and could be played by amateurs of talent, of whom the province had no lack.

"A good idea!" some of the Conservatives began to murmur.

"I'll pay for the theatre!" cried Captain Basilio, with enthusiasm.

"Accepted! Accepted!" cried numerous voices. The young man went on:

"A part of the money taken at the theatre might be distributed in prizes: to the

best pupil in the school, the best shepherd, the best fisherman. We might have boat races, and games, and fireworks, of course.”

Almost all were agreed, though some talked about “innovations.”

When silence was established, only the decision of the gobernadorcillo was wanting.

The poor man passed his hand across his forehead, he fidgeted, he perspired; finally he stammered, lowering his eyes:

“I also; I approve; but, hem!”

The assembly listened in silence.

“But——” demanded Captain Basilio.

“I approve entirely,” repeated the functionary, “that is to say, I do not approve; I say yes, but——”

He rubbed his eyes with the back of his hand.

“But,” continued the unhappy man, coming to the point at last, “the curate wants something else.”

“Is the curate to pay for the festival? Has he given even a cuarto?” cried a penetrating voice.

Every one turned. It was Tasio. The lieutenant remained immovable, his eyes on the gobernadorcillo.

“And what does the curate want?” demanded Don Basilio.

“The curate wants six processions, three sermons, three solemn masses, and if any money is left, a comedy with songs between the acts.”

“But we don’t want it!” cried the young men and some of their elders.

“The curate wishes it,” repeated the gobernadorcillo, “and I’ve promised that his wishes shall be carried out.”

“Then why did you call us together?” asked one, impatient.

“Why didn’t you say so in the beginning?” demanded another.

“I wished to, señores, but, Captain Basilio, I did not have a chance. We must obey the curate!”

“We must obey!” repeated some of the Conservatives.

Don Filipo approached the gobernadorcillo and said bitterly:

“I sacrificed my pride in a good cause; you sacrifice your manliness in a bad one; you spoil every good thing that might be done!”

Ibarra said to the schoolmaster:

“Have you any commission for the capital? I leave immediately.”

On the way home the old philosopher said to Don Filipo, who was cursing his fate:

“The fault is ours. You didn’t protest when they gave you a slave for mayor, and I, fool that I am, forgot about him!”

XXIII.

The Eve of the Fête.

It is the 10th of November, the eve of the fête. The pueblo of San Diego is stirred by an incredible activity; in the houses, the streets, the church, the gallera, all is unwonted movement. From windows flags and rugs are hanging; the air, resounding with bombs and music, seems saturated with gayety. Inside on little tables covered with bordered cloths the dalaga arranges in jars of tinted crystal the confitures made from the native fruits. Servants come and go; orders, whispers, comments, conjectures are everywhere. And all this activity and labor are for guests as often unknown as known; the stranger, the friend, the Filipino, the Spaniard, the rich man, the poor man, will be equally fortunate; and no one will ask his gratitude, nor even demand that he speak well of his host till the end of his dinner.

The red covers which all the year protect the lamps are taken off, and the swinging prisms and crystal pendants strike out harmonies from one another and throw dancing rainbow colors on the white walls. The glass globes, precious heirlooms, are rubbed and polished; the dainty handiwork of the young girls of the house is brought out. Floors shine like mirrors, curtains of piña or silk just ornament the doors, and in the windows hang lanterns of crystal or of colored paper. The vases on the Chinese pedestals are heaped with flowers, the saints themselves in their reliquaries are dusted and wreathed with blossoms.

At intervals along the streets rise graceful arches of reed; around the parvis of the church is the costly covered passageway, supported by trunks of bamboos, under which the procession is to pass, and in the centre of the plaza rises the platform of the theatre, with its stage of reed, of nipa, or of wood. The native pyrotechnician, who learns his art from no one knows what master, is getting ready his castles, balloons, and fiery wheels; all the bells of the pueblo are ringing gaily. There are sounds of music in the distance, and the gamins run to

meet the bands and give them escort. In comes the fanfare with spirited marches, followed by the ragged and half-naked urchins, who, the moment a number is ended, know it by heart, hum it, whistle it with wonderful accuracy, and are ready to pass judgment on it.

Meanwhile the people of the mountains, the kasamà, in gala dress, bring down to the rich of the pueblo wild game and fruits, and the rarest plants of the woods, the biga, with its great leaves, and the tikas-tikas, whose flaming flowers will ornament the doorways of the houses. And from all sides, in all sorts of vehicles, arrive the guests, known and unknown, many bringing with them their best cocks and sacks of gold to risk in the gallera, or on the green cloth.

“The alférez has fifty pesos a night,” a little plump man is murmuring in the ears of his guests. “Captain Tiago will hold the bank; Captain Joaquin brings eighteen thousand. There will be liam-pô; the Chinese Carlo puts up the game, with a capital of ten thousand. Sporting men are coming from Lipa and Batanzos and Santa Cruz. There will be big play! big play!—but will you take chocolate?—Captain Tiago won’t fleece us this year as he did last; and how is your family?”

“Very well, very well, thank you! And Father Dámaso?”

“The father will preach in the morning and be with us at the games in the evening.”

“He’s out of danger now?”

“Without question! Ah, it’s the Chinese who will let their hands go!” And in dumb show the little man counted money with his hands.

But the greatest animation of all was at the outskirts of the crowd, around a sort of platform a few paces from the home of Ibarra. Pulleys creaked, cries went up, one heard the metallic ring of stone-cutting, of nail-driving; a band of workmen were opening a long, deep trench; others were placing in line great stones from the quarries of the pueblo, emptying carts, dumping sand, placing capstans.

“This way! That’s it! Quick about it!” a little old man of intelligent and animated face was crying. It was the foreman, Señor Juan, architect, mason, carpenter, metalworker, stonecutter, and on occasions sculptor. To each stranger he

repeated what he had already said a thousand times.

“Do you know what we are going to build? A model school, like those of Germany, and even better. The plans were traced by Señor R——. I direct the work. Yes, señor, you see it is to be a palace with two wings, one for the boys, the other for the girls. Here in the centre will be a great garden with three fountains, and at the sides little gardens for the children to cultivate plants. That great space you see there is for playgrounds. It will be magnificent!” And the Señor Juan rubbed his hands, thinking of his fame to come. Soothed by its contemplation, he went back and forth, passing everything in review.

“That’s too much wood for a crane,” he said to a Mongol, who was directing a part of the work. “The three beams that make the tripod and the three joining them would be enough for me.”

“But not for me,” replied the Mongol, with a peculiar smile, “the more ornament, the more imposing the effect. You will see! I shall trim it, too, with wreaths and streamers. You will say in the end that you were right to give the work into my hands, and Señor Ibarra will have nothing left to desire.”

The man smiled still, and Señor Juan laughed and threw back his head.

In truth, Ibarra’s project had found an echo almost everywhere. The curate had asked to be a patron and to bless the cornerstone, a ceremony that was to take place the last day of the fête, and to be one of its chief solemnities. One of the most conservative papers of Manila had dedicated to Ibarra on its first page an article entitled, “Imitate Him!” He was therein called “the young and rich capitalist, already a marked man,” “the distinguished philanthropist,” “the Spanish Filipino,” and so forth. The students who had come from Manila for the fête were full of admiration for Ibarra, and ready to take him for their model. But, as almost always when we try to imitate a man who towers above the crowd, we ape his weaknesses, if not his faults, many of these admirers of Crisóstomo’s held rigorously to the tie of his cravat, or the shape of his collar; almost all to the number of buttons on his vest. Even Captain Tiago burned with generous emulation, and asked himself if he ought not to build a convent.

The dark presentiments of old Tasio seemed dissipated. When Ibarra said so to him, the old pessimist replied: “Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.”

Toward evening Captain Tiago arrived from Manila, bringing Maria Clara, in honor of the fête, a beautiful reliquary of gold, set with emeralds and diamonds, enshrining a splinter from the fishing-boat of St. Peter. Scarcely had he come when a party of Maria's friends came to take her out to see the streets.

"Go," said Captain Tiago, "but come back soon. Father Dámaso, you know, is to dine with us. You, too, Crisóstomo, must join us."

"With the greatest pleasure," stammered Ibarra, avoiding Maria Clara's eyes, "if I did not feel that I must be at home to receive whoever may come."

"Bring your friends here; there is always room at my table," said Captain Tiago, somewhat coldly. "I wish Father Dámaso and you to come to an understanding."

"There is yet time," said Ibarra, forcing a smile.

As they descended to the street, Aunt Isabel following, people moved aside to let them pass. Maria Clara was a vision of loveliness: her pallor had disappeared, and if her eyes remained pensive, her mouth seemed to know only smiles. With the amiability characteristic of happy young womanhood she saluted the people she had known as a child, and they smiled back their admiration. In these few days of freedom she had regained the frank friendliness, the gracious speech, which seemed to have slumbered inside the narrow walls of her convent. She felt a new, intense life within her, and everything without seemed good and beautiful. She showed her love for Ibarra with that maiden sweetness which comes from pure thoughts and knows no reason for false blushes.

At regular intervals in the streets were kindled great clustered lights with bamboo supports, like candelabra. People were beginning to illuminate their houses, and through the open windows one could see the guests moving about in the radiance among the flowers to the music of harp, piano, or orchestra. Outside, in gala costume, native or European, Chinese, Spaniards, and Filipinos were moving in all directions, escaping with difficulty the crush of carriages and calashes.

When the party reached Captain Basilio's house, Sinang saw them, and ran down the steps.

“Come up till I’m ready to go out with you,” she said. “I’m weary of all these strangers who talk of nothing but cocks and cards.”

The house was full of people. Many came up to greet Crisóstomo, and all admired Maria Clara. “Beautiful as the Virgin!” the old dames whispered, chewing their buyo.

Here they must take chocolate. As they were leaving, Captain Basilio said in Ibarra’s ear:

“Won’t you join us this evening? Father Dámaso is going to make up a little purse.”

Ibarra smiled and answered by a movement of the head, which might have meant anything.

Chatting and laughing, the merry party went on past the brilliantly illuminated houses. At length they came to one fast closed and dark. It was the home of the alférez. Maria was astonished.

“It’s that old sorceress. The Muse of the Municipal Guard, as Tasio calls her,” said Sinang. “Her house is in mourning because the people are gay.”

At a corner of the plaza, where a blind man was singing, an uncommon sight offered itself. A man stood there, miserably dressed, his head covered by a great salakot of palm leaves, which completely hid his face, though from its shadow two lights gleamed and went out fitfully. He was tall, and, from his figure, young. He pushed forward a basket, and after speaking some unintelligible words drew back and stood completely isolated. Women passing put fruit and rice into his basket, and at this he came forward a little, speaking what seemed to be his thanks.

Maria Clara felt the presence of some great suffering. “Who is it?” she asked Iday.

“It’s a leper. He lives outside the pueblo, near the Chinese cemetery; every one fears to go near him. If you could see his cabin! The wind, the rain, and the sun must visit him as they like.”

“Poor man!” murmured Maria Clara, and hardly knowing what she did, she went up and put into the basket the reliquary her father had just given her.

“Maria!” exclaimed her friends.

“I had nothing else,” she said, forcing back the tears.

“What will he do with the reliquary? He can’t sell it! Nobody will touch it now! If only it could be eaten!” said Sinang.

But the leper went to the basket, took the glittering thing in his hands, fell on his knees, kissed it, and bent his head to the ground, uncovering humbly. Maria Clara turned her face to hide the tears.

As the leper knelt, a woman crept up and knelt beside him. By her long, loose hair and emaciated face the people recognized Sisa. The leper, feeling her touch, sprang up with a cry; but, to the horror of the crowd, she clung to his arm.

“Pray! Pray!” said she. “It is the Feast of the Dead! These lights are the souls of men. Pray for my sons!”

“Separate them! Separate them!” cried the crowd; but no one dared do it.

“Do you see the light in the tower? That is my son Basilio, ringing the bells. Do you see that other in the manse? That is my son Crispin; but I cannot go to them, because the curate is ill, and his money is lost. I carried the curate fruit from my garden. My garden was full of flowers, and I had two sons. I had a garden, I tended my flowers, and I had two sons.”

And leaving the leper she moved away, singing:

“I had a garden and flowers. I had two sons, a garden and flowers.”

“What have you done for that poor woman?” Maria asked Ibarra.

“Nothing yet,” he replied, somewhat confused. “But don’t be troubled; the curate has promised to aid me.”

As they spoke, a soldier came dragging Sisa back, rather than leading her. She

was resisting.

“Where are you taking her? What has she done?” asked Ibarra.

“What has she done? Didn’t you hear the noise she made?” said the guardian of public tranquillity.

The leper took up his basket and vanished. Maria Clara asked to go home. She had lost all her gayety. Her sadness increased when, arrived at her door, her fiancé refused to go in.

“It must be so to-night,” he said as he bade her good-by.

Maria, mounting the steps, thought how tiresome were fête days, when one must receive so many strangers.

The next evening a little perfumed note came to Ibarra by the hand of Andeng, Maria’s foster sister.

“Crisóstomo, for a whole day I have not seen you. They tell me you are ill. I have lighted two candles and prayed for you. I’m so tired of being asked to play and dance. I did not know there were so many tiresome people in the world. If Father Dámaso had not tried to amuse me with stories, I should have left them all and gone away to sleep. Write me how you are, and if I shall send papa to see you. I send you Andeng now to make your tea; she will do it better than your servants. If you don’t come to-morrow, I shall not go to the ceremony.

MARIA CLARA.”

XXIV.

In the Church.

The orchestras sounded the reveille at the first rays of the sun, waking with joyous airs the tired inhabitants of the pueblo.

It was the last day of the fête—indeed, the fête itself. Every one expected much more than on the eve, when the Brothers of the Sacred Rosary had had their sermon and procession; for the Brothers of the Third Order were more numerous, and counted on humiliating their rivals. The Chinese candle merchants had reaped a rich harvest.

Everybody put on his gala dress; all the jewels came out of their coffers; the fops and sporting men wore rows of diamond buttons on their shirt fronts, heavy gold chains, and white jipijapa hats, as the Indians call Panamas. No one but old Tasio was in everyday costume.

“You seem even sadder than usual,” the lieutenant said to him. “Because we have so many reasons to weep, may we not laugh once in a while?”

“Yes, laugh, but not play the fool! It’s the same insane orgy every year, the same waste of money when there’s so much need and so much suffering! But I see! It’s the orgy, the bacchanal, that is to still the lamentations of the poor!”

“You know I share your opinion,” said Don Filipino, half serious, half laughing, “and that I defended it; but what can I do against the gobernadorcillo and the curate?”

“Resign!” cries the irate old man, leaving him.

“Resign!” muttered Don Filipino, going on toward the church. “Resign? Yes, certainly, if my post were an honor and not a charge.”

There was a crowd in the parvis, and men, women, and children in a stream were coming and going through the narrow doors of the church. The smell of powder mingled with that of flowers and incense. Rockets, bombs, and serpents made women run and scream and delighted the children. An orchestra was playing before the convent; bands accompanied dignitaries on their way to the church, or paraded the streets under innumerable floating and dipping flags. Light and color distracted the eye, music and explosions the ear.

High mass was about to be celebrated. Among the congregation were to be the chief alcalde of the province and other Spanish notables; and last, the sermon would be given by Brother Dámaso, who had the greatest renown as a preacher.

The church was crammed. People were jostled, crushed, trampled on, and cried out at each encounter. From far they stretched their arms to dip their fingers in the holy water, but getting nearer, saw its color, and the hands retired. They scarcely breathed; the heat and atmosphere were insupportable; but the preacher was worth the endurance of all these miseries; besides, his sermon was to cost the pueblo two hundred and fifty pesos. Fans, hats, and handkerchiefs agitated the air; children cried, and gave the sacristans a hard enough task getting them out.

Ibarra was in a corner. Maria Clara knelt near the high altar, where the curate had reserved a place for her. Captain Tiago, in frock coat, sat on the bench of authorities, and the children, who did not know him, taking him for another gobernadorcillo, dared not go near him.

At length the alcalde arrived with his suite. He came from the sacristy, and sat down in a splendid fauteuil, beneath which was spread a rich carpet. He was in full dress, and wore the cordon of Charles III., with four or five other decorations.

“Ha!” cried a countryman. “A citizen in fancy dress!”

“Imbecile!” replied his neighbor. “It’s Prince Villardo whom we saw last night in the play!” And the alcalde, in the character of giant-slayer, rose accordingly in the popular estimation.

Presently those seated arose, those sleeping awoke, the mass had begun. Brother

Salvi celebrated, attended by two Augustins. At length came the long-looked-for moment of the sermon. The three priests sat down, the alcalde and other notables followed them, the music ceased. The people made themselves as comfortable as possible, those who had no benches sitting outright on the pavement, or arranging themselves tailor fashion.

Preceded by two sacristans and followed by another monk, who bore a great book, Father Dámaso made his way through the crowd. He disappeared a moment in the spiral staircase of the pulpit, then his great head reappeared and his herculean bust. He looked over his audience, and, the review terminated, said to his companion, hidden at his feet:

“Attention, brother!”

The monk opened his book.

XXV.

The Sermon.

The first part of the sermon was to be in Castilian, the remainder in Tagalo. Brother Dámaso began slowly and in ordinary voice:

“Et spiritum tuum bonum dedisti qui docevet eos, et manna tuum non prohibuisti ab ore eorum, et aquam dedisti eis in siti. Words of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Esdras, Book II., chapter ix., verse 20.

“Most worshipful señor (to the alcalde), very reverend priests, brothers in Christ!”

Here an impressive pose and a new glance round the audience, then, his eyes on the alcalde, the father majestically extended his right hand toward the altar, slowly crossed his arms, without saying a word, and, passing from this calm to action, threw back his head, pointed toward the main entrance, and, impetuously cutting the air with the edge of his hand, began to speak in a voice strong, full, and resonant.

“Brilliant and splendid is the altar, wide the door, the air is the vehicle of the sacred word which shall spring from my lips. Hear, then, with the ears of the soul and the heart, that the words of the Lord may not fall on a stony ground, but that they may grow and shoot upward in the field of our seraphic father, St. Francis. You, sinners, captives of those Moors of the soul who infest the seas of the eternal life, in the doughty ships of the flesh and the world; you who row in the galleys of Satan, behold with reverent compunction him who redeems souls from the captivity of the demon—the intrepid Gideon, the courageous David, the victorious Roland of Christianity! the celestial guard, more valiant than all the civil guards of past and future. (The alférez frowned.) Yes, Señor Alférez, more valiant and more powerful than all! This conqueror, who, without other weapon than a wooden cross, vanquished the eternal tulisanes of darkness, and would

have utterly destroyed them were spirits not immortal. This marvel, this incredible phenomenon, is the blessed Diego of Alcalá!”

The “rude Indians,” as the correspondents say, fished out of this paragraph only the words civil guard, tulisane, San Diego, and San Francisco. They had noticed the grimace of the alférez and the militant gesture of the preacher, and had from this deduced that the father was angry with the guard for not pursuing the tulisanes, and that San Diego and San Francisco had taken upon themselves to do it. They were enchanted, not doubting that, the tulisanes once dispersed, St. Francis would also destroy the municipal guard. Their attention, therefore, redoubled.

The monk continued so long his eulogy of San Diego that his auditors, not even excepting Captain Tiago, began to yawn a little. Then he reproached them with living like the Protestants and heretics, who respect not the ministers of God; like the Chinese, for which condemnation be upon them!

“What is he telling us, the Palé Lámaso?” murmured the Chinese Carlos, looking angrily at the preacher, who went on improvising a series of apostrophes and imprecations.

“You will die in impenitence, race of heretics! Your punishment is already being meted out to you in jails and prisons. The family and its women should flee you; rulers should destroy you. If you have a member that causeth you to offend, cut it off and cast it into the fire!”

Brother Dámaso was nervous. He had forgotten his sermon and was improvising. Ibarra became restless; he looked about in search of some corner, but the church was full. Maria Clara no longer heard the sermon. She was analyzing a picture of the souls of the “Blessed in Purgatory.”

In the improvisation the monk who played the part of prompter lost his place and skipped some paragraphs. The text returned to San Diego, and with a long series of exclamations and contrasts the father brought to a close the first part of his sermon.

The second part was entirely improvised; not that Brother Dámaso knew Tagalog better than Castilian; but, considering the natives of the province entirely

ignorant of rhetoric, he did not mind making errors before them. Yet the second part of his discourse had for certain people graver consequences than the first.

He began with a “Maná capatir concristians,” “My Christian brothers,” followed by an avalanche of untranslatable phrases about the soul, sin, and the patron saint. Then he launched a new series of maledictions against lack of respect and growing irreligion. On this point he seemed to be inspired, and expressed himself with force and clearness. He spoke of sinners who die in prison without confession or the sacraments; of accursed families, of petty students, and of toy philosophers.

Ibarra listened and understood. He kept a calm exterior, but his eyes turned toward the bench of magistrates. No one seemed to pay attention; as to the alcalde, he was asleep.

The inspiration of the preacher increased. He spoke of the early times when every Filipino encountering a priest uncovered, knelt, and kissed his hand. Now, he said, there were those who, because they had studied in Manila or in Europe, thought fit to shake the hand of a priest instead of kissing it.

But in spite of the cries and gestures of the orator, by this time many of his auditors slept, and few listened. Some of the devout would have wept over the sins of the ungodly, but nobody joined them, and they were forced to give it up. A man seated beside an old woman went so sound asleep that he fell over against her. The good woman took her slipper and tried to waken him, at the same time crying out:

“Get away! Savage, animal, demon, carabao!”

Naturally this raised a tumult. The preacher elevated his brows, struck dumb by such a scandal; indignation strangled the words in his throat; he could only strike the pulpit with his fists. This had its effect. The old woman dropped the shoe and, still grumbling and signing herself, sank on her knees.

“Ah, ah, ah, ah!” the irate priest could at last articulate. “It is for this that I have preached to you all the morning! Savages! You respect nothing! Behold the work of the incontinence of the century!” And launched again upon this theme, he preached a half hour longer. The alcalde breathed loud. Maria Clara, having

studied all the pictures in sight, had dropped her head. Crisóstomo had ceased to be moved by the sermon. He was picturing a little house, high up among the mountains, with Maria Clara in the garden. Why concern himself with men, dragging out their lives in the miserable pueblos of the valley?

At length the sermon ended, and the mass went on. At the moment when all were kneeling and the priests bowed their heads at the “Incarnatus est,” a man murmured in Ibarra’s ear: “At the blessing of the cornerstone do not separate yourself from the curate; do not go down into the trench. Your life is at stake!”

It was the helmsman.

XXVI.

The Crane.

It was indeed not an ordinary crane that the Mongol had built for letting the enormous cornerstone of the school into the trench. The framework was complicated and the cables passed over extraordinary pulleys. Flags, streamers, and garlands of flowers, however, hid the mechanism. By means of a cleverly contrived capstan, the enormous stone held suspended over the open trench could be raised or lowered with ease by a single man.

“See!” said the Mongol to Señor Juan, inserting the bar and turning it. “See how I can manipulate the thing up here and unaided!”

Señor Juan was full of admiration.

“Who taught you mechanics?” he asked.

“My father, my late father,” replied the man, with his peculiar smile, “and Don Saturnino, the grandfather of Don Crisóstomo, taught him.”

“You must know then about Don Saturnino——”

“Oh, many things! Not only did he beat his workmen and expose them to the sun, but he knew how to awaken sleepers and put waking men to sleep. Ah, you will see presently what he could teach! You will see!”

On a table with Persian spread, beside the trench, were the things to be put into the cornerstone, and the glass box and leaden cylinder which were to preserve for the future these souvenirs, this mummy of an epoch.

Under two long booths near at hand were sumptuous tables, one for the school-children, without wine, and heaped with fruits; the other for the distinguished

visitors. The booths were joined by a sort of bower of leafy branches, where were chairs for the musicians, and tables with cakes, confitures, and carafes of water, for the public in general.

The crowd, gay in garments of many colors, was massed under the trees to avoid the ardent rays of the sun, and the children, to better see the ceremony of the dedication, had climbed up among the branches.

Soon bands were heard in the distance. The Mongol carefully examined his construction; he seemed nervous. A man with the appearance of a peasant standing near him on the edge of the excavation and close beside the capstan watched all his movements. It was Elias, well disguised by his salakot and rustic costume.

The musicians arrived, preceded by a crowd of old and young in motley array. Behind came the alcalde, the municipal guard officers, the monks, and the Spanish Government clerks. Ibarra was talking with the alcalde; Captain Tiago, the alférez, the curate and a number of the rich country gentlemen accompanied the ladies, whose gay parasols gleamed in the sunshine.

As they approached the trench, Ibarra felt his heart beat. Instinctively he raised his eyes to the strange scaffolding. The Mongol saluted him respectfully, and looked at him intently a moment. Ibarra recognized Elias through his disguise, and the mysterious helmsman, by a significant glance, recalled the warning in the church.

The curate put on his robes and began the office. The one-eyed sacristan held his book; a choir boy had in charge the holy water and sprinkler. The men uncovered, and the crowd stood so silent that, though the father read low, his voice was heard to tremble.

The manuscripts, journals, money, and medals to be preserved in remembrance of this day had been placed in the glass box and the box itself hermetically sealed within the leaden cylinder.

“Señor Ibarra, will you place the box in the stone? The curate is waiting for you,” said the alcalde in Ibarra’s ear.

“I should do so with great pleasure,” said Ibarra, “but it would be a usurpation of the honor; that belongs to the notary, who must draw up the written process.”

The notary gravely took the box, descended the carpeted stairway which led to the bottom of the trench, and with due solemnity deposited his burden in the hollow of the stone already laid. The curate took the sprinkler and sprinkled the stone with holy water.

Each one was now to deposit his trowel of cement on the surface of the lower stone, to seal it to the stone held suspended by the crane when that should be lowered.

Ibarra offered the alcalde a silver trowel, on which was engraved the date of the fête, but before using it His Excellency pronounced a short allocution in Castilian.

“Citizens of San Diego,” he said, “we have the honor of presiding at a ceremony whose importance you know without explanations. We are founding a school, and the school is the basis of society, the book wherein is written the future of each race.

“Citizens of San Diego! Thank God, who has given you these priests! Thank the Mother Country, who spreads civilization in these fertile isles and protects them with the covering of her glorious mantle. Thank God, again, who has enlightened you by his priests from his divine Word.

“And now that the first stone of this building has been blessed, we, the alcalde of this province, in the name of His Majesty the King, whom God guard; in the name of the illustrious Spanish Government, and under the protection of its spotless and ever-victorious flag, consecrate this act and begin the building of this school!

“Citizens of San Diego, long live the king! Long live Spain! Long live the religious orders! Long live the Catholic church!”

“Long live the Señor Alcalde!” replied many voices.

Then the high official descended majestically, to the strains of the orchestras, put his trowel of cement on the stone, and came back as majestically as he had gone

down.

The Government clerks applauded.

Ibarra offered the trowel to the curate, who descended slowly in his turn. In the middle of the staircase he raised his eyes to the great stone suspended above, but he stopped only a second, and continued the descent. This time the applause was a little warmer, Captain Tiago and the monks adding theirs to that of the clerks.

The notary followed. He gallantly offered the trowel to Maria Clara, but she refused, with a smile. The monks, the alférez, and others descended in turn, Captain Tiago not being forgotten.

Ibarra was left. He had ordered the stone to be lowered when the curate remembered him.

“You do not put on your trowelful, Señor Ibarra?” said the curate, with a familiar and jocular air.

“I should be Juan Palomo, who made the soup and then ate it,” replied Crisóstomo in the same light tone.

“You go down, of course,” said the alcalde, taking him by the arm in friendly fashion. “If not, I shall order that the stone be kept suspended, and we shall stay here till the Day of Judgment!”

Such a menace forced Ibarra to obey. He exchanged the silver trowel for a larger one of iron, as some people noticed, and started out calmly. Elias gave him an indefinable look; his whole being seemed in it. The Mongol’s eyes were on the abyss at his feet.

Ibarra, after glancing rapidly at the block over his head, at Elias, and at the Mongol, said to Señor Juan, in a voice that trembled:

“Give me the tray and bring me the other trowel.”

He stood alone. Elias no longer looked at him, his eyes were riveted on the hands of the Mongol, who, bending over, was anxiously following the movements of Ibarra. Then the sound of Ibarra’s trowel was heard, accompanied

by the low murmur of the clerks' voices as they felicitated the alcalde on his speech.

Suddenly a frightful noise rent the air. A pulley attached to the base of the crane sprang out, dragging after it the capstan, which struck the crane like a lever. The beams tottered, the cables broke, and the whole fabric collapsed with a deafening roar and in a whirlwind of dust.

A thousand voices filled the place with cries of horror. People fled in all directions. Only Maria Clara and Brother Salvi remained where they were, pale, mute, incapable of motion.

As the cloud of dust thinned, Ibarra was seen upright among the beams, joists and cables, between the capstan and the great stone that had fallen. He still held the trowel in his hand. With eyes frightful to look at, he regarded a corpse half buried under the beams at his feet.

"Are you unhurt? Are you alive? For God's sake, speak!" cried some one at last.

"A miracle! A miracle!" cried others.

"Come, take out the body of this man," said Ibarra, as if waking from a dream. At the sound of his voice Maria Clara would have fallen but for the arms of her friends.

Then everything was confusion. All talked at once, gestured, went hither and thither, and knew not what to do.

"Who is killed?" demanded the alférez.

"Arrest the head builder!" were the first words the alcalde could pronounce.

They brought up the body and examined it. It was that of the Mongol. The heart no longer beat.

The priests shook Ibarra's hand, and warmly congratulated him.

"When I think that I was there a moment before!" said one of the clerks.

“It is well they gave the trowel to you instead of me,” said a trembling old man.

“Don Pascal!” cried some of the Spaniards.

“Señores, the Señor Ibarra lives, while I, if I had not been crushed, should have died of fright.”

Ibarra had been to inform himself of Maria Clara.

“Let the fête continue, Señor Ibarra,” said the alcalde, as he came back. “Thank God, the dead is neither priest nor Spaniard! You ought to celebrate your escape! What if the stone had fallen on you!”

“He had presentiments!” cried the notary. “He did not want to go down, that was plain to be seen!”

“It’s only an Indian!”

“Let the fête go on! Give us music! Mourning won’t raise the dead. Captain, let the inquest be held! Arrest the head builder!”

“Shall he be put in the stocks?”

“Yes, in the stocks! Music, music! The head builder in the stocks!”

“Señor Alcalde,” said Ibarra, “if mourning won’t raise the dead, neither will the imprisonment of a man whose guilt is not proven. I go security for his person and ask his liberty, for these fête days at least.”

“Very well! But let him not repeat it!” said the alcalde.

All kinds of rumors circulated among the people. The idea of a miracle was generally accepted. Many said they had seen descend into the trench at the fatal moment a figure in a dark costume, like that of the Franciscans. ’Twas no doubt San Diego himself.

“A bad beginning,” muttered old Tasio, shaking his head as he moved away.

XXVII.

Free Thought.

Ibarra, who had gone home for a change of clothing, had just finished dressing when a servant announced that a peasant wished to see him. Supposing it to be one of his laborers, he had him taken to his work room, which was at the same time his library and chemical laboratory. To his great surprise he found himself face to face with the mysterious Elias.

“You saved my life,” said the man, speaking in Tagalo, and understanding the movement of Ibarra. “I have not half paid my debt. Do not thank me. It is I who should thank you. I have come to ask a favor.”

“Speak!” said his listener.

Elias fixed his melancholy eyes on Ibarra’s and went on:

“When the justice of man tries to clear up this mystery, and your testimony is taken, I entreat you not to speak to any one of the warning I gave you.”

“Do not be alarmed,” said Crisóstomo, losing interest; “I know you are pursued, but I’m not an informer.”

“I don’t speak for myself, but for you,” said Elias, with some haughtiness. “I have no fear of men.”

Ibarra grew surprised. This manner of speaking was new, and did not comport with the state or fortunes of the helmsman.

“Explain yourself!” he demanded.

“I am not speaking enigmas. To insure your safety, it is necessary that your enemies believe you blind and confiding.”

“To insure my safety?” said Ibarra, thoroughly aroused.

“You undertake a great enterprise,” Elias went on. “You have a past. Your grandfather and your father had enemies. It is not criminals who provoke the most hatred; it is honorable men.”

“You know my enemies, then?”

Elias hesitated.

“I knew one; the dead man.”

“I regret his death,” said Ibarra; “from him I might have learned more.”

“Had he lived, he would have escaped the trembling hand of men’s justice. God has judged him!”

“Do you also believe in the miracle of which the people talk?”

“If I believed in such a miracle, I should not believe in God, and I believe in Him; I have more than once felt His hand. At the moment when the scaffolding gave way I placed myself beside the criminal.” Elias looked at Ibarra.

“You—you mean that you——”

“Yes, when his deadly work was about to be done, he was going to flee; I held him there; I had seen his crime! Let God be the only one who has the right over life!”

“And yet, this time you——”

“No!” cried Elias. “I exposed the criminal to the risk he had prepared for others; I ran the risk myself; and I did not strike him; I left him to be struck by the hand of God!”

Ibarra regarded the man in silence.

“You are not a peasant,” he said at last. “Who are you? Have you studied?”

“I’ve need of much belief in God, since I’ve lost faith in men,” said Elias,

evading the question.

“But God cannot speak to resolve each of the countless contests our passions raise; it is necessary, it is just, that man should sometimes judge his kind.”

“For good, yes; not for evil. To correct and ameliorate, not to destroy; because, if man’s judgments are erroneous, he has not the power to remedy the evil he has done. But this discussion is over my head, and I am detaining you. Do not forget what I came to entreat; save yourself for the good of your country!” And he started to go.

“And when shall I see you again?”

“Whenever you wish; whenever I can be of use to you; I am always your debtor!”

XXVIII.

The Banquet.

All the distinguished people of the province were united in the carpeted and decorated booth. The alcalde was at one end of the table, Ibarra at the other. The talk was animated, even gay. The meal was half finished when a despatch was handed to Captain Tiago. He asked permission to read it; his face paled; then lighted up. “Señores,” he cried, quite beside himself, “His Excellency the captain-general is to honor my house with his presence!” And he started off running, carrying his despatch and his napkin, forgetting his hat, and pursued by exclamations and questions. The announcement of the tulisanes could not have put him to greater confusion.

“Wait a moment! When is he coming? Tell us?”

Captain Tiago was already in the distance.

“His Excellency asks the hospitality of Captain Tiago!” the guests exclaimed, apparently forgetting that they spoke before his daughter and his future son-in-law.

“He could hardly make a better choice,” said Ibarra, with dignity.

“This was spoken of yesterday,” said the alcalde, “but His Excellency had not fully decided.”

“Do you know how long he is to stay?” asked the alférez, uneasily.

“I’m not at all sure! His Excellency is fond of surprising people.”

Three other despatches were brought. They were for the alcalde, the alférez, and the gobernadorcillo, and identical, announcing the coming of the governor. It

was remarked that there was none for the curate.

“His Excellency arrives at four this afternoon,” said the alcalde, solemnly. “We can finish our repast.” It might have been Leonidas saying: “To-night we sup with Pluto!”

The conversation returned to its former course.

“I notice the absence of our great preacher,” said one of the clerks, an honest, inoffensive fellow, who had not yet said a word. Those who knew the story of Ibarra’s father looked significantly at one another. “Fools rush in,” said the glances of some; but others, more considerate, tried to cover the error.

“He must be somewhat fatigued——”

“Somewhat!” cried the alférez. “He must be spent, as they say here, malunquado. What a sermon!”

“Superb! Herculean!” was the opinion of the notary.

“Magnificent! Profound!” said a newspaper correspondent.

In the other booth the children were more noisy than little Filipinos are wont to be, for at table or before strangers they are usually rather too timid than too bold. If one of them did not eat with propriety, his neighbor corrected him. To one a certain article was a spoon; to others a fork or a knife; and as nobody settled their questions, they were in continual uproar.

Their fathers and mothers, simple peasants, looked in ravishment to see their children eating on a white cloth, and doing it almost as well as the curate or the alcalde. It was better to them than a banquet.

“Yes,” said a young peasant woman to an old man grinding his buyo, “whatever my husband says, my Andoy shall be a priest. It is true, we are poor; but Father Mateo says Pope Sixtu was once a keeper of carabaos at Batanzas! Look at my Andoy; hasn’t he a face like St. Vincent?” and the good mother’s mouth watered at the sight of her son with his fork in both hands!

“God help us!” said the old man, munching his sapa. “If Andoy gets to be pope,

we will go to Rome! I can walk yet! Ho! Ho!”

Another peasant came up.

“It’s decided, neighbor,” he said, “my son is to be a doctor.”

“A doctor! Don’t speak of it!” replied Petra. “There’s nothing like being a curate! He has only to make two or three turns and say ‘déminos pabiscum’ and he gets his money.”

“And isn’t it work to confess?”

“Work! Think of the trouble we take to find out the affairs of our neighbors! The curate has only to sit down, and they tell him everything!”

“And preaching? Don’t you call that work?”

“Preaching? Where is your head? To scold half a day from the pulpit without any one’s daring to reply and be paid for it into the bargain! Look, look at Father Dámaso! See how fat he gets with his shouting and pounding!”

In truth, Father Dámaso was that moment passing the children’s booth in the gait peculiar to men of his size. As he entered the other booth, he was half smiling, but so maliciously that at sight of it Ibarra, who was talking, lost the thread of his speech.

The guests were astonished to see the father, but every one except Ibarra received him with signs of pleasure. They were at the dessert, and the champagne was sparkling in the cups.

Father Dámaso’s smile became nervous when he saw Maria Clara sitting next Crisóstomo, but, taking a chair beside the alcalde, he said in the midst of a significant silence:

“You were talking of something, señores; continue!”

“We had come to the toasts,” said the alcalde. “Señor Ibarra was mentioning those who had aided him in his philanthropic enterprise, and he was speaking of the architect when your reverence——”

“Ah, well! I know nothing about architecture,” interrupted Father Dámaso, “but I scorn architects and the simpletons who make use of them.”

“Nevertheless,” said the alcalde, as Ibarra was silent, “when certain buildings are in question, like a school, for example, an expert is needed——”

“An expert!” cried the father, with sarcasm. “One needs be more stupid than the Indians, who build their own houses, not to know how to raise four walls and put a roof on them. Nothing else is needed for a school!”

Every one looked at Ibarra, but, though he grew a little pale, he pursued his conversation with Maria Clara.

“But does your reverence consider——”

“See here!” continued the Franciscan, again cutting off the alcalde. “See how one of our lay brothers, the most stupid one we have, built a hospital. He paid the workmen eight cuartos a day, and got them from other pueblos, too. Not much like these young feather-brains who ruin workmen, paying them three or four réales!”

“Does your reverence say he paid but eight cuartos? Impossible!” said the alcalde, hoping to change the course of the conversation.

“Yes, señor, and so should those do who pride themselves upon being good Spaniards. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, corruption has reached even here! When the Cape had to be doubled, not so many ruined men came here, and fewer went abroad to ruin themselves!”

“But Father Dámaso——”

“You know the Indian; as soon as he has learned anything, he takes a title. All these beardless youths who go to Europe——”

“But, your reverence, listen——” began the alcalde, alarmed by the harshness of these words.

“Finish as they merit,” continued the priest. “The hand of God is in it; he is blind who does not see that. Already even the fathers of these reptiles receive their

chastisement; they die in prison! Ah——”

He did not finish. Ibarra, livid, had been watching him. At these words he rose, gave one bound, and struck out with his strong hand. The monk, stunned by the blow, fell backward.

Surprised and terrified, not one of the spectators moved.

“Let no one come near!” said the young man in a terrible voice, drawing his slender blade, and holding the neck of the priest with his foot. “Let no one come, unless he wishes to die.”

Ibarra was beside himself, his whole body trembled, his threatening eyes were big with rage. Father Dámaso, regaining his senses, made an effort to rise, but Crisóstomo, grasping his neck, shook him till he had brought him to his knees.

“Señor de Ibarra! Señor de Ibarra!” stammered one and another. But nobody, not even the alférez, risked a movement. They saw the knife glitter; they calculated Crisóstomo’s strength, unleashed by anger; they were paralyzed.

“All you here, you have said nothing. Now it rests with me. I avoided him; God brings him to me. Let God judge!”

Ibarra breathed with effort, but his arm of iron kept harsh hold of the Franciscan, who struggled in vain to free himself.

“My heart beats true, my hand is firm——” And he looked about him.

“I ask you first, is there among you any one who has not loved his father, who has not loved his father’s memory; any one born in shame and abasement? See, hear this silence! Priest of a God of peace, thy mouth full of sanctity and religion, thy heart of corruption! Thou canst not know what it is to be a father; thou shouldst have thought of thy own! See, in all this crowd that you scorn there is not one like you! You are judged!”

The guests, believing he was going to strike, made their first movement.

“Do not come near us!” he cried again in the same threatening voice. “What? You fear I shall stain my hand in impure blood? Did I not tell you that my heart

beats true? Away from us, and listen, priests, believing yourselves different from other men, giving yourselves other rights! My father was an honorable man. Ask the country which venerates his memory. My father was a good citizen, who sacrificed himself for me and for his country's good. His house was open, his table set for the stranger or the exile who should turn to him! He was a Christian; always doing good, never pressing the weak, nor forcing tears from the wretched. As to this man, he opened his door to him, made him sit down at his table, and called him friend. And how did the man respond? He falsely accused him; he pursued him; he armed ignorance against him! Confiding in the sanctity of his office, he outraged his tomb, dishonored his memory; his hate troubled even the rest of the dead. And not yet satisfied, he now pursues the son. I fled from him, avoided his presence. You heard him this morning profane the chair, point me out to the people's fanaticism; but I said nothing. Now, he comes here to seek a quarrel; I suffer in silence, until he again insults a memory sacred to all sons.

“You who are here, priests, magistrates, have you seen your old father give himself for you, part from you for your good, die of grief in a prison, looking for your embrace, looking for consolation from any one who would bring it, sick, alone; while you in a foreign land? Then have you heard his name dishonored, found his tomb empty when you went there to pray? No? You are silent; then you condemn him!”

He raised his arm. But a girl, rapid as light, threw herself between him and the priest, and with her fragile hands held the avenging arm. It was Maria Clara. Ibarra looked at her with eyes like a madman's. Then, little by little, his tense fingers relaxed; he let fall the knife, and, covering his face with his hands, he fled.

XXIX.

Opinions.

The noise of the affair spread rapidly. At first no one believed it, but when there was no longer room for doubt, each made his comments, according to the degree of his moral elevation.

“Father Dámaso is dead,” said some. “When he was carried away, his face was congested with blood, and he no longer breathed.”

“May he rest in peace, but he has only paid his debt!” said a young stranger.

“Why do you say that?”

“One of us students who came from Manila for the fête left the church when the sermon in Tagalo began, saying it was Greek to him. Father Dámaso sent for him afterward, and they came to blows.”

“Are we returning to the times of Nero?” asked another student.

“You mistake,” replied the first. “Nero was an artist, and Father Dámaso is a jolly poor preacher!”

The men of more years talked otherwise.

“To say which was wrong and which right is not easy,” said the gobernadorcillo, “and yet, if Señor Ibarra had been more moderate——”

“You probably mean, if Father Dámaso had shown half the moderation of Señor Ibarra,” interrupted Don Filipo. “The pity is that the rôles were interchanged: the youth conducted himself like an old man, and the old man like a youth.”

“And you say nobody but the daughter of Captain Tiago came between them?”

Not a monk, nor the alcalde?" asked Captain Martin. "I wouldn't like to be in the young man's shoes. None of those who were afraid of him will ever forgive him. Hah, that's the worst of it!"

"You think so?" demanded Captain Basilio, with interest.

"I hope," said Don Filipo, exchanging glances with Captain Basilio, "that the pueblo isn't going to desert him. His friends at least——"

"But, señores," interrupted the gobernadorcillo, "what can we do? What can the pueblo? Whatever happens, the monks are always in the right——"

"They are always in the right, because we always say they're in the right. Let us say we are in the right for once, and then we shall have something to talk about!"

The gobernadorcillo shook his head.

"Ah, the young blood!" he said. "You don't seem to know what country you live in; you don't know your compatriots. The monks are rich; they are united; we are poor and divided. Try to defend him and you will see how you are left to compromise yourself alone!"

"Yes," cried Don Filipo bitterly, "and it will be so as long as fear and prudence are supposed to be synonymous. Each thinks of himself, nobody of any one else; that is why we are weak!"

"Very well! Think of others and see how soon the others will let you hang!"

"I've had enough of it!" cried the exasperated lieutenant. "I shall give my resignation to the alcalde to-day."

The women had still other thoughts.

"Aye!" said one of them. "Young people are always the same. If his good mother were living, what would she say? When I think that my son, who is a young hothead, too, might have done the same thing——"

"I'm not with you," said another woman. "I should have nothing against my two sons if they did as Don Crisóstomo."

“What are you saying, Capitana Maria?” cried the first woman, clasping her hands.

“I’m a poor stupid,” said a third, the Capitana Tinay, “but I know what I’m going to do. I’m going to tell my son not to study any more. They say men of learning all die on the gallows. Holy Mary, and my son wants to go to Europe!”

“If I were rich as you, my children should travel,” said the Capitana Maria. “Our sons ought to aspire to be more than their fathers. I have not long to live, and we shall meet again in the other world.”

“Your ideas, Capitana Maria, are little Christian,” said Sister Rufa severely. “Make yourself a sister of the Sacred Rosary, or of St. Francis.”

“Sister Rufa, when I’m a worthy sister of men, I will think about being a sister of the saints,” said the capitana, smiling.

Under the booth where the children had their feast the father of the one who was to be a doctor was talking.

“What troubles me most,” said he, “is that the school will not be finished; my son will not be a doctor, but a carter.”

“Who said there wouldn’t be a school?”

“I say so. The White Fathers have called Don Crisóstomo plibastiero. There won’t be any school.”

The peasants questioned each other’s faces. The word was new to them.

“And is that a bad name?” one at last ventured to ask.

“It’s the worst one Christian can give another.”

“Worse than tarantado and saragate?”

“If it weren’t, it wouldn’t amount to much.”

“Come now. It can’t be worse than indio, as the alférez says.”

He whose son was to be a carter looked gloomy. The other shook his head and reflected.

“Then is it as bad as *betalapora*, that the old woman of the *alférez* says?”

“You remember the word *ispichoso* (suspect), which had only to be said of a man to have the guards lead him off to prison? Well, *plibastiero* is worse yet; if any one calls you *plibastiero*, you can confess and pay your debts, for there’s nothing else left to do but get yourself hanged. That’s what the telegrapher and the sub-director say, and you know whether the telegrapher and the sub-director ought to know: one talks with iron wires, and the other knows Spanish, and handles nothing but the pen.”

The last hope fled.

xxx.

The First Cloud.

The home of Captain Tiago was naturally not less disturbed than the minds of the crowd. Maria Clara refused to be comforted by her aunt and her foster-sister. Her father had forbidden her to speak to Crisóstomo until the ban of excommunication should be raised.

In the midst of his preparations for receiving the governor-general Captain Tiago was summoned to the convent.

“Don’t cry, my child,” said Aunt Isabel, as she polished the mirrors with a chamois skin, “the ban will be raised. They will write to the holy father. We will make a big offering. Father Dámaso only fainted; he isn’t dead!”

“Don’t cry,” whispered Andeng; “I will arrange to meet Crisóstomo.”

At last Captain Tiago came back. They scanned his face for answers to many questions; but the face of Captain Tiago spoke discouragement. The poor man passed his hand across his brow and seemed unable to frame a word.

“Well, Santiago?” demanded the anxious aunt.

He wiped away a tear and replied by a sigh.

“Speak, for heaven’s sake! What is it?”

“What I all the time feared,” he said at last, conquering his tears. “Everything is lost! Father Dámaso orders me to break the promise of marriage. They all say the same thing, even Father Sibyla. I must shut the doors of my house to him, and—I owe him more than fifty thousand pesos! I told the fathers so, but they wouldn’t take it into account. ‘Which would you rather lose,’ they said, ‘fifty

thousand pesos or your soul?' Ah, St. Anthony, if I had known, if I had known!"

Maria Clara was sobbing.

"Don't cry, my child," he said, turning to her; "you aren't like your mother; she never cried. Father Dámaso told me that a young friend of his is coming from Spain; he intends him for your fiancé——"

Maria Clara stopped her ears.

"But, Santiago, are you mad?" cried Aunt Isabel. "Speak to her of another fiancé now? Do you think your daughter changes them as she does her gloves?"

"I have thought about it, Isabel; but what would you have me do? They threaten me, too, with excommunication."

"And you do nothing but distress your daughter! Aren't you the friend of the archbishop? Why don't you write to him?"

"The archbishop is a monk, too. He will do only what the monks say. But don't cry, Maria; the governor-general is coming. He will want to see you, and your eyes will be red. Alas, I thought I was going to have such a good afternoon! Without this misfortune I should be the happiest of men, with everybody envying me! Be calm, my child, I am more unhappy than you, and I don't cry. You may find a better fiancé; but as for me, I lose fifty thousand pesos! Ah, Virgin of Antipolo, if only I have luck tonight!"

Salvos, the sound of wheels and of horses galloping, the band playing the Royal March, announced the arrival of His Excellency the governor-general of the Philippine Islands. Maria Clara ran to hide in her chamber. Poor girl! Her heart was at the mercy of rude hands that had no sense of its delicate fibres.

While the house was filling with people, while heavy footsteps, words of command, and the hurling of sabres and spurs resounded all about, the poor child, heart-broken, was half-lying, half-kneeling before that picture of the Virgin where Delaroche represents her in a grievous solitude, as though he had surprised her returning from the sepulchre of her son. Maria Clara did not think of the grief of this mother; she thought only of her own. Her head bent on her breast, her hands pressed against the floor, she seemed a lily broken by the

storm. A future for years caressed in dreams, illusions born in childhood, fostered in youth, grown a part of her being, they thought to shatter all these with a word, to drive it all out of her mind and heart. A devout Catholic, a loving daughter, the excommunication terrified her. Not so much her father's commands as her desire for his peace of mind demanded from her the sacrifice of her love. And in this moment she felt for the first time the full strength of her affection for Crisóstomo. The peaceful river glides over its sandy bed under the nodding flowers along its banks; the wind scarcely ridges its current; it seems to sleep; but farther down the banks close in, rough rocks choke the channel, a heap of knotty trunks forms a dyke; then the river roars, revolts, its waters whirl, and shake their plumes of spray, and, raging, beat the rocks and rush on madly. So this tranquil love was now transformed and the tempests were let loose.

She would have prayed; but who can pray without hope? "O God!" her heart complained. "Why refuse a man the love of others? Thou givest him the sunshine and the air; thou dost not hide from him the sight of heaven. Why take away that love without which he cannot live?"

The poor child, who had never known a mother of her own, had brought her grief to that pure heart which knew only filial and maternal love, to that divine image of womanhood of whose tenderness we dream, whom we call Mary.

"Mother, mother!" she sobbed.

Aunt Isabel came to find her; her friends were there, and the governor-general had asked for her.

"Dear aunt, tell them I am ill!" she begged in terror. "They will want me to play and sing!"

"Your father has promised. Would you make your father break his word?"

Maria Clara rose, looked at her aunt, threw out her beautiful arms with a sob, then stood still till she was outwardly calm, and went to obey.

XXXI.

His Excellency.

“I want to talk with that young man,” said the general to one of his aids; “he rouses all my interest.”

“He has been sent for, my general; but there is here another young man of Manila who insists upon seeing you. We told him you have not the time; that you did not come to give audiences. He replied that Your Excellency has always the time to do justice.”

The general, perplexed, turned to the alcalde.

“If I am not mistaken,” said the alcalde, with an inclination of the head, “it is a student who this morning had trouble with Father Dámaso about the sermon.”

“Another still? Has this monk started out to put the province to revolt, or does he think he commands here? Admit the young man!” And the governor got up and walked nervously back and forth.

In the ante-chamber some Spanish officers and all the functionaries of the pueblo were talking in groups. All the monks, too, except Father Dámaso, had come to pay their respects to the governor.

“His Excellency begs your reverences to attend a moment,” said the aide-de-camp. “Enter, young man!”

The young Manilian who confounded the Tagalo with the Greek entered, trembling.

Every one was greatly astonished. His Excellency must be much annoyed to make the monks wait this way. Said Brother Sibyla:

“I have nothing to say to him, and I’m wasting my time here.”

“I also,” said an Augustin. “Shall we go?”

“Would it not be better to find out what he thinks?” asked Brother Salvi. “We should avoid a scandal, and we could remind him—of his duty——”

“Your reverences may enter,” said the aid, conducting back the young man, who came out radiant.

The fathers went in and saluted the governor.

“Who among your reverences is the Brother Dámaso?” demanded His Excellency at once, without asking them to be seated or inquiring for their health, and without any of those complimentary phrases which form the repertory of dignitaries.

“Señor, Father Dámaso is not with us,” replied Father Sibyla, in a tone almost as dry.

“Your Excellency’s servant is ill,” added the humble Brother Salvi. “We come, after saluting Your Excellency and inquiring for his health, to speak in the name of Your Excellency’s respectful servant, who has had the misfortune——”

“Oh!” interrupted the captain-general, with a nervous smile, while he twirled a chair on one leg. “If all the servants of my Excellency were like the Father Dámaso, I should prefer to serve my Excellency myself!”

Their reverences did not seem to know what to reply.

“Won’t your reverences sit down?” added the governor in more conventional tone.

Captain Tiago, in evening dress and walking on tiptoe, came in, leading by the hand Maria Clara, hesitating, timid. Overcoming her agitation, she made her salute, at once ceremonial and graceful.

“This señorita is your daughter!” exclaimed the surprised governor. “Happy the fathers whose daughters are like you, señorita. They have told me about you,

and I wish to thank you in the name of His Majesty the King, who loves the peace and tranquillity of his subjects, and in my own name, in that of a father who has daughters. If there is anything you would wish, *sigñorita*——”

“*Señor!*” protested Maria, trembling.

“The *Señor Don Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra* awaits Your Excellency’s orders,” announced the ringing voice of the *aide-de-camp*.

“Permit me, *sigñorita*, to see you again before I leave the *pueblo*. I have yet things to say to you. *Señor acalde*, Your Highness will accompany me on the walk I wish to take after the private conference I shall have with the *Señor Ibarra*.”

“Your Excellency,” said Father Salvi humbly, “will permit us to inform him that the *Señor Ibarra* is excommunicated——”

The general broke in.

“I am happy,” he said, “in being troubled about nothing but the state of Father *Dámaso*. I sincerely desire his complete recovery, for, at his age, a voyage to Spain in search of health would be somewhat disagreeable. But all depends upon him. Meanwhile, God preserve the health of your reverences!”

All retired.

“In his own case also everything depends upon him,” murmured Brother Salvi as he went out.

“We shall see who makes the earliest voyage to Spain!” added another Franciscan.

“I shall go immediately,” said Father Sibyla, in vexation.

“We, too,” grumbled the Augustins.

Both parties bore it ill that for the fault of a Franciscan His Excellency should have received them so coldly.

In the ante-chamber they encountered Ibarra, who a few hours before had been their host. There was no exchange of greetings, but there were eloquent looks. The alcalde, on the contrary, gave Ibarra his hand. On the threshold Crisóstomo met Maria coming out. Looks spoke again, but very differently this time.

Though this encounter with the monks had seemed to him of bad augury, Ibarra presented himself in the utmost calm. He bowed profoundly. The captain-general came forward.

“It gives me the greatest satisfaction, Señor Ibarra, to take you by the hand. I hope for your entire confidence.” And he examined the young man with evident satisfaction.

“Señor, so much kindness——”

“Your surprise shows that you did not expect a friendly reception; that was to doubt my fairness.”

“A friendly reception, señor, for an insignificant subject of His Majesty, like myself, is not fairness, but favor.”

“Well, well!” said the general, sitting down and motioning Crisóstomo to a seat. “Let us have a moment of open hearts. I am much gratified by what you are doing, and have proposed you to the Government of His Majesty for a decoration in recompense for your project of the school. Had you invited me, I should have found it a pleasure to be here for the ceremony. Perhaps I should have been able to save you an annoyance. But as to what happened between you and Father Dámaso, have neither fear nor regrets. Not a hair of your head shall be harmed so long as I govern the islands; and in regard to the excommunication, I will talk with the archbishop. We must conform ourselves to our circumstances. We cannot laugh at it here, as we might in Europe. But be more prudent in the future. You have weighted yourself with the religious orders, who, from their office and their wealth, must be respected. I protect you, because I like a good son. By heaven, I don’t know what I should have done in your place!”

Then, quickly changing the subject, he said:

“They tell me you have just returned from Europe. You were in Madrid?”

“Yes, señor, several months.”

“How happens it that you return without bringing me a letter of recommendation?”

“Señor,” replied Ibarra, bowing, “because, having heard there of the character of Your Excellency, I thought a letter of recommendation would not only be unnecessary, but might even offend you; the Filipinos are all recommended to you.”

A smile curled the lips of the old soldier, who replied slowly, as though meditating and weighing his words:

“I cannot help being flattered that you think so. And yet, young man, you should know what a weight rests on our shoulders. Here we old soldiers have to be all—king, ministers of state, of war, of justice, of everything; and yet, in every event, we have to consult the far-off mother country, which often must approve or reject our propositions with blind justice. If in Spain itself, with the advantage of everything near and familiar, all is imperfect and defective, the wonder is that all here is not revolution. It is not lack of good will in the governors, but we must use the eyes and arms of strangers, of whom, for the most part, we can know nothing, and who, instead of serving their country, may be serving only their own interests. The monks are a powerful aid, but they are not sufficient. You inspire great interest in me, and I would not have the imperfection of our governmental system tell in anyway against you. I cannot watch over any one; every one cannot come to me. Tell me, can I be useful to you in any way? Have you any request to make?”

Ibarra reflected.

“Señor,” he replied, “my great desire is for the happiness of my country, and I would that happiness might be due to the efforts of our mother country and of my fellow-citizens united to her and united among themselves by the eternal bonds of common views and interests. What I would ask, the Government alone can give, and that after many continuous years of labor and of well-conceived reforms.”

The general gave him a long look, which Ibarra bore naturally, without timidity, without boldness.

“You are the first man with whom I’ve spoken in this country,” cried His Excellency, stretching out his hand.

“Your Excellency has seen only those who while away their lives in cities; he has not visited the falsely maligned cabins of our villages. There Your Excellency would be able to see veritable men, if to be a man a noble heart and simple manners are enough.”

The captain-general rose and walked up and down the room.

“Señor Ibarra,” he said, stopping before Crisóstomo, “your education and manner of thinking are not for this country. Sell what you own and come with me when I go back to Europe; the climate will be better for you.”

“I shall remember all my life this kindness of Your Excellency,” replied Ibarra, moved; “but I must live in the country where my parents lived——”

“Where they died, you would say more justly. Believe me, I, perhaps, know your country better than you do yourself. Ah, but I forget! You are to marry an adorable girl, and I’m keeping you from her all this time! Go—go to her! And that you may have more freedom, send the father to me,” he added, smiling. “Don’t forget, though, that I want your company for the promenade.”

Ibarra saluted, and went out.

The general called his aide-de-camp.

“I am pleased,” said he, giving him a light tap on the shoulder; “I have seen to-day for the first time how one may be a good Spaniard without ceasing to be a good Filipino. What a pity that this Ibarra some day or other——but call the alcalde.”

The judge at once presented himself.

“Señor alcalde,” said the general, “to avoid a repetition of scenes like those of which you were a spectator to-day—scenes, I deplore, because they reflect upon

the Government and upon all Spaniards—I recommend the Señor Ibarra to your utmost care and consideration.”

The alcalde perceived the reprimand and lowered his eyes.

Captain Tiago presented himself, stiff and unnatural.

“Don Santiago,” the general said affectionately, “a moment ago I congratulated you upon having a daughter like the Señorita de los Santos. Now I make you my compliments upon your future son-in-law. The most virtuous of daughters is worthy of the first citizen of the Philippines. May I know the day of the wedding?”

“Señor——” stammered Captain Tiago, wiping drops of sweat from his brow.

“Then nothing is settled, I see. If witnesses are lacking, it will give me the greatest pleasure to be one of them.”

“Yes, señor,” said Captain Tiago, with a smile to stir compassion.

Ibarra had gone off almost running to find Maria Clara. He had so much to talk over with her. Through a door he heard the murmur of girls’ voices. He knocked.

“Who is there?” asked Maria.

“I.”

The voices were hushed, but the door did not open.

“It’s I. May I come in?” demanded Crisóstomo, his heart beginning to beat violently.

The silence continued. After some moments, light foot-steps approached the door, and the voice of Sinang said through the keyhole:

“Crisóstomo, we’re going to the theatre to-night. Write what you have to say to Maria Clara.”

“What does that mean?” said Ibarra to himself as he slowly left the door.

XXXII.

The Procession.

That evening, in the light of countless lanterns, to the sound of bells and of continuous detonations, the procession started for the fourth time.

The captain-general, who had set out on foot, accompanied by his two aides-de-camp, Captain Tiago, the alcalde, the alférez, and Ibarra, and preceded by the guards, to open a passage, was to view the procession from the house of the gobernadorcillo. This functionary had built a platform for the recitation of a loa, a religious poem in honor of the patron saint.

Ibarra would gladly have renounced the hearing of this composition, but His Excellency had ordered his attendance, and Crisóstomo must console himself with the thought of seeing his fiancée at the theatre.

The procession began by the march of the silver candelabra, borne by three sacristans. Then came the school children and their master, then other children, all with paper lanterns, shaped and ornamented according to the taste of each child—for each was his own lantern-maker—hoisted on bamboo poles of various lengths and lighted by bits of candles. An effigy of St. John the Baptist followed, borne on a litter, and then came St. Francis, surrounded by crystal lamps. A band followed, and then the standard of the saint, borne by the brothers of the Third Order, praying aloud in a sort of lamentation. San Diego came next, his car drawn by six brothers of the Third Order, probably fulfilling some vow. St. Mary Magdalen followed him, a beautiful image with splendid hair, wearing a costume of silk spangled with gold, and holding a handkerchief of embroidered piña in her jewelled hands. Lights and incense surrounded her, and her glass tears reflected the varied colors of Bengal lights. St. John the Baptist moved far ahead, as if ashamed of his camel's hair beside all this gold and glitter.

After the Magdalen came the women of the order, the elder first, so that the

young girls should surround the car of the Virgin; behind them was the curate under his dais. The car of the Virgin was preceded by men dressed as phantoms, to the great terror of the children; the women wore habits like those of religious orders. In the midst of this obscure mass of robes and cowls and cordons one saw, like dainty jasmines, like fresh sampages amid old rags, twelve little girls in white, their hair free. Their eyes shone like their necklaces. One might have thought them little genii of the light taken prisoner by spectres. By two wide blue ribbons they were attached to the car of the Virgin, like the doves which draw the car of Spring.

At the gobernadorcillo's the procession stopped, all the images and their attendants were drawn up around the platform, and all eyes were fixed on the half-open curtain. At length it parted, and a young man appeared, winged, booted like a cavalier, with sash and belt and plumed hat, and in Latin, Castilian, and Tagal recited a poem as extraordinary as his attire. The verses ended, St. John pursued his bitter way.

At the moment when the figure of the Virgin passed the house of Captain Tiago, a celestial song greeted it. It was a voice, sweet and tender, almost weeping out the Gounod "Ave Maria." The music of the procession died away, the prayers ceased. Father Salvi himself stood still. The voice trembled; it drew tears; it was more than a salutation: it was a supplication and a complaint.

Ibarra heard, and fear and darkness entered his heart. He felt the suffering in the voice and dared not ask himself whence it came.

The captain-general was speaking to him.

"I should like your company at table. We will talk to those children who have disappeared," he said.

Crisóstomo, looking at the general without seeing him, asked himself under his breath: "Can I be the cause?" And he followed the governor mechanically.

XXXIII.

Doña Consolacion.

Why were the windows of the house of the alférez not only without lanterns, but shuttered? Where, when the procession passed, were the masculine head with its great veins and purple lips, the flannel shirt, and the big cigar of the “Muse of the Municipal Guard”?

The house was sad, as Sinang said, because the people were gay. Had not a sentinel paced as usual before the door one might have thought the place uninhabited.

A feeble light showed the disorder of the room, where the alféreza was sitting, and pierced the dusty and spider-webbed conches of the windows. The dame, according to her idle custom, was dozing in a fauteuil. To deaden the sound of the bombs, she had coifed her head in a handkerchief, from which escaped her tangled hair, short and thin. This morning she had not been to mass, not because she did not wish it, but because her husband had not permitted it, accompanying his prohibition with oaths and threats of blows. Doña Consolacion was now dreaming of revenge. She bestirred herself at last and ran over the house from one end to the other, her dark face disquieting to look at. A spark flashed from her eyes like that from the pupil of a serpent trapped and about to be crushed. It was cold, luminous, penetrating; it was viscous, cruel, repulsive. The smallest error on the part of a servant, the least noise, drew forth words injurious enough to smirch the soul; but nobody replied; to offer excuse would have been to commit another crime.

In this way the day passed. Meeting no opposition—her husband had been invited to the gobernadorcillo’s—she stored up spleen; the cells of her organism seemed slowly charging with electric force, which burst out, later on, in a tempest.

Sisa had been in the barracks since her arrest the day before. The alférez, fearing she might become the sport of the crowd, had ordered her to be kept until the fête was over.

This evening, whether she had heard the song of Maria Clara, whether the bands had recalled airs that she knew, for some reason she began to chant, in her sympathetic voice, the songs of her youth. The soldiers heard and became still; they knew these airs, had sung them themselves when they were young and free and innocent. Doña Consolacion heard, too, and inquired for the singer.

“Have her come up at once,” she said, after a moment’s reflection, something like a smile flickering on her dry lips.

The soldiers brought Sisa, who came without fear or question. When she entered she seemed to see no one, which wounded the vanity of the dreadful muse. Doña Consolacion coughed, motioned the soldiers to withdraw, and, taking down her husband’s riding whip, said in a sinister voice:

“Vamos, magcanter icau!”

It was an order to sing, in a mixture of Castilian and Tagalo. Doña Consolacion affected ignorance of her native tongue, thinking thus to give herself the air of a veritable *Orofea*, as she said in her attempt at Europea. For if she martyred the Tagalo, she treated Castilian worse, though her husband, and chairs and shoes, had contributed to giving her lessons.

Sisa had been happy enough not to understand. The forehead of the shrew unknotted a bit, and a look of satisfaction animated her face.

“Tell this woman to sing!” she said to the orderly. “She doesn’t understand; she doesn’t know Spanish!”

The orderly spoke to Sisa, and she began at once the “Night Song.”

At first Doña Consolacion listened with a mocking smile, but little by little it left her lips. She became attentive, then serious. Her dry and withered heart received the rain. “The sadness, the cold, the dew come down from the sky in the mantle of the night,” seemed to fall upon her heart; she understood “the flower, full of vanity, and prodigal with its splendors in the sun, now, at the fall of day,

withered and stained, repentant and disillusioned, trying to raise its poor petals toward heaven, begging a shade to hide it from the mockery of the sun, who had seen it in its pomp, and was laughing at the impotence of its pride; begging also a drop of dew to be let fall upon it.”

“No! Stop singing!” she cried in perfect Tagal. “Stop! These verses bore me!”

Sisa stopped. The orderly thought: “Ah, she knows the Tagal!” And he regarded his mistress with admiration.

She saw she had betrayed herself, became ashamed, and shame in her unfeminine nature meant rage. She showed the door to the imprudent orderly, and shut it behind him with a blow. Then she took several turns around the room, wringing the whip in her nervous hands. At last, planting herself before Sisa, she said to her in Spanish: “Dance!”

Sisa did not move.

“Dance! Dance!” she repeated in a threatening voice. The poor thing looked at her with vacant eyes. The vixen took hold of one of her arms and then the other, raising them and swaying them about. It was of no use. Sisa did not understand.

In vain Doña Consolacion began to leap about, making signs for Sisa to imitate her. In the distance a band was playing a slow and majestic march; but the creature leaped furiously to another measure, beating within herself. Sisa looked on, motionless. A faint curiosity rose in her eyes, a feeble smile moved her pale lips; the alférez’s dance pleased her.

The dancer stopped, as if ashamed, and raised the terrible whip, well known to thieves and soldiers.

“Now,” said she, “it’s your turn! Dance!” And she began to give light taps to the bare feet of bewildered Sisa, whose face contracted with pain; the poor thing tried to ward off the blows with her hands.

“Ah! You’re beginning, are you?” cried Doña Consolacion, with savage joy, and from lento, she passed to allegro vivace.

Sisa cried out and drew up first one foot and then the other.

“Will you dance, accursed Indian!” and the whip whistled.

Sisa let herself fall to the floor, trying to cover her feet, and looking at her tormenter with haggard eyes. Two lashes on the shoulders forced her to rise with screams.

Her thin chemise was torn, the skin broken and the blood flowing.

This excited Doña Consolacion still more.

“Dance! Dance!” she howled, and seizing Sisa with one hand, while she beat her with the other, she commenced to leap about again.

At length Sisa understood, and followed, moving her arms without rhythm or measure. A smile of satisfaction came to the lips of the horrible woman—the smile of a female Mephistopheles who has found an apt pupil: hate, scorn, mockery, and cruelty were in it; a burst of demoniacal laughter could not have said more.

Absorbed by her delight in this spectacle, the *alférez* did not know that her husband had arrived until the door was violently thrown open with a kick.

The *alférez* was pale and morose. When he saw what was going on, he darted a terrible glance at his wife, then quietly put his hand on the shoulder of the strange dancer, and stopped her motion. Sisa, breathing hard, sat down on the floor. He called the orderly.

“Take this woman away,” he said; “see that she is properly cared for, and has a good dinner and a good bed. To-morrow she is to be taken to Señor Ibarra’s.”

Then he carefully closed the door after them, pushed the bolt, and approached his wife.

XXXIV.

Right and Might.

It was ten o'clock in the evening. The first rockets were slowly going up in the dark sky, where bright-colored balloons shone like new stars. On the ridge-poles of the houses men were seen armed with bamboo poles, with pails of water at hand. Their dark silhouettes against the clear gray of the night seemed phantoms come to share in the gayety of men. They were there to look out for balloons that might fall burning.

Crowds of people were going toward the plaza to see the last play at the theatre. Bengal fires burned here and there, grouping the merry-makers fantastically.

The grand estrade was magnificently illuminated. Thousands of lights were fixed round the pillars, hung from the roof and clustered near the ground.

In front of the stage the orchestra was tuning its instruments. The dignitaries of the pueblo, the Spaniards, and wealthy strangers occupied seats in rows. The people filled the rest of the place; some had brought benches, rather to mount them than to sit on them, and others noisily protested against this.

Comings and goings, cries, exclamations, bursts of laughter, jokes, a whistle, swelled the tumult. Here the leg of a bench gave way and precipitated those on it, to the delight of the spectators; there was a dispute for place; and a little beyond a fracas of glasses and bottles. It was Andeng, carrying a great tray of drinks, and unfortunately she had encountered her fiancé, who was disposed to profit by the occasion.

The lieutenant, Don Filipo, was in charge of the spectacle, for the gobernadorcillo was playing monte, of which he was a passionate devotee. Don Filipo was talking with old Tasio, who was on the point of leaving.

“Aren’t you going to see the play?”

“No, thank you! My own mind suffices for rambling and dreaming,” replied the philosopher, laughing. “But I have a question to propose. Have you ever observed the strange nature of our people? Pacific, they love warlike spectacles; democratic, they adore emperors, kings, and princes; irreligious, they ruin themselves in the poms of the ritual; the nature of our women is gentle, but they have deliriums of delight when a princess brandishes a lance. Do you know the cause of all this? Well——”

The arrival of Maria Clara and her friends cut short the conversation. Don Filipo accompanied them to their places. Then came the curate, with his usual retinue.

The evening began with Chananay and Marianito in “Crispino and the Gossip.” The scene fixed the attention of every one. The act was ending when Ibarra entered. His coming excited a murmur, and eyes turned from him to the curate. But Crisóstomo observed nothing. He gracefully saluted Maria and her friends and sat down. The only one who spoke to him was Sinang.

“Have you been watching the fireworks?” she asked.

“No, little friend, I had to accompany the governor-general.”

“That was too bad!”

Brother Salvi had risen, gone to Don Filipo, and appeared to be having with him a serious discussion. He spoke with heat, the lieutenant calmly and quietly.

“I am sorry not to be able to satisfy your reverence, but Señor Ibarra is one of the chief contributors to the fête, and has a perfect right to be here so long as he creates no disturbance.”

“But is it not creating a disturbance to scandalize all good Christians?”

“Father,” replied Don Filipo, “my slight authority does not permit me to interfere in religious matters. Let those who fear Señor Ibarra’s contact avoid him: he forces himself upon no one; the señor alcalde and the captain-general have been in his company all the afternoon; it hardly becomes me to give them a lesson.”

“If you do not put him out of the place, we shall go.”

“I should be very sorry, but I have no authority to remove him.”

The curate repented of his threat, but there was now no remedy. He motioned to his companions, who rose reluctantly, and all went out, not without hostile glances toward Ibarra.

The whisperings and murmurs began again. Several people came up to Crisóstomo and said:

“We are with you; pay no attention to them!”

“To whom?” he asked in astonishment.

“Those who have gone out because you are here; they say you are excommunicated.”

Ibarra, surprised, not knowing what to say, looked about him. Maria’s face was hidden.

“Is it possible? Are we yet in the middle ages?” he began. But he checked himself and said to the girls:

“I must excuse myself; I will be back to go home with you.”

“Oh, stay!” said Sinang. “Yeyeng is going to dance!”

“I cannot, little friend.”

While Yeyeng was coming forward, two soldiers of the guard approached Don Filipo and demanded that the representation be stopped.

“And why?” he asked in surprise.

“Because the alférez and his wife have been fighting; they want to sleep.”

“Tell the alférez we have the permission of the alcalde of the province, and nobody in the pueblo can overrule that, not even the gobernadorcillo.”

“But we have our orders to stop the performance.”

Don Filipino shrugged his shoulders and turned his back. The Comedy Company of Tondo was about to give a play, and the audience was settling for its enjoyment.

The Filipino is passionately fond of the theatre; he listens in silence, never hisses, and applauds with measure. Does not the spectacle please him? He chews his buyo and goes out quietly, not to trouble those who may like it. He expects in his plays a combat every fifteen seconds, and all the rest of the time repartee between comic personages, or terrifying metamorphoses. The comedy chosen for this fête was “Prince Villardo, or the Nails Drawn from the Cellar of Infamy,” comedy with sorcery and fireworks.

Prince Villardo presented himself, defying the Moors, who held his father prisoner. He threatened to cut off all their heads at a single stroke and send them into the moon.

Fortunately for the Moors, as they were preparing for the combat, a tumult arose. The music stopped, and the musicians assailed the theatre with their instruments, which went flying in all directions. The valiant Villardo, unprepared for so many foes, threw down his sword and buckler and took to flight, and the Moors, seeing the hasty leave of so terrible a Christian, made bold to follow him. Cries, exclamations, and imprecations rose on all sides, people ran against one another, lights went out, children screamed, and benches were overturned in a hurly-burly. Some cried fire, some cried “The tulisanes!”

What had happened? The two guards had driven off the musicians, and the lieutenant and some of the cuadrilleros were vainly trying to check their flight.

“Take those two men to the tribunal!” cried Don Filipino. “Don’t let them escape!”

When the crowd had recovered from its fright and taken account of what had happened, indignation broke forth.

“That’s why they are for!” cried a woman, brandishing her arms; “to trouble the pueblo! They are the real tulisanes! Fire the barracks!”

Stones rained on the group of cuadrilleros leading off the guards, and the cry to

fire the barracks was repeated. Chananay in her costume of Leonora in “Il Trovatore” was talking with Ratia, in schoolmaster’s dress; Yeyeng, wrapped in a shawl, was attended by Prince Villardo, while the Moors tried to console the mortified musicians; but already the crowd had determined upon action, and Don Filipo was doing his best to hold them in check.

“Do nothing rash!” he cried. “To-morrow we will demand satisfaction; we shall have justice; I promise you justice!”

“No,” replied some; “that’s what they did at Calamba: they promised justice, and the alcalde didn’t do a thing! We will take justice for ourselves! To the barracks!”

Don Filipo, looking about for some one to aid him, saw Ibarra.

“For heaven’s sake, Señor Ibarra, keep the people here while I go for the cuadrilleros!”

“What can I do?” demanded the perplexed young fellow; but Don Filipo was already in the distance.

Ibarra, in his turn, looked about for aid, and saw Elias. He ran to him, took him by the arm, and, speaking in Spanish, begged him to do what he could for order. The helmsman disappeared in the crowd. Animated discussions were heard, and rapid questions; then, little by little, the mass began to dissolve and to wear a less hostile attitude. It was time; the soldiers arrived with bayonets fixed.

As Ibarra was about to enter his house that night a little man in mourning, having a great scar on his left cheek, placed himself in front of him and bowed humbly.

“What can I do for you?” asked Crisóstomo.

“Señor, my name is José; I am the brother of the man killed this morning.”

“Ah,” said Ibarra, “I assure you I am not insensible to your loss. What do you wish of me?”

“Señor, I wish to know how much you are going to pay my brother’s family.”

“Pay!” repeated Crisóstomo, not without annoyance. “We will talk of this again; come to me to-morrow.”

“But tell me simply what you will give,” insisted José.

“I tell you we will talk of it another day, not now,” said Ibarra, more impatiently.

“Ah! You think because we are poor——”

Ibarra interrupted him.

“Don’t try my patience too far,” he said, moving on. José looked after him with a smile full of hatred.

“It is easy to see he is a grandson of the man who exposed my father to the sun,” he murmured between his teeth. “The same blood!” Then in a changed tone he added: “But if you pay well—friends!”

XXXV.

Husband and Wife.

The fête was over, and the inhabitants of the pueblo now perceived, as they did every year, that their purses were empty, that in the sweat of their faces they had earned scant pleasure, and paid dear for noise and headaches. But what of that? The next year they would begin again; the next century it would still be the same, for it had been so up to this time, and there is nothing which can make people renounce a custom.

The house of Captain Tiago is sad. All the windows are closed; one scarcely dares make a sound; and nowhere but in the kitchen do they speak aloud. Maria Clara, the soul of the house, is sick in bed. The state of her health could be read on all faces, as our actions betray the griefs of our hearts.

“What do you think, Isabel, ought I to make a gift to the cross at Tunasan, or that at Matahong?” asks the unhappy father. “The cross at Tunasan grows, but that at Matahong perspires. Which do you call the more miraculous?”

Aunt Isabel reflected, nodded her head, and whispered:

“To grow is more miraculous; we all perspire, but we don’t all grow.”

“That’s so, yes, Isabel; but, after all, for wood to perspire—well, then, the best thing is to make offerings to both.”

A carriage stopping before the house cut short the conversation. Captain Tiago, followed by Aunt Isabel, ran down the steps to receive the coming guests. They were the doctor, Don Tiburcio de Espadaña, his wife, the Doctora Doña Victorina de Los Reyes de de Espadaña, and a young Spaniard of attractive face and fine appearance.

The doctora wore a silk dress bordered with flowers, and a hat with a large parrot perched among bows of red and blue ribbons. The dust of the journey mingling with the rice powder on her cheeks, exaggerated her wrinkles; as when we saw her at Manila, she had given her arm to her lame husband.

“I have the pleasure of presenting to you our cousin, Don Alfonso Linares de Espadaña,” said Doña Victorina, indicating the young man; “the adopted son of a relative of Father Dámaso’s, and private secretary of all the ministers——”

The young man bowed low; Captain Tiago barely escaped kissing his hand.

While the countless trunks, valises, and bags are being cared for and Captain Tiago is conducting his guests to their apartments, let us make a nearer acquaintance with these people whom we have not seen since the opening chapters.

Doña Victorina is a woman of forty-five summers, which, according to her arithmetic, are equivalent to thirty-two springs. In her youth she had been very pretty, but, enraptured in her own contemplation, she had looked with the utmost disdain on her numerous Filipino adorers, even scorning the vows of love once murmured in her ears or chanted under her balcony by Captain Tiago. Her aspirations bore her toward another race.

Her first youth, then her second, then her third, having passed in tending nets to catch in the ocean of the world the object of her dreams, Doña Victorina must in the end content herself with what fate willed her. It was a poor man torn from his native Estramadure, who, after wandering six or seven years about the world, a modern Ulysses, found at length, in the island of Luzon, hospitality, money, and a faded Calypso.

Don Tiburcio was a modest man, without force, who would not willingly have injured a fly. He started for the Philippines as under-clerk of customs, but after breaking his leg was forced to give up his position. For a while he lived at the expense of some compatriots, but he found their bread bitter. As he had neither profession nor money, his advisers counselled him to go into the provinces and offer himself as a physician. At first he refused, but, necessity becoming pressing, his friends convinced him of the vanity of his scruples. He started out, kept by his conscience from asking more than small fees, and was on the road to

prosperity when a jealous doctor called him to the attention of the College of Physicians at Manila. Nothing would have come of it, but the affair reached the ears of the people; loss of confidence followed, and then loss of patrons. Misery again stared him in the face when he heard of the affliction of Doña Victorina. Don Tiburcio saw here a patch of blue sky, and asked to be presented.

They met, and after a half-hour of conversation, reached an understanding. Without doubt she would have preferred a Spaniard less halting, less bald, without impediment of speech, and with more teeth; but such a Spaniard had never asked her hand, and at thirty-two what woman is not prudent?

For his part, Don Tiburcio resigned himself when he saw the spectre of famine raise its head. Not that he had ever had great ambitions or great pretensions; but his heart, virgin till now, had pictured a different divinity. He was, however, somewhat of a philosopher. He said to himself: "All that was a dream! Is the reality powdered and wrinkled, homely and ridiculous? Well, I am bald and lame and toothless."

They were married then, and Doña Victorina was enchanted with her husband. She had him fitted out with false teeth, attired by the best tailors of the city, and ordered carriages and horses for the professional visits she intended him again to make.

While thus transforming her husband, she did not forget herself. She discarded the silk skirt and jacket of piña for European costume, loaded her head with false hair, and her person with such extravagances generally as to disturb the peace of a whole idle and tranquil neighborhood.

The glamour around the husband first began to dim when he tried to approach the subject of the rice powder by remarking that nothing is so ugly as the false or so admirable as the natural. Doña Victorina looked unpleasantly at his teeth, and he was silent. Indeed, at the end of a very short time the doctora had arrived at the complete subjugation of her husband, who no longer offered any more resistance than a little lap-dog. If he did anything to annoy her, she forbade his going out, and in her moments of greatest rage she tore out his false teeth, and left him, sometimes for days, horribly disfigured.

When they were well settled in Manila, Rodoreda received orders to engrave on

a plate of black marble:

“Dr. De Espadaña,
Specialist in All Kinds of Diseases.”

“Do you wish me to be put in prison?” asked Don Tiburcio in terror.

“I wish people to call you doctor and me doctora,” said Doña Victorina, “but it must be understood that you treat only very rare cases.”

The señora signed her own name, Victorina de los Reyes de de Espadaña. Neither the engraver of her visiting cards nor her husband could make her renounce that second “de.”

“If I use only one ‘de,’ people will think you haven’t any, imbecile!” she said to Don Tiburcio.

Then the number of gewgaws grew, the layer of rice powder was thickened, the ribbons and laces were piled higher, and Doña Victorina regarded with more and more disdain her poor compatriots who had not had the fortune to marry husbands of so high estate as her own.

All this sublimity, however, did not prevent her being each day older and more ridiculous. Every time Captain Tiago was with her, and remembered that she had once really inspired him with love, he sent a peso to the church for a mass of thanksgiving. But he had much respect for Don Tiburcio, because of his title of specialist, and listened attentively to the rare sentences the doctor’s impediment of speech let him pronounce. For this reason and because the doctor did not lavish his visits on people at large he had chosen him to treat Maria.

As to young Linares, Doña Victorina, wishing a steward from the peninsula, her husband remembered a cousin of his, a law student at Madrid, who was considered the most astute of the family. They sent for him, and the young man had just arrived.

Father Salvi entered while Don Santiago and his guests were at the second breakfast. They talked of Maria Clara, who was sleeping; they talked of the journey, and Doña Victorina exclaimed loudly at the costumes of the provincials, their houses of nipa, and their bamboo bridges. She did not omit to inform the

curate of her friendly relations with the “Segundo Cabo,” with this alcalde, with that councillor, all people of distinction, who had for her the greatest consideration.

“If you had come two days earlier, Doña Victorina,” said Captain Tiago, profiting by a slight pause in the lady’s brilliant loquacity, “you would have found His Excellency the governor general seated in this very place.”

“What! His Excellency was here? And at your house? Impossible!”

“I repeat that he was seated exactly here. If you had come two days ago——”

“Ah! What a pity Clarita did not fall ill sooner!” she cried. “You hear, cousin! His Excellency was here! You know, Don Santiago, that at Madrid our cousin was the friend of ministers and dukes, and that he dined with the Count del Campanario.”

“The Duke de la Torre, Victorina,” suggested her husband.

“It is the same thing!”

“Shall I find Father Dámaso at his pueblo to-day?” Linares asked Brother Salvi.

“Father Dámaso is here, and may be with us at any moment.”

“I’m very glad! I have a letter for him, and if a happy chance had not brought me here, I should have come expressly to see him.”

Meanwhile the “happy chance,” that is to say, poor Maria Clara, had awakened.

“Come, de Espadaña, come, see Clarita,” said Doña Victorina. “It is for you he does this,” she went on, turning to Captain Tiago; “my husband attends only people of quality.”

The sick-room was almost in obscurity, the windows closed, for fear of draughts; two candles, burning before an image of the Virgin of Antipolo, sent out feeble glimmers.

Enveloped in multiple folds of white, the lovely figure of Maria lay on her bed

of kamagon, behind curtains of jusi and piña. Her abundant hair about her face increased its transparent pallor, as did the radiance of her great, sad eyes. Beside her were her two friends, and Andeng holding a lily branch.

De Espadaña felt her pulse, examined her tongue, asked a question or two, and nodded his head.

“Sh—she is s—sick, but she can be c—cured.”

Doña Victorina looked proudly at their audience.

“Lichen with m—m—milk, for the m—m—morning, syrup of m—m—marshmallow, and two tablets of cynoglossum.”

“Take courage, Clarita,” said Doña Victorina, approaching the bed, “we have come to cure you. I’m going to present to you our cousin.”

Linares, absorbed, was gazing at those eloquent eyes, which seemed to be searching for some one; he did not hear Doña Victorina.

“Señor Linares,” said the curate, drawing him out of his abstraction, “here is Father Dámaso.”

It was indeed he; but it was not the Father Dámaso of heretofore, so vigorous and alert. He walked uncertainly, and he was pale and sad.

XXXVI.

Projects.

With no word for any one else, Father Dámaso went straight to Maria's bed and took her hand.

"Maria," he said with great tenderness, and tears gushed from his eyes, "Maria, my child, you must not die!"

Maria Clara looked at him with some astonishment. No one of those who knew the Franciscan would have believed him capable of such display of feeling.

He could not say another word, but moved aside the draperies and went out among the plants of Maria's balcony, crying like a child.

"How he loves his god-daughter!" every one thought.

Father Salvi, motionless and silent, watched him intently.

When the father's grief seemed more controlled, Doña Victorino presented young Linares. Father Dámaso, saying nothing, looked him over from head to foot, took the letter, read it without appearing to comprehend, and asked:

"Well, who are you?"

"Alfonso Linares, the godson of your brother-in-law——" stammered the young fellow. Father Dámaso threw back his head and examined him anew, his face clearing.

"What! It's the godson of Carlicos!" he cried, clasping him in his arms. "I had a letter from him some days ago. And it is you? You were not born when I left the country. I did not know you!" And Father Dámaso still held in his strong arms the young man, whose face began to color, perhaps from embarrassment,

perhaps from suffocation. Father Dámaso appeared to have completely forgotten his grief.

After the first moments of effusion and questions about Carlicos and Pepa, Father Dámaso asked:

“Let’s see, what is it Carlicos wishes me to do for you?”

“I think he says something about it in the letter,” stammered Linares again.

“In the letter? Yes, that’s so! He wishes me to find you employment and a wife. Ah, the employment is easy enough, but as for the wife!—hem!—a wife——”

“Father, that is not so urgent,” said Linares, with confusion.

But Father Dámaso was walking back and forth murmuring: “A wife! A wife!” His face was no longer sad or joyful, but serious and preoccupied. From a distance Father Salvi watched the scene.

“I did not think the thing could cause me so much pain,” Father Dámaso murmured plaintively; “but of two evils choose the least!” Then approaching Linares:

“Come with me, my boy,” he said, “we will talk with Don Santiago.” Linares paled and followed the priest.

XXXVII.

Scrutiny of Conscience.

Long days followed by weary nights were passed by the pillow of the sick girl. After a confession to Father Salvi, Maria Clara had had a relapse, and in her delirium she pronounced no name but that of her mother, whom she had never known. Her friends, her father, her aunt, watched her, and heaped with gifts and with silver for masses the altars of miraculous images. At last, slowly and regularly, the fever began to abate.

The Doctor de Espadaña was stupefied at the virtues of the syrup of marshmallow and the decoction of lichen, prescriptions he had never varied. Doña Victorina was so satisfied with her husband that one day when he stepped on her train, in a rare state of clemency she did not apply to him the usual penal code by pulling out his teeth.

One afternoon, Sinang and Victorina were with Maria; the curate, Captain Tiago, and the Espadañas were talking in the dining-room.

“I’m distressed to hear it,” the doctor was saying; “and Father Dámaso must be greatly disturbed.”

“Where did you say he is to be sent?” asked Linares.

“Into the province of Tabayas,” replied the curate carelessly.

“Maria Clara will be very sorry too,” said Captain Tiago; “she loves him like a father.”

Father Salvi looked at him from the corner of his eye.

“Father,” continued Captain Tiago, “I believe her sickness came from nothing

but that trouble the day of the fête.”

“I am of the same opinion, so you have done well in not permitting Señor Ibarra to talk with her; that would only have aggravated her condition.”

“And it is thanks to us alone,” interrupted Doña Victorina, “that Clarita is not already in heaven singing praises with the angels.”

“Amen!” Captain Tiago felt moved to say.

“I think I know whereof I speak,” said the curate, “when I say that the confession of Maria Clara brought about the favorable crisis that saved her life. I do not deny the power of science, but a pure conscience——”

“Pardon,” objected Doña Victorina, piqued; “then cure the wife of the alférez with a confession!”

“A hurt, señora, is not a malady, to be influenced by the conscience,” replied Father Salvi severely; “but a good confession would preserve her in future from such blows as she got this morning.”

“She deserved them!” said Doña Victorina. “She is an insolent woman. In church she did nothing but look at me. I had a mind to ask her what there was curious about my face; but who would soil her lips speaking to these people of no standing?”

The curate, as if he had not heard this tirade, continued: “To finish the cure of your daughter, she should receive the communion to-morrow, Don Santiago. I think she does not need to confess, and yet, if she will once more, this evening ——”

“I don’t know,” said Doña Victorina, profiting by the pause to continue her reflections, “I don’t understand how men can marry such frights. One easily sees where that woman came from. She is dying of envy, that shows in her eyes. What does an alférez get?”

“So prepare Maria for confession,” the curate continued, turning to Aunt Isabel.

The good aunt left the group and went to her niece’s room. Maria Clara was still

in bed, and pale, very pale; beside her were her two friends.

Sinang was giving her her medicine.

“He has not written to you again?” asked Maria, softly.

“No.”

“He gave you no message for me?”

“No; he only said he was going to make every effort to have the archbishop raise the ban of excommunication——”

The arrival of Aunt Isabel interrupted the conversation.

“The father says you are to prepare yourself for confession, my child,” said she.

“Sinang, leave her to examine her conscience. Shall I bring you the ‘Anchor,’ the ‘Bouquet,’ or the ‘Straight Road to Heaven,’ Maria?”

Maria Clara did not reply.

“Well, we mustn’t fatigue you,” said the good aunt consolingly; “I will read you the examination myself, and you will only have to remember your sins.”

“Write him to think of me no more,” murmured the sick girl in Sinang’s ear.

“What!”

But Aunt Isabel came back with her book, and Sinang had to go.

The good aunt drew her chair up to the light, settled her glasses on the tip of her nose, and opened a little book.

“Give good attention, my child: I will begin with the commandments of God; I shall go slowly, so that you may meditate: if you don’t hear well, you must tell me, and I will repeat; you know I’m never weary of working for your good.”

In a voice monotonous and nasal, she began to read. Maria Clara gazed vaguely into space. The first commandment finished, Aunt Isabel observed her listener over her glasses, and appeared satisfied with her sad and meditative air. She

coughed piously, and after a long pause began the second. The good old woman read with unction. The terms of the second commandment finished, she again looked at her niece, who slowly turned away her head.

“Bah!” said Aunt Isabel within herself, “as to taking His holy name in vain, the poor thing has nothing to question: pass on to the third.”

And the third commandment sifted and commentated, all the causes of sin against it droned out, she again looked toward the bed. This time she lifted her glasses and rubbed her eyes; she had seen her niece raise her handkerchief, as if to wipe away tears.

“Hm!” said she; “hm! the poor child must have fallen asleep during the sermon.” And putting back her glasses on the tip of her nose, she reflected:

“We shall see if besides not keeping the holy feast days, she has not honored her father and her mother.” And slowly, in a voice more nasal than ever, she read the fourth commandment.

“What a pure soul!” thought the old lady; “she who is so obedient, so submissive! I’ve sinned much more deeply than that, and I’ve never been able to really cry!” And she began the fifth commandment with such enthusiasm that she did not hear the stifled sobs of her niece. It was only when she stopped after the commentaries on wilful homicide, that she perceived the groanings of the sinner. Then in a voice that passed description, and a manner she strove to make menacing, she finished the commentary, and seeing that Maria had not ceased to weep:

“Cry, my child, cry!” she said, going to her bedside; “the more you cry the more quickly will God pardon you. Cry, my child, cry; and beat your breast, but not too hard, for you are ill yet, you know.”

But as if grief had need of mystery and solitude, Maria Clara, finding herself surprised, stopped sobbing little by little and dried her eyes. Aunt Isabel returned to her reading, but the plaint of her audience having ceased, she lost her enthusiasm; the second table of the law made her sleepy, and a yawn broke the nasal monotony.

“No one would have believed it without seeing it,” thought the good woman; “the child sins like a soldier against the first five commandments, and from the sixth to the tenth not so much as a peccadillo. That is contrary to the custom of the rest of us. One sees queer things in these days!” And she lighted a great candle for the Virgin of Antipolo, and two smaller ones for Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of the Pillar. The Virgin of Delaroche was excluded from this illumination: she was to Aunt Isabel an unknown foreigner.

We may not know what passed during the confession in the evening. It was long, and Aunt Isabel, who at a distance was watching over her niece, could see that instead of offering his ear to the sick girl, the curate had his face turned toward her. He went out, pale, with compressed lips. At the sight of his brow, darkened and moist with sweat, one would have said it was he who had confessed, and absolution had been denied him.

“Maria! Joseph!” said the good aunt, crossing herself, “who can comprehend the girls of to-day!”

XXXVIII.

The Two Women.

Doña Victorina was taking a walk through the pueblo, to see of what sort were the dwellings and the advancement of the indolent Indians. She had put on her most elegant adornments, to impress the provincials, and to show what distance separated them from her sacred person. Giving her arm to her limping husband, she paraded the streets of the pueblo, to the profound amazement of its inhabitants.

“What ugly houses these Indians have!” she began, with a grimace. “One must needs be an Indian to live in them! And how ill-bred the people are! They pass us without uncovering. Knock off their hats, as the curates do, and the lieutenants of the Civil Guard.”

“And if they attack me?” stammered the doctor.

“Are you not a man?”

“Yes, but—but—I am lame.”

Doña Victorina grew cross. There were no sidewalks in these streets, and the dust was soiling the train of her dress. Some young girls who passed dropped their eyes, and did not admire at all as they should her luxurious attire. Sinang’s coachman, who was driving Sinang and her cousin in an elegant tres-por-ciento, had the effrontery to cry out to her “Tabi!” in so audacious a voice that she moved out of the way.

“What a brute of a coachman!” she protested; “I shall tell his master he had better train his servants. Come along, Tiburcio!”

Her husband, fearing a tempest, turned on his heels, and they found themselves

face to face with the alférez. Greetings were exchanged, but Doña Victorina's discontent grew. Not only had the officer said nothing complimentary of her costume, but she believed she detected mockery in his look.

"You ought not to give your hand to a simple alférez," she said to her husband, when the officer had passed. "You don't know how to preserve your rank."

"H—here he is the chief."

"What does that mean to us? Do we happen to be Indians?"

"You are right," said Don Tiburcio, not minded to dispute.

They passed the barracks. Doña Consolacion was at the window, as usual dressed in flannel, and puffing her puro. As the house was low, the two women faced each other. The muse examined Doña Victorina from head to foot, protruded her lip, ejected tobacco juice, and turned away her head. This affectation of contempt brought the patience of the doctora to an end. Leaving her husband without support, she went, trembling with rage, powerless to utter a word, and placed herself in front of the alférez's window. Doña Consolacion turned her head slowly back, regarded her antagonist with the utmost calm, and spat again with the same cool contempt.

"What's the matter with you, doña?" she asked.

"Could you tell me, señora, why you stare at me in this fashion? Are you jealous?" Doña Victorina was at last able to say.

"I jealous? And of you?" replied the alférez calmly. "Yes, I'm jealous of your frizzes."

"Come away there!" broke in the doctor; "d—d—don't pay at—t—t—tention to these f—f—follies!"

"Let me alone! I have to give a lesson to this brazenface!" replied the doctora, joggling her husband, who just missed sprawling in the dust.

"Consider to whom you are speaking!" she said haughtily, turning back to Doña Consolacion. "Don't think I am a provincial or a woman of your class. With us,

at Manila, the alférezas are not received; they wait at the door.”

“Ho! ho! most worshipful señora, the alférezas wait at the door! But you receive such paralytics as this gentleman! Ha! ha! ha!”

Had she been less powdered Doña Victorina might have been seen to blush. She started to rush on her enemy, but the sentinel stood in the way. The street was filling with a curious crowd.

“Know that I demean myself in speaking to you; persons of position like me ought not! Will you wash my clothes? I will pay you well. Do you suppose I do not know you are a washerwoman?”

Doña Consolacion sat erect. To be called a washerwoman had wounded her.

“And do you think we don’t know who you are?” she retorted. “My husband has told me! Señora, I, at least——”

But she could not be heard. Doña Victorina, wildly shaking her fists, screamed out:

“Come down, you old hussy, come down and let me tear your beautiful eyes out!”

Rapidly the medusa disappeared from the window; more rapidly yet she came running down the steps, brandishing her husband’s terrible whip. Don Tiburcio, supplicating both, threw himself between, but he could not have prevented the combat, had not the alférez arrived.

“Well, well, señoras!—Don Tiburcio!”

“Give your wife a little more breeding, buy her more beautiful clothes, and if you haven’t the money, steal it from the people of the pueblo; you have soldiers for that!” cried Doña Victorina.

“Señora,” said the alférez, furious, “it is fortunate that I remember you are a woman; if I didn’t, I should trample you down, with all your curls and ribbons!”

“Se—señor alférez!”

“Move on, charlatan! It’s not you who wear the breeches!”

Armed with words and gestures, with cries, insults, and injuries, the two women hurled at each other all there was in them of soil and shame. All four talked at once, and in the multitude of words numerous verities were paraded in the light. If they did not hear all, the crowd of the curious did not fail to be diverted. They were looking forward to battle, but, unhappily for these amateurs of sport, the curate came by and established peace.

“Señoras! señoras! what a scandal! Señor alférez!”

“What are you doing here, hypocrite, carlist!”

“Don Tiburcio, take away your wife! Señora, restrain your tongue!”

Little by little the dictionary of sounding epithets became exhausted. The shameless shrews found nothing left to say to each other, and still threatening, the two couples drew slowly apart, the curate going from one to the other, lavishing himself on both.

“We shall leave for Manila this very day and present ourselves to the captain-general!” said the infuriated Doña Victorina to her husband. “You are no man!”

“But—but, wife, the guards, and I am lame.”

“You are to challenge him, with swords or pistols, or else—or else——” And she looked at his teeth.

“Woman, I’ve never handled——”

Doña Victorina let him go no farther; with a sublime movement she snatched out his teeth, threw them in the dust, and trampled them under her feet. The doctor almost crying, the doctora pelting him with sarcasms, they arrived at the house of Captain Tiago. Linares, who was talking with Maria Clara, was no little disquieted by the abrupt arrival of his cousins. Maria, amid the pillows of her fauteuil, was not less surprised at the new physiognomy of her doctor.

“Cousin,” said Doña Victorina, “you are to go and challenge the alférez this instant; if not——”

“Why?” demanded the astonished Linares.

“You are to go and challenge him this instant; if not, I shall say here, and to everybody, who you are.”

“Doña Victorina!”

The three friends looked at each other.

“The alférez has insulted us. The old sorceress came down with a whip to assault us, and this creature did nothing to prevent it! A man!”

“Hear that!” said Sinang regretfully. “There was a fight, and we didn’t see it!”

“The alférez broke the doctor’s teeth!” added Doña Victorina.

Captain Tiago entered, but he wasn’t given time to get his breath. In few words, with an intermingling of spicy language, Doña Victorina narrated what had passed, naturally trying to put herself in a good light.

“Linares is going to challenge him, do you hear? Or don’t let him marry your daughter. If he isn’t courageous, he doesn’t merit Clarita.”

“What! you are going to marry this gentleman?” Sinang asked Maria, her laughing eyes filling with tears. “I know you are discreet, but I didn’t think you inconstant.”

Maria Clara, white as alabaster, looked with great, frightened eyes from her father to Doña Victorina, from Doña Victorina to Linares. The young man reddened; Captain Tiago dropped his head.

“Help me to my room,” Maria said to her friends, and steadied by their round arms, her head on the shoulder of Victorina, she went out.

That night the husband and wife packed their trunks, and presented their account—no trifle—to Captain Tiago. The next morning they set out for Manila, leaving to the pacific Linares the rôle of avenger.

XXXIX.

The Outlawed.

By the feeble moonlight that penetrates the thick foliage of forest trees, a man was making his way through the woods. His movement was slow but assured. From time to time, as if to get his bearings, he whistled an air, to which another whistler in the distance replied by repeating it.

At last, after struggling long against the many obstacles a virgin forest opposes to the march of man, and most obstinately at night, he arrived at a little clearing, bathed in the light of the moon in its first quarter. Scarcely had he entered it when another man came carefully out from behind a great rock, a revolver in his hand.

“Who are you?” he demanded with authority in Tagalo.

“Is old Pablo with you?” asked the newcomer tranquilly; “if so, tell him Elias is searching for him.”

“You are Elias?” said the other, with a certain respect, yet keeping his revolver cocked. “Follow me!”

They penetrated a cavern, the guide warning the helmsman when to lower his head, when to crawl on all fours. After a short passage they arrived at a sort of room, dimly lighted by pitch torches, where twelve or fifteen men, dirty, ragged, and sinister, were talking low among themselves. His elbows resting on a stone, an old man of sombre face sat apart, looking toward the smoky torches. It was a cavern of tulisanes. When Elias arrived, the men started to rise, but at a gesture from the old man they remained quiet, contenting themselves with examining the newcomer.

“Is it thou, then?” said the old chief, his sad eyes lighting a little at sight of the

young man.

“And you are here!” exclaimed Elias, half to himself.

The old man bent his head in silence, making at the same time a sign to the men, who rose and went out, not without taking the helmsman’s measure with their eyes.

“Yes,” said the old man to Elias when they were alone, “six months ago I gave you hospitality in my home; now it is I who receive compassion from you. But sit down and tell me how you found me.”

“As soon as I heard of your misfortunes,” replied Elias slowly, “I set out, and searched from mountain to mountain. I’ve gone over nearly two provinces.” After a short pause in which he tried to read the old man’s thoughts in his sombre face, he went on:

“I have come to make you a proposition. After vainly trying to find some representative of the family which caused the ruin of my own, I have decided to go North, and live among the savage tribes. Will you leave this life you are beginning, and come with me? Let me be a son to you?”

The old man shook his head.

“At my age,” he said, “when one has taken a desperate resolution it is final. When such a man as I, who passed his youth and ripe age laboring to assure his future and that of his children, who submitted always to the will of superiors, whose conscience is clear—when such a man, almost on the border of the tomb, renounces all his past, it is because after ripe reflection he concludes that there is no such thing as peace. Why go to a strange land to drag out my miserable days? I had two sons, a daughter, a home, a fortune. I enjoyed consideration and respect; now I am like a tree stripped of its branches, bare and desolate. And why? Because a man dishonored my daughter; because my sons wished to seek satisfaction from this man, placed above other by his office; because this man, fearing them, sought their destruction and accomplished it. And I have survived; but if I did not know how to defend my sons, I shall know how to avenge them. The day my band is strong enough, I shall go down into the plain and wipe out my vengeance and my life in fire! Either this day will come or there is no God!”

The old man rose, and, his eyes glittering, his voice cavernous, he cried, fastening his hands in his long hair:

“Malediction, malediction upon me, who held the avenging hands of my sons! I was their assassin!”

“I understand you,” said Elias; “I too have a vengeance to satisfy; and yet, from fear of striking the innocent, I choose to forego that.”

“You can; you are young; you have not lost your last hope. I too, I swear it, would not strike the innocent. You see this wound? I got it rather than harm a cuadrillero who was doing his duty.”

“And yet,” said Elias, “if you carry out your purpose, you will bring dreadful woes to our unhappy country. If with your own hands you satisfy your vengeance, your enemies will take terrible reprisals—not from you, not from those who are armed, but from the people, who are always the ones accused. When I knew you in other days, you gave me wise counsels: will you permit me _____”

The old man crossed his arms and seemed to attend.

“Señor,” continued Elias, “I have had the fortune to do a great service to a young man, rich, kind of heart, upright, wishing the good of his country. It is said he has relations at Madrid; of that I know nothing, but I know he is the friend of the governor-general. What do you think of interesting him in the cause of the miserable and making him their voice?”

The old man shook his head.

“He is rich, you say. The rich think only of increasing their riches. Not one of them would compromise his peace to go to the aid of those who suffer. I know it, I who was rich myself.”

“But he is not like the others. And he is a young man about to marry, who wishes the tranquillity of his country for the sake of his children’s children.”

“He is a man, then, who is going to be happy. Our cause is not that of fortunate men.”

“No, but it is that of men of courage!”

“True,” said the old man, seating himself again. “Let us suppose he consents to be our mouthpiece. Let us suppose he wins the captain-general, and finds at Madrid deputies who can plead for us; do you believe we shall have justice?”

“Let us try it before we try measures of blood,” said Elias. “It must surprise you that I, an outlaw too, and young and strong, propose pacific measures. It is because I see the number of miseries which we ourselves cause, as well as our tyrants. It is always the unarmed who pay the penalty.”

“And if nothing result from our steps?”

“If we are not heard, if our grievances are made light of, I shall be the first to put myself under your orders.”

The old man embraced Elias, a strange light in his eyes.

“I accept the proposition,” he said; “I know you will keep your word. I will help you to avenge your parents; you shall help me to avenge my sons!”

“Meanwhile, señor, you will do nothing violent.”

“And you will set forth the wrongs of the people; you know them. When shall I have the response?”

“In four days send me a man to the lake shore of San Diego. I will tell him the decision, and name the person on whom I count.”

“Elias will be chief when Captain Pablo is fallen,” said the old man. And he himself accompanied the helmsman out of the cave.

XL.

The Enigma.

The day after the departure of the doctor and the doctora, Ibarra returned to the pueblo. He hastened to the house of Captain Tiago to tell Maria he had been reconciled to the Church. Aunt Isabel, who was fond of the young fellow, and anxious for his marriage with her niece, was filled with joy. Captain Tiago was not at home.

“Come in!” Aunt Isabel cried in her bad Castilian. “Maria, Crisóstomo has returned to favor with the Church; the archbishop has disexcommunicated him!”

But Crisóstomo stood still, the smile froze on his lips, the words he was to say to Maria fled from his mind. Leaning against the balcony beside her was Linares; on the floor lay leafless roses and sampagas. The Spaniard was making garlands with the flowers and leaves from the vines; Maria Clara, buried in her fauteuil, pale and thoughtful, was playing with an ivory fan, less white than her slender hands.

At sight of Ibarra Linares paled, and carmine tinted the cheeks of Maria Clara. She tried to rise, but was not strong enough; she lowered her eyes and let her fan fall.

For some seconds there was an embarrassing silence; then Ibarra spoke.

“I have this moment arrived, and came straight here. You are better than I thought you were.”

One would have said Maria had become mute: her eyes still lowered, she did not say a word in reply. Ibarra looked searchingly at Linares; the timid young man bore the scrutiny with haughtiness.

“I see my arrival was not expected,” he went on slowly. “Pardon me, Maria, that I did not have myself announced. Some day I can explain to you—for we shall still see each other—surely!”

At these last words the girl raised toward her fiancé her beautiful eyes full of purity and sadness, so suppliant and so sweet that Ibarra stood still in confusion.

“May I come to-morrow?” he asked after a moment.

“You know that to me you are always welcome,” she said in a weak voice.

Ibarra left, calm in appearance, but a tempest was in his brain and freezing cold in his heart. What he had just seen and comprehended seemed to him incomprehensible. Was it doubt, inconstancy, betrayal?

“Oh, woman!” he murmured.

Without knowing where he went, he arrived at the ground where the school was going up. Señor Juan hailed him with delight, and showed him what had been done since he went away.

With surprise Ibarra saw Elias among the workmen; the helmsman saluted him, as did the others, and at the same time made him understand that he had something to say to him.

“Señor Juan,” said Ibarra, “will you bring me the list of workmen?” Señor Juan disappeared, and Ibarra approached Elias, who was lifting a great stone and loading it on a cart.

“If you can, señor,” said the helmsman, “give me an hour of conversation, there is something grave of which I want to talk with you. Will you go on the lake early this evening in my boat?”

Ibarra gave a sign of assent and Elias moved away. Señor Juan brought the list, but Ibarra searched it in vain for the name of the helmsman.

XLI.

The Voice of the Persecuted.

The sun was just setting when Ibarra stepped into the little boat on the lake shore. He appeared disturbed.

“Pardon me, señor,” said Elias, “for having asked this favor; I wished to speak to you freely, with no possibility of listeners.”

“And what have you to say?”

They had already shot away from the bank. The sun had disappeared behind the crest of the mountains, and as twilight is of short duration in this latitude, the night was descending rapidly, lighted by a brilliant moon.

“Señor,” replied Elias, “I am the spokesman of many unfortunates.” And briefly he told of his conversation with the chief of the tulisanes, omitting the old man’s doubts and threats.

“And they wish?” asked Ibarra, when he had finished.

“Radical reforms in the guard, the clergy, and the administration of justice.”

“Elias,” said Ibarra, “I know little of you, but I believe you will understand me when I say that though I have friends at Madrid whom I might influence, and though I might interest the captain-general in these people, neither they nor he could bring about such a revolution. And more, I would not take a step in this direction, because I believe what you want reformed is at present a necessary evil.”

“You also, señor, believe in necessary evil?” said Elias with a tremor in his voice. “You think one must go through evil to arrive at good?”

“No; but I look at evil as a violent remedy we sometimes use to cure ourselves of illness.”

“It is a bad medicine, señor, that does away with the symptoms without searching out the cause of the disease. The Municipal Guard exists only to suppress crime by force and terrorizing.”

“The institution may be imperfect, but the terror it inspires keeps down the number of criminals.”

“Rather say that this terror creates new criminals every day,” said Elias. “There are those who have become tulisanes for life. A first offence punished inhumanly, and the fear of further torture separates them forever from society and condemns them to kill or to be killed. The terrorism of the Municipal Guard shuts the doors of repentance, and as a tulisan, defending himself in the mountains, fights to much better advantage than the soldier he mocks, we cannot remedy the evil we have made. Terrorism may serve when a people is enslaved, and the mountains have no caverns; but when a desperate man feels the strength of his arm, and anger possesses him, terrorism cannot put out the fire for which it has itself heaped the fuel.”

“You would seem to speak reasonably, Elias, if one had not already his own convictions. But let me ask you, Who demand these reforms? You know I except you, whom I cannot class with these others; but are they not all criminals, or men ready to become so?”

“Go from pueblo to pueblo, señor, from house to house, and listen to the stifled groanings, and you will find that if you think that, you are mistaken.”

“But the Government must have a body of unlimited power, to make itself respected and its authority felt.”

“It is true, señor, when the Government is at war with the country; but is it not unfortunate that in times of peace the people should be made to feel they are at strife with their rulers? If, however, we prefer force to authority, we should at least be careful to whom we give unlimited power. Such a force in the hands of men ignorant, passionate, without moral training or tried honor, is a weapon thrown to a madman in the middle of an unarmed crowd. I grant the Government

must have an arm, but let it choose this arm well; and since it prefers the power it assumes to that the people might give it, let it at least show that it knows how to assume it!”

Elias spoke with passion; his eyes were brilliant, his voice was resonant. His words were followed by silence; the boat, no longer driven forward by the oars, seemed motionless on the surface of the lake; the moon shone resplendent in the sapphire sky; above the far banks the stars glittered.

“And what else do they ask?”

“Reform of the religious orders,—they demand better protection——”

“Against the religious orders?”

“Against their oppression, señor.”

“Do the Philippines forget the debt they owe those men who led them out of error into the true faith? It is a pity we are not taught the history of our country!”

“We must not forget this debt, no! But were not our nationality and independence a dear price with which to cancel it? We have also given the priests our best pueblos, our most fertile fields, and we still give them our savings, for the purchase of all sorts of religious objects. I realize that a pure faith and a veritable love of humanity moved the first missionaries who came to our shores. I acknowledge the debt we owe those noble men; I know that in those days Spain abounded in heroes, of politics as well as religion. But because the ancestors were true men, must we consent to the excesses of their unworthy descendants? Because a great good has been done us, may we not protest against being done a great wrong? The missionaries conquered the country, it is true; but do you think it is through the monks that Spain will keep the Philippines?”

“Yes, and through them only. It is the opinion of all those who have written on the islands.”

“Señor,” said Elias in dejection, “I thank you for your patience. I will take you back to the shore.”

“No,” said Ibarra, “go on; we should know which is right in so important a

question.”

“You will excuse me, señor,” said Elias, “I have not eloquence enough to convince you. If I have some education, I am an Indian, and my words would always be suspected. Those who have expressed opinions contrary to mine are Spaniards, and as such disarm in advance all contradiction. Besides, when I see that you, who love your country, you, whose father sleeps below this calm water, you who have been attacked and wronged yourself, have these opinions, I commence to doubt my own convictions, I acknowledge that the people may be mistaken. I must tell these unfortunates who have placed their confidence in men to put it in God or in their own strength.”

“Elias, your words hurt me, and make me, too, have doubts. I have not grown up with the people, and cannot know their needs. I only know what books have taught me. If I take your words with caution, it is because I fear you may be prejudiced by your personal wrongs. If I could know something of your story, perhaps it would alter my judgment. I am mistrustful of theories, am guided rather by facts.”

Elias thought a moment, then he said:

“If this is so, señor, I will briefly tell you my history.”

XLII.

The Family of Elias.

“It is about sixty years since my grandfather was employed as accountant by a Spanish merchant. Although still young, he was married, and had a son. One night the warehouse took fire, and was burned with the surrounding property. The loss was great, incendiarism was suspected, and my grandfather was accused. He had no money to pay for his defence, and he was convicted and condemned to be publicly flogged in the streets of his pueblo. Attached to a horse, he was beaten as he passed each street corner by men, his brothers. The curates, you know, advocate nothing but blows for the discipline of the Indian. When the unhappy man, marked forever with infamy, was liberated, his poor young wife went about seeking work to keep alive her disabled husband and their little child. Failing in this, she was forced to see them suffer, or to live herself a life of shame.”

Ibarra rose to his feet.

“Oh, don’t be disturbed! There was no longer honor or dishonor for her or hers. When the husband’s wounds were healed, they went to hide themselves in the mountains, where they lived for a time, shunned and feared. But my grandfather, less courageous than his wife, could not endure this existence and hung himself. When his body was found, by chance, my grandmother was accused for not reporting his death, and was in turn condemned to be flogged; but in consideration of her state her punishment was deferred. She gave birth to another son, unhappily sound and strong; two months later her sentence was carried out. Then she took her two children and fled into a neighboring province.

“The elder of the sons remembered that he had once been happy. As soon as he was old enough he became a tulisan to avenge his wrongs, and the name of Bâlat spread terror in many provinces. The younger son, endowed by nature with a gentle disposition, stayed with his mother, both living on the fruits of the forest

and dressing in the cast-off rags of those charitable enough to give. At length the famous Bâlat fell into the hands of justice, and paid a dreadful penalty for his crimes, to that society which had never done anything to teach him better than to commit them. One morning the young brother, who had been in the forest gathering fruits, came back to find the dead body of his mother in front of their cabin, the horror-stricken eyes staring upward; and following them with his own, the unhappy boy saw suspended from a limb the bloody head of his brother.”

“My God!” cried Ibarra.

“It is perhaps the cry that escaped the lips of my father,” said Elias coldly. “Like a condemned criminal, he fled across mountains and valleys. When he thought himself far enough away to have lost his identity, he found work with a rich man of the province of Tayabas. His industry and the sweetness of his disposition gained him favor. Here he stayed, economized, got a little capital, and as he was yet young, thought to be happy. He won the love of a girl of the pueblo, but delayed asking for her hand, fearing that his past might be uncovered. At length, when love’s indiscretion bore fruit, to save her reputation he was obliged to risk everything. He asked to marry her, his papers were demanded, and the truth was learned. As the father was rich, he instituted a prosecution. The unhappy young man made no defence, and was sent to the garrison.

“Our mother bore twins, my sister and me. She died while we were yet young, and we were told that our father was dead also. As our grandfather was rich, we had a happy childhood; we were always together, and loved each other as only twins can. I was sent very early to the college of the Jesuits, and my sister to La Concordia, that we might not be completely separated. In time we returned to take possession of our grandfather’s property. We had many servants and rich fields. We were both happy, and my sister was affianced to a man she adored.

“By my haughtiness, perhaps, and for pecuniary reasons, I had won the dislike of a distant relative. He threw in my face the obscurity of our origin and the dishonor of our race. Believing it calumny, I demanded satisfaction; the tomb where so many miseries sleep was opened, and the truth came forth to confound me. To crown all, there had been with us many years an old servant, who had suffered all my caprices without complaint. I do not know how our relative found it out, but he brought the old man before the court and made him declare the truth: he was our father. Our happiness was ended. I gave up my inheritance,

my sister lost her fiancé, and with our father we left the pueblo, to live where he might. The thought of the unhappiness he had brought upon us shortened our father's days, and my sister and I were left alone. She could not forget her lover, and little by little I saw her droop. One day she disappeared, and I searched everywhere for her in vain. Six months afterward, I learned that at the time I lost her there had been found on the lake shore of Calamba the body of a young woman drowned or assassinated. A knife, they said, was buried in her breast. From what they told me of her dress and her beauty, I recognized my sister. Since then I have wandered from province to province, my reputation and my story following in time. Many things are attributed to me, often unjustly, but I continue my way and take little account of men. You have my story, and that of one of the judgments of our brothers!"

Elias rowed on in a silence which was for some time unbroken.

"I believe you are not wrong when you say that justice should interest herself in the education of criminals," said Crisóstomo at length; "but it is impossible, it is Utopia; where get the money necessary to create so many new offices?"

"Why not use the priests, who vaunt their mission of peace and love? Can it be more meritorious to sprinkle a child's head with water than to wake, in the darkened conscience of a criminal, that spark lighted by God in every soul to guide it in the search for truth? Can it be more humane to accompany a condemned man to the gallows than to help him in the hard path that leads from vice to virtue? And the spies, the executioners, the guards, do not they too cost money?"

"My friend, if I believed all this, what could I do?"

"Alone, nothing; but if the people sustained you?"

"I shall never be the one to lead the people when they try to obtain by force what the Government does not think it time to give them. If I should see the people armed, I should range myself on the side of the Government. I do not recognize my country in a mob. I desire her good; that is why I build a school. I seek this good through instruction; without light there is no route."

"Without struggle, no liberty; without liberty, no light. You say you know your

country little. I believe you. You do not see the conflict coming, the cloud on the horizon: the struggle begun in the sphere of the mind is going to descend to the arena of blood. Listen to the voice of God; woe to those who resist it! History shall not be theirs!”

Elias was transfigured. He stood uncovered, his manly face illumined by the white light of the moon. He shook his mane of hair and continued:

“Do you not see how everything is waking? The sleep has lasted centuries, but some day the lightning will strike, and the bolt, instead of bringing ruin, will bring life. Do you not see minds in travail with new tendencies, and know that these tendencies, diverse now, will some day be guided by God into one way? God has not failed other peoples; He will not fail us!”

The words were followed by solemn silence. The boat, drawn on by the waves, was nearing the bank. Elias was the first to speak.

“What shall I say to those who sent me?”

“That they must wait. I pity their situation, but progress is slow, and there is always much of our own fault in our misfortunes.”

Elias said no more. He lowered his eyes and continued to row. When the boat touched the shore, he took leave of Ibarra.

“I thank you, señor,” he said, “for your kindness to me, and, in your own interest, I ask you to forget me from this day.”

When Ibarra was gone, Elias guided his boat toward a clump of reeds along the shore. His attention seemed absorbed in the thousands of diamonds that rose with the oar, and fell back and disappeared in the mystery of the gentle azure waves. When he touched land, a man came out from among the reeds.

“What shall I say to the captain?” he asked.

“Tell him Elias, if he lives, will keep his word,” replied the helmsman sadly.

“And when will you join us?”

“When your captain thinks the hour has come.”

“That is well; adieu!”

“If I live!” repeated Elias, under his breath.

XLIII.

Il Buon Di si Conosce da Mattina.

While Ibarra and Elias were on the lake, old Tasio, ill in his solitary little house, and Don Filippo, who had come to see him, were also talking of the country. For several days the old philosopher, or fool—as you find him—prostrated by a rapidly increasing feebleness, had not left his bed.

“The country,” he was saying to Don Filippo, “isn’t what it was twenty years ago.”

“Do you think so?”

“Don’t you see it?” asked the old man, sitting up. “Ah! you did not know the past. Hear the students of to-day talking. New names are spoken under the arches that once heard only those of Saint Thomas, Suarez, Amat, and the other idols of my day. In vain the monks cry from the chair against the demoralization of the times; in vain the convents extend their ramifications to strangle the new ideas. The roots of a tree may influence the parasites growing on it, but they are powerless against the bird, which, from the branches, mounts triumphant toward the sky!”

The old man spoke with animation, and his eye shone.

“And yet the new germ is very feeble,” said the lieutenant. “If they all set about it, the progress already so dearly paid for may yet be choked.”

“Choke it? Who? The weak dwarf, man, to choke progress, the powerful child of time and energy? When has he done that? He has tried dogma, the scaffold, and the stake, but *E pur si muove* is the device of progress. Wills are thwarted, individuals sacrificed. What does that mean to progress? She goes her way, and the blood of those who fall enriches the soil whence spring her new shoots. The

Dominicans themselves do not escape this law, and they are beginning to imitate the Jesuits, their irreconcilable enemies.”

“Do you hold that the Jesuits move with progress?” asked the astonished Don Filipo. “Then why are they so attacked in Europe?”

“I reply as did once an ecclesiastic of old,” said the philosopher, laying his head back on the pillow and putting on his mocking air, “that there are three ways of moving with progress: ahead, beside, behind; the first guide, the second follow, the third are dragged. The Jesuits are of these last. At present, in the Philippines, we are about three centuries behind the van of the general movement. The Jesuits, who in Europe are the reaction, viewed from here represent progress. For instance, the Philippines owe to them the introduction of the natural sciences, the soul of the nineteenth century. As for ourselves, at this moment we are entering a period of strife: strife between the past which grapples to itself the tumbling feudal castle, and the future whose song may be heard afar off, bringing us from distant lands the tidings of good news.”

The old man stopped, but seeing the expression of Don Filipo he smiled and went on.

“I can almost divine what you are thinking.”

“Can you?”

“You are thinking that I may easily be wrong; to-day I have the fever, and I am never infallible. But it is permitted us to dream. Why not make the dreams agreeable in the last hours of life? You are right: I do dream! Our young men think of nothing but loves and pleasures; our men of riper years have no activity but in vice, serve only to corrupt youth with their example; youth spends its best years without ideal, and childhood wakes to life in rust and darkness. It is well to die. *Claudite jam rivos, pueri.*”

“Is it time for your medicine?” asked Don Filipo, seeing the cloud on the old man’s face.

“The parting have no need of medicine, but those who stay. In a few days I shall be gone. The Philippines are in the shadows.”

XLIV.

La Gallera.

To keep holy the afternoon of Sunday in Spain, one goes ordinarily to the plaza de toros; in the Philippines, to the gallera. Cock-fights, introduced in the country about a century ago, are to-day one of the vices of the people. The Chinese can more easily deprive themselves of opium than the Filipinos of this bloody sport.

The poor, wishing to get money without work, risks here the little he has; the rich seeks a distraction at the price of whatever loose coin feasts and masses leave him. The education of their cocks costs both much pains, often more than that of their sons.

Since the Government permits and almost recommends it, let us take our part in the sport, sure of meeting friends.

The gallera of San Diego, like most others, is divided into three courts. In the entry is taken the sa pintû, that is, the price of admission. Of this price the Government has a share, and its revenues from this source are some hundred thousand pesos a year. It is said this license fee of vice serves to build schools, open roads, span rivers, and establish prizes for the encouragement of industry. Blessed be vice when it produces so happy results! In this entry are found girls selling buyo, cigars, and cakes. Here gather numerous children, brought by their fathers or uncles, whose duty it is to initiate them into the ways of life.

In the second court are most of the cocks. Here the contracts are made, amid recriminations, oaths, and peals of laughter. One caresses his cock, while another counts the scales on the feet of his, and extends the wings. See this fellow, rage in his face and heart, carrying by the legs his cock, deplored and dead. The animal which for months has been tended night and day, on which such brilliant hopes were built, will bring a peseta and make a stew. Sic transit gloria mundi! The ruined man goes home to his anxious wife and ragged children. He has lost

at once his cock and the price of his industry. Here the least intelligent discuss the sport; those least given to thought extend the wings of cocks, feel their muscles, weigh, and ponder. Some are dressed in elegance, followed and surrounded by the partisans of their cocks; others, ragged and dirty, the stigma of vice on their blighted faces, follow anxiously the movements of the rich; the purse may get empty, the passion remains. Here not a face that is not animated; in this the Filipino is not indolent, nor apathetic, nor silent; all is movement, passion. One would say they were all devoured by a thirst always more and more excited by muddy water.

From this court one passes to the pit, a circle with seats terraced to the roof, filled during the combats with a mass of men and children; scarcely ever does a woman risk herself so far. Here it is that destiny distributes smiles and tears, hunger and joyous feasts.

Entering, we recognize at once the gobernadorcillo, Captain Basilio, and José, the man with the scar, so cast down by the death of his brother. And here comes Captain Tiago, dressed like the sporting man, in a cotton flannel shirt, woollen trousers, and a jipijapa hat. He is followed by two servants with his cocks. A combat is soon arranged between one of these and a famous cock of Captain Basilio's. The news spreads, and a crowd gathers round, examining, considering, forecasting, betting.

While men were searching their pockets for their last cuarto, or in lieu of it were engaging their word, promising to sell the carabao, the next crop, and so forth, two young fellows, brothers apparently, looked on with envious eyes. José watched them by stealth, smiling evilly. Then making the pesos sound in his pocket, he passed the brothers, looking the other way and crying:

“I pay fifty; fifty against twenty for the lásak!”

The brothers looked at each other discontentedly.

“I told you not to risk all the money,” said the elder. “If you had listened to me _____”

The younger approached José and timidly touched his arm.

“What! It’s you?” he cried, turning and feigning surprise. “Does your brother accept my proposition?”

“He won’t do it. But if you would lend us something, as you say you know us _____”

José shook his head, shifted his position, and replied:

“Yes, I know you; you are Társilo and Bruno; and I know that your valiant father died from the club strokes of these soldiers. I know you don’t think of vengeance _____”

“Don’t concern yourself with our history,” said the elder brother, joining them; “that brings misfortune. If we hadn’t a sister, we should have been hanged long ago!”

“Hanged! Only cowards are hanged. Besides, the mountain isn’t so far.”

“A hundred against fifty for the bûlik!” cried some one passing.

“Loan us four pesos—three—two,” begged Bruno. José again shook his head.

“Sh! the money isn’t mine. Don Crisóstomo gave it to me for those who are willing to serve him. But I see you are not like your father; he was courageous. The man who is not must not expect to divert himself.” And he moved away.

“See!” said Bruno, “he’s talking with Pedro; he’s giving him a lot of money!” And in truth José was counting silver pieces into the palm of Sisa’s husband.

Társilo was moody and thoughtful; with his shirt sleeve he wiped the sweat from his forehead.

“Brother,” said Bruno, “I’m going, if you don’t; our father must be avenged!”

“Wait,” said Társilo, gazing into his eyes—they were both pale—“I’m going with you. You are right: our father must be avenged!” But he did not move, and again wiped his brow.

“What are you waiting for?” demanded Bruno impatiently.

“Don’t you think—our poor sister——”

“Bah! Isn’t Don Crisóstomo the chief, and haven’t we seen him with the governor-general? What risk do we run?”

“And if we die?”

“Did not our poor father die under their clubs?”

“You are right!”

The brothers set out to find José, but hesitation again possessed Tárсило.

“No; come away! we’re going to ruin ourselves!” he cried.

“Go on if you want to. I shall accept!”

“Bruno!”

Unhappily a man came up and asked:

“Are you betting? I’m for the lásak.”

“How much?” demanded Bruno.

The man counted his pieces.

“I have two hundred; fifty against forty!”

“No!” said Bruno resolutely.

“Good! Fifty against thirty!”

“Double it if you will.”

“A hundred against sixty, then!”

“Agreed! Wait while I go for the money,” and turning to his brother he said:

“Go away if you want to; I shall stay!”

Társilo reflected. He loved Bruno, and he loved sport.

“I am with you,” he said. They found José.

“Uncle,” said Társilo, “how much will you give?” “I’ve told you already; if you will promise to find others to help surprise the quarters, I’ll give you thirty pesos each, and ten to each companion. If all goes well, they will each receive a hundred, and you double. Don Crisóstomo is rich!”

“Agreed!” cried Bruno; “give us the money!”

“I knew you were like your father! Come this way, so that those who killed him cannot hear us,” said José. And drawing them into a corner, he added as he counted out the money:

“Don Crisóstomo has come and brought the arms. To-morrow night at eight o’clock meet me in the cemetery. I will give you the final word. Go find your companions.” And he left them.

The brothers appeared to have exchanged rôles. Társilo now seemed undisturbed; Bruno was pale. They went back to the crowd, which was leaving the circle for the raised seats. Little by little the place became silent. Only the soldadores were left in the ring holding two cocks, with exaggerated care, looking out for wounds. The silence became solemn; the spectators became mere caricatures of men; the fight was about to begin.

XLV.

A Call.

Two days later Brother Salvi presented himself at the house of Captain Tiago. The Franciscan was more gaunt and pale than usual; but as he went up the steps a strange light shone in his eyes, and his lips parted in a strange smile. Captain Tiago kissed his hand, and took his hat and cane, smiling beatifically.

“I bring good news,” said the curate as he entered the drawing-room; “good news for everybody. I have letters from Manila confirming the one Señor Ibarra brought me, so that I believe, Don Santiago, the obstacle is quite removed.”

Maria Clara, seated at the piano, made a movement to rise, but her strength failed her and she had to sit down again. Linares grew pale; Captain Tiago lowered his eyes.

“The young man seems to me very sympathetic,” said the curate. “At first I misjudged him. He is impulsive, but when he commits a fault, he knows so well how to atone for it that one is forced to forgive him. If it were not for Father Dámaso——” And the curate flashed a glance at Maria Clara. She was listening with all her being, but did not take her eyes off her music, in spite of the pinches that were expressing Sinang’s joy. Had they been alone they would have danced.

“But Father Dámaso has said,” continued the curate, without losing sight of Maria Clara, “that as godfather he could not permit; but, indeed, I believe if Señor Ibarra will ask his pardon everything will arrange itself.”

Maria rose, made an excuse, and with Victorina left the room.

“And if Father Dámaso does not pardon him?” asked Don Santiago in a low voice.

“Then Maria Clara must decide. But I believe the matter can be arranged.”

The sound of an arrival was heard, and Ibarra entered. His coming made a strange impression. Captain Tiago did not know whether to smile or weep. Father Salvi rose and offered his hand so affectionately that Crisóstomo could scarcely repress a look of surprise.

“Where have you been all day?” demanded wicked Sinang. “We asked each other: ‘What can have taken that soul newly rescued from perdition?’ and each of us had her opinion.”

“And am I to know what each opinion was?”

“No, not yet! Tell me where you went, so I can see who made the best guess.”

“That’s a secret too; but I can tell you by yourself if these gentlemen will permit.”

“Certainly, certainly?” said Father Salvi. Sinang drew Crisóstomo to the other end of the great room.

“Tell me, little friend,” said he, “is Maria angry with me?”

“I don’t know. She says you had best forget her, and then she cries. This morning when we were wondering where you were I said to tease her: ‘Perhaps he has gone a-courting.’ But she was quite grave, and said: ‘It is God’s will!’”

“Tell Maria I must see her alone,” said Ibarra, troubled.

“It will be difficult, but I’ll try to manage it.”

“And when shall I know?”

“To-morrow. But you are going without telling me the secret!”

“So I am. Well, I went to the pueblo of Los Baños to see about some cocoanut trees!”

“What a secret!” cried Sinang aloud in a tone of a usurer despoiled.

“Take care, I really don’t want you to speak of it.”

“I’ve no desire to,” said Sinang scornfully. “If it had been really of importance I should have told my friends; but cocoanuts, cocoanuts, who cares about cocoanuts!” and she ran off to find Maria.

Conversation languished, and Ibarra soon took his leave. Captain Tiago was torn between the bitter and the sweet. Linares said nothing. Only the curate affected gaiety and recounted tales.

XLVI.

A Conspiracy.

The bell was announcing the time of prayer the evening after. At its sound every one stopped his work and uncovered. The laborer coming from the fields checked his song; the woman in the streets crossed herself; the man caressed his cock and said the Angelus, that chance might favor him. And yet the curate, to the great scandal of pious old ladies, was running through the street toward the house of the alférez. He dashed up the steps and knocked impatiently. The alférez opened.

“Ah, father, I was just going to see you; your young buck——”

“I’ve something very important——” began the breathless curate.

“I can’t allow the fences to be broken; if he comes back, I shall fire on him.”

“Who knows whether to-morrow you will be alive,” said the curate, going on toward the reception-room.

“What? You think that youngster is going to kill me?”

“Señor alférez, the lives of all of us are in danger!”

“What?”

The curate pointed to the door, which the alférez closed in his customary fashion.

“Now, go ahead,” he said calmly.

“Did you see how I ran? When I thus forget myself, there is some grave reason.”

“And this time it is——”

The curate approached him and spoke low.

“Do you—know—of nothing—new?”

The alférez shrugged his shoulders.

“Are you speaking of Elias?”

“No, no! I’m speaking of a great peril!”

“Well, finish then!” cried the exasperated alférez.

The curate lowered his voice mysteriously:

“I have discovered a conspiracy!”

The alférez gave a spring and looked at the curate in stupefaction.

“A terrible conspiracy, well organized, that is to break out to-night!”

The alférez rushed across the room, took down his sabre from the wall, and grasped his revolver.

“Whom shall I arrest?” he cried.

“Be calm! There is plenty of time, thanks to the haste with which I came. At eight o’clock——”

“They shall be shot, all of them!”

“Listen! It is a secret of the confessional, discovered to me by a woman. At eight o’clock they are to surprise the barracks, sack the convent, and assassinate all the Spaniards.”

The alférez stood dumbfounded.

“Be ready for them; ambush your soldiers; send me four guards for the convent! You will earn your promotion to-night! I only ask you to make it known that it

was I who warned you.”

“It shall be known, father; it shall be known, and, perhaps, it will bring down a mitre!” replied the alférez, his eyes on the sleeves of his uniform.

While this conversation was in progress, Elias was running toward the house of Ibarra. He entered and was shown to the laboratory, where Crisóstomo was passing the time until the hour of his appointment with Maria Clara.

“Ah! It is you, Elias?” he said, without noticing the tremor of the helmsman.
“See here! I’ve just made a discovery: this piece of bamboo is non-combustible.”

“Señor, there is no time to talk of that; take your papers and flee!”

Ibarra looked up amazed, and, seeing the gravity of the helmsman’s face, let fall the piece of bamboo.

“Leave nothing behind that could compromise you, and may an hour from this time find you in a safer place than this!”

“What does all this mean?”

“That there is a conspiracy on foot which will be attributed to you. I have this moment been talking with a man hired to take part in it.”

“Did he tell you who paid him?”

“He said it was you.”

Ibarra stared in stupid amazement.

“Señor, you haven’t a moment to lose. The plot is to be carried out to-night.”

Crisóstomo still gazed at Elias, as if he did not understand.

“I learned of it too late; I don’t know the leaders; I can do nothing. Save yourself, señor!”

“Where can I go? I am due now at Captain Tiago’s,” said Ibarra, beginning to come out of his trance.

“To another pueblo, to Manila, anywhere! Destroy your papers! Fly, and await events!”

“And Maria Clara? No! Better die!”

Elias wrung his hands.

“Prepare for the accusation, at all events. Destroy your papers!”

“Aid me then,” said Crisóstomo, in almost helpless bewilderment. “They are in these cabinets. My father’s letters might compromise me. You will know them by the addresses.” And he tore open one drawer after another. Elias worked to better purpose, choosing here, rejecting there. Suddenly he stopped, his pupils dilated; he turned a paper over and over in his hand, then in a trembling voice he asked:

“Your family knew Don Pedro Eibarramendia?”

“He was my great-grandfather.”

“Your great-grandfather?” repeated Elias, livid.

“Yes,” said Ibarra mechanically, and totally unobservant of Elias. “The name was too long; we cut it.”

“Was he a Basque?” asked Elias slowly.

“Yes; but what ails you?” said Crisóstomo, looking round and recoiling before the hard face and clenched fists of Elias.

“Do you know who Don Pedro Eibarramendia was? Don Pedro Eibarramendia was the wretch who caused all our misfortune! I have long been searching for his descendants; God has delivered you into my hands! Look at me! Do you think I have suffered? And you live, and you love, and have a fortune and a home; you live, you live!” and, beside himself, he ran toward a collection of arms on the wall. But no sooner had he reached down two poniards than he dropped them, looking blindly at Ibarra, who stood rigid.

“What was I going to do?” he said under his breath, and he fled like a madman.

XLVII.

The Catastrophe.

Captain Tiago, Aunt Isabel, and Linares were dining. Maria Clara had said she was not hungry, and was at the piano with Sinang. The two girls had arranged this moment for meeting Ibarra away from too watchful eyes. The clock struck eight.

“He’s coming! Listen!” cried the laughing Sinang.

He entered, white and sad. Maria Clara, in alarm, started toward him, but before any one could speak a fusilade sounded in the street; then random pistol shots, and cries and clamor. Crisóstomo seemed glued to the floor. The diners came running in crying: “The tulisanes! The tulisanes!” Aunt Isabel fell on her knees half dead from fright, Captain Tiago was weeping. Some one rushed about fastening the windows. The tumult continued outside; then little by little there fell a dreadful silence. Presently the alférez was heard crying out as he ran through the street:

“Father Salvi! Father Salvi!”

“Mercy!” exclaimed Aunt Isabel. “The alférez is asking for confession!”

“The alférez is wounded!” murmured Linares, with an expression of the utmost relief.

“The tulisanes have killed the alférez! Maria, Sinang, into your chamber! Barricade the door!”

In spite of the protests of Aunt Isabel, Ibarra went out into the street. Everything seemed turning round and round him; his ears rang; he could scarcely move his limbs. Spots of blood, flashes of light and darkness alternated before his eyes.

The streets were deserted, but the barracks were in confusion, and voices came from the tribunal, that of the alférez dominating all the others. Ibarra passed unchallenged, and reached his home, where his servants were anxiously watching for him.

“Saddle me the best horse and go to bed,” he said to them.

He entered his cabinet and began to pack a valise. He had put in his money and jewels and Maria’s picture and was gathering up his papers when there came three resounding knocks at the house door.

“Open in the name of the King! Open or we force the door!” said an imperious voice. Ibarra armed himself and looked toward the window; then changed his mind, threw down his revolver, and went to the door. Three guards immediately seized him.

“I make you prisoner in the name of the King!” said the sergeant.

“Why?”

“You will learn at the tribunal; I am forbidden to talk with you.”

“I am at your disposition. It will not be for, I suppose, long.”

“If you promise not to try to escape us, we may leave your hands free; the alférez grants you that favor.”

Crisóstomo took his hat and followed the guards, leaving his servants in consternation.

Elias, after leaving the house of Ibarra, ran like a madman, not knowing whither. He crossed the fields and reached the wood. He was fleeing from men and their habitations; he was fleeing from light; the moon made him suffer. He buried himself in the mysterious silence of the wood. The birds stirred, wakened from their sleep; owls flew from branch to branch, screeching or looking at him with great, round eyes. Elias did not see or hear them; he thought he was followed by the irate shades of his ancestors. From every branch hung the bleeding head of Bâlat. At the foot of every tree he stumbled against the cold body of his grandmother; among the shadows swung the skeleton of his infamous

grandfather; and the skeleton, the body, and the bleeding head cried out:
“Coward! Coward!”

He ran on. He left the mountain and went down to the lake, moving feverishly along the shore; his wandering eyes became fixed upon a point on the tranquil surface, and there, surrounded by a silver nimbus and rocked by the tide, stood a shade which he seemed to recognize. Yes, that was her hair, so long and beautiful; yes, that was her breast, gaping from the poniard stroke. And the wretched man, kneeling in the sand, stretched out his arms to the cherished vision:

“Thou! Thou, too!” he cried.

His eyes fixed on the apparition, he rose, entered the water and descended the gentle slope of the beach. Already he was far from the bank; the waves lapped his waist; but he went on fascinated. The water reached his breast. Did he know it? Suddenly a volley tore the air; the night was so calm that the rifle shots sounded clear and sharp. He stopped, listened, came to himself; the shade vanished; the dream was gone. He perceived that he was in the lake, level with his eyes across the tranquil water he saw the lights in the poor cabins of fishermen. Everything came back to him. He made for the shore and went rapidly toward the pueblo.

San Diego was deserted; the houses were closed; even the dogs had hidden themselves. The glittering light that bathed everything detached the shadows boldly, making the solitude still more dreary.

Fearing to encounter the guards, Elias scaled fences and hedges, and so, making his way through the gardens, reached the home of Ibarra. The servants were around the door lamenting the arrest of their master. Elias learned what had happened, and made feint of going away, but returned to the back of the house, jumped the wall, climbed into a window and made his way to the laboratory. He saw the papers, the arms taken down, the bags of money and jewels, Maria's picture, and had a vision of Ibarra surprised by the soldiers. He meditated a moment and decided to bury the things of value in the garden. He gathered them up, went to the window, and saw gleaming in the moonlight the casques and bayonets of the guard. His plans were quickly laid. He hid about his person the money and jewels, and, after an instant's hesitation, the picture of Maria. Then,

heaping all the papers in the middle of the room, he saturated them with oil from a lamp, threw the lighted candle in the midst, and sprang out of the window. It was none too soon: the guards were forcing entrance against the protests of the servants.

But dense smoke made its way through the house and tongues of flame began to break out. Soldiers and servants together cried fire and rushed toward the cabinet, but the flames had reached the chemicals, and their explosion drove every one back. The water the servants could bring was useless, and the house stood so apart that their cries brought no aid. The flames leaped upward amid great spirals of smoke; the house, long respected by the elements, was now their prisoner.

XLVIII.

Gossip.

It was not yet dawn. The street in which were the barracks and tribunal was still deserted; none of its houses gave a sign of life. Suddenly the shutter of a window opened with a bang and a child's head appeared, looking in all directions, the little neck stretched to its utmost—plas! It was the sound of a smart slap in contact with the fresh human skin. The child screwed up his face, shut his eyes, and disappeared from the window, which was violently closed again.

But the example had been given: the two bangs of the shutter had been heard. Another window opened, this time with precaution, and the wrinkled and toothless head of an old woman looked stealthily out. It was Sister Putá, the old dame who had caused such a commotion during Father Dámaso's sermon. Children and old women are the representatives of curiosity in the world; the children want to know, the old women to live over again. The old sister stayed longer than the child, and gazed into the distance with contracted brows. Timidly a skylight opened in the house opposite, giving passage to the head and shoulders of sister Rufa. The two old women looked across at each other, smiled, exchanged gestures, and signed themselves.

"Since the sack of the pueblo by Bâlat I've not known such a night!" said Sister Putá.

"What a firing! They say it was the band of old Pablo."

"Tulisanes? Impossible! I heard it was the cuadrilleros against the guards; that's why Don Filipo was arrested."

"They say at least fourteen are dead."

Other windows opened and people were seen exchanging greetings and gossip.

By the light of the dawn, which promised a splendid day, soldiers could now be seen dimly at the end of the street, like gray silhouettes coming and going.

“Do you know what it was?” asked a man, with a villainous face.

“Yes, the cuadrilleros.”

“No, señor, a revolt!”

“What revolt? The curate against the alférez?”

“Oh, no; nothing of that kind. It was an uprising of the Chinese.”

“The Chinese!” repeated all the listeners, with great disappointment.

“That’s why we don’t see one!”

“They are all dead!”

“I—I suspected they had something on foot!”

“I saw it, too. Last night——”

“What a pity they are all dead before Christmas!” cried Sister Rufa. “We shall not get their presents!”

The streets began to show signs of life. First the dogs, pigs, and chickens began to circulate; then some little ragged boys, keeping hold of each other’s hands, ventured to approach the barracks. Two or three old women crept after them, their heads wrapt in handkerchiefs knotted under their chins, pretending to tell their beads, so as not to be driven back by the soldiers. When it was certain that one might come and go without risking a pistol shot, the men commenced to stroll out. Affecting indifference and stroking their cocks, they finally got as far as the tribunal.

Every quarter hour a new version of the affair was circulated. Ibarra with his servants had tried to carry off Maria Clara, and in defending her, Captain Tiago had been wounded. The number of dead was no longer fourteen, but thirty. At half-past seven the version which received most credit was clear and detailed.

“I’ve just come from the tribunal,” said a passer, “where I saw Don Filipo and Don Crisóstomo prisoners. Well, Bruno, son of the man who was beaten to death, has confessed everything. You know, Captain Tiago is to marry his daughter to the young Spaniard. Don Crisóstomo wanted revenge, and planned to massacre all the Spaniards. His band attacked the convent and the barracks. They say many of them escaped. The guards burned Don Crisóstomo’s house, and if he hadn’t been arrested, they would have burned him, too.”

“They burned the house?”

“You can still see the smoke from here,” said the narrator.

Everybody looked: a column of smoke was rising against the sky. Then the comments began, some pitying, some accusing.

“Poor young man!” cried the husband of Sister Putá.

“What!” cried the sister. “You are ready to defend a man that heaven has so plainly punished? You’ll find yourself arrested too. You uphold a falling house!”

The husband was silent; the argument had told.

“Yes,” went on the old woman. “After striking down Father Dámaso, there was nothing left but to kill Father Salvi!”

“But you can’t deny he was a good child.”

“Yes, he was good,” replied the old woman; “but he went to Europe, and those who go to Europe come back heretics, the curates say.”

“Oho!” said the husband, taking his advantage. “And the curate, and all the curates, and the archbishop, and the pope, aren’t they all Spaniards? What? And are they heretics?”

Happily for Sister Putá, the conversation was cut short. A servant came running, pale and horror-stricken.

“A man hung—in our neighbor’s garden!” she gasped.

A man hung! Nobody stirred.

“Let’s come and see,” said the old man, rising.

“Don’t go near him,” cried Sister Putá, “’twill bring us misfortune. If he’s hung, so much the worse for him!”

“Let me see him, woman. You, Juan, go and inform them at the tribunal; he may not be dead.” And the old man went off, the women, even Sister Putá, following at a distance, full of fear, but also of curiosity.

Hanging from the branch of a sandal tree in the garden a human body met their gaze. The brave man examined it.

“We must wait for the authorities; he’s been dead a long time,” he said.

Little by little the women drew near.

“It’s the new neighbor,” they whispered. “See the scar on his face?”

In half an hour the authorities arrived.

“People are in a great hurry to die!” said the directorcillo, cocking his pen behind his ear, and he began his investigation.

Meanwhile a peasant wearing a great salakat on his head and having his neck muffled was examining the body and the cord. He noticed several evidences that the man was dead before he was hung. The curious countryman noticed also that the clothing seemed recently torn and was covered with dust.

“What are you looking at?” demanded the directorcillo, who had gathered all his evidence.

“I was looking, señor, to see if I knew him,” stammered the man, half uncovering, in which he managed to lower his salakat even farther over his eyes.

“But didn’t you hear that it is a certain José? You must be asleep!”

Everybody laughed. The confused countryman stammered something else and

went away. When he had reached a safe distance, he took off his disguise and resumed the stature and gait of Elias.

XLIX.

Væ Victis.

With threatening air the guards marched back and forth before the door of the town hall, menacing with the butt of their rifles intrepid small boys, who came and raised themselves on tiptoe to see through the gratings.

The court room had not the same appearance as the day of the discussion of the fête. The guards and the cuadrilleros spoke low; the alférez paced the room, looking angrily at the door from time to time. In a corner yawned Doña Consolacion, her steely eyes riveted on the door leading into the prison. The arm-chair under the picture of His Majesty was empty.

It was almost nine o'clock when the curate arrived.

"Well," said the alférez, "you haven't kept us waiting!"

"I did not wish to be here," said the curate, ignoring the tone of the alférez. "I am very nervous."

"I thought it best to wait for you," said the alférez. "We have eight here," he went on, pointing toward the door of the prison; "the one called Bruno died in the night. Are you ready to examine the two unknown prisoners?"

The curate sat down in the arm-chair.

"Let us go on," he said.

"Bring out the two in the cepo!" ordered the alférez in as terrible a voice as he could command. Then turning to the curate:

"We skipped two holes."

For the benefit of those not acquainted with the instruments of torture of the Philippines, we will say that the cepo, a form of stocks, is one of the most innocent; but by skipping enough holes, the position is made most trying. It is, however, a torture that can be long endured.

The jailor drew the bolt and opened the door. A sickening odor escaped, and a match lighted by one of the guards went out in the vitiated air; when it was possible to take in a candle, one could see dimly, from the rooms outside, the forms of men crouching or standing. The cepo was opened.

A dark figure came out between two soldiers; it was Társilo, the brother of Bruno. His torn clothing let his splendid muscles show. The other prisoner brought out was weeping and lamenting.

“What is your name?” the alférez demanded of Társilo.

“Társilo Alasigan.”

“What did Don Crisóstomo promise you for attacking the convent?”

“I have never had any communication with Don Crisóstomo.”

“Don’t attempt to deny it: what other reason had you for joining the conspiracy?”

“You had killed our father, we wished to avenge him, nothing more. Go find two of your guards. They’re at the foot of the precipice, where we threw them. You may kill me now, you will learn nothing more.”

There was silence and general surprise.

“You will name your accomplices,” cried the alférez, brandishing his cane.

The accused man smiled disdainfully. The alférez talked apart with the curate.

“Take him where the bodies are,” he ordered.

In a corner of the patio, on an old cart, five bodies were heaped under a piece of soiled matting.

“Do you know them?” asked the alférez, lifting the covering. Tárсило did not reply. He saw the body of Sisa’s husband, and that of his brother, pierced through with bayonet strokes. His face grew darker, and a great sigh escaped him; but he was mute.

“Beat him till he confesses or dies!” cried the exasperated alférez.

They led him back where the other prisoner, with chattering teeth, was invoking the saints.

“Do you know this man?” demanded Father Salvi.

“I never saw him before,” replied Tárсило, looking at the poor wretch with faint compassion.

“Fasten him to the bench; gag him!” ordered the alférez, trembling with rage. When this was done, a guard began his sad task.

Father Salvi, pale and haggard, rose trembling, and left the tribunal. In the street he saw a girl, leaning against the wall, rigid, motionless, her eyes far away. The sun shone full down on her. She seemed not to breathe but to count, one after another, the muffled blows inside. It was Tárсило’s sister.

The torture continued until the soldier, breathless, let his arm fall, and the alférez ordered his victim released. But Tárсило still refused to speak. Then Doña Consolacion whispered in her husband’s ear; he nodded.

“To the well with him!” he said.

The Filipinos know what that means. In Tagalo it is called timbaîn. We do not know who invented this judiciary process, but it must belong to antiquity. Truth coming out of a well is perhaps a sarcastic interpretation.

In the middle of the patio of the tribunal was a picturesque well curb of uncut stones. It had a rustic crank of bamboo; its water was slimy and putrid. All sorts of refuse had been thrown around it and in it.

Toward this Tárсило was led. He was very pale, and his lips trembled, if he was not praying. The pride he had shown appeared now to be crushed out; he seemed

resigned to suffer. The poor wretch looked enviously at the pile of bodies, and sighed heavily.

“Speak then!” said the directorcillo. “You will be hung anyway. Why not die without so much suffering?” But Társilo remained mute.

When the well was reached, they bound his feet. He was to be let down head foremost. He was fastened to the curb; the crank turned, and his body disappeared. The alférez noted the seconds with his watch. At the signal the body was drawn up, too pitiable to describe; but Társilo was still mute. Again he was let down, again he refused to speak; when he was drawn up the third time, he no longer breathed.

His torturers looked at each other in consternation. The alférez ordered the body taken down, and they all examined it for signs of life; but there were none.

“See,” said a cuadrillero, at last, “he has strangled himself with his tongue!”

“Put the body with the others,” ordered the alférez nervously. “We must examine the other unknown prisoner.”

L.

Accurst.

The news spread that the prisoners were to be taken to the capital, and members of their families ran wildly from convent to barracks, from barracks to tribunal, but found no consolation anywhere. The curate was said to be ill. The guards dealt roughly with the supplicating women, and the gobernadorcillo was more useless than ever. The friends of the accused, therefore, had collected near the prison, waiting for them to be brought out. Doray, Don Filipino's young wife, wandered back and forth, her child in her arms, both crying. The Capitana Tinay called on her son Antonio, and brave Capitana Maria watched the grating behind which were her twins, her only children.

At two in the afternoon, an uncovered cart drawn by two oxen stopped in front of the tribunal. It was surrounded, and there were loud threats of breaking it.

"Don't do that!" cried Capitana Maria; "do you wish them to go on foot?" In a few moments, twenty soldiers came out and surrounded the ox-cart; then the prisoners appeared. The first was Don Filipino, who smiled at his wife. Doray responded by bitter sobs, and would have rushed to her husband, had not the guards held her back. The son of Capitana Tinay was crying like a child, which did not help to check the lamentations of his family. The twins were calm and grave. Ibarra came last. He walked between two guards, his hand free; his eyes sought on all sides for a friendly face.

"He is the guilty one!" cried numerous voices. "He is the guilty one, and his hands are unbound!"

"Bind my arms," said Ibarra to his guards.

"We have no orders."

“Bind me!”

The soldiers obeyed.

The alférez appeared on horseback, armed to the teeth, and followed by an escort of soldiers. The prisoners’ friends saluted them with affectionate words; only Ibarra was friendless.

“What has my husband done to you?” sobbed Doray. “See my child; you have robbed him of his father!”

Grief began to turn to hate against the man who was said to have provoked the uprising.

The alférez gave the order to start.

“Coward!” cried a woman, as the cart moved off. “While the others fought, you were in hiding! Coward!”

“Curses on you!” cried an old man, running after. “Cursed be the gold heaped up by your family to take away our peace. Accurst! accurst!”

“May you be hung, heretic!” cried a woman, picking up a stone and throwing it after him. Her example was promptly followed, and a shower of dust and pebbles beat against the unhappy man. Crisóstomo bore this injustice without a sign. It was the farewell of his beloved country. He bent his head and sat motionless. Perhaps he was thinking of a man beaten in the pueblo streets; perhaps of the body of a girl, washed up by the waves.

The alférez felt obliged to drive away the crowd, but stones did not cease to fall, nor insult to sound. One mother only did not curse Ibarra; the Capitana Maria watched her sons go, with compressed lips and eyes full of silent tears.

Of all the people in the open windows as he passed, none but the indifferent and curious showed Ibarra the least compassion. All his friends had deserted him, even Captain Basilio, who had forbidden Sinang to weep. When Crisóstomo passed the smoking ruins of his home, that home where he was born, and spent his happy childhood and youth, the tears, long repressed, gushed from his eyes, and bound as he was, he had to experience the bitterness of showing a grief that

could not rouse the slightest sympathy.

From a hill, an old man, pale and thin, wrapped in a mantle, and leaning on a stick, watched the sad procession. At the news of what had happened, old Tasio had left his bed, and tried to go to the pueblo, but his strength had failed him. He followed the cart with his eyes, until it disappeared in the distance. Then, after resting a while in thought, he got up painfully, and started toward his home, halting for breath at almost every step. The next day some shepherds found him dead under the shadow of his solitary house.

LI.

Patriotism and Interest.

The telegraph had secretly transmitted to Manila the news of the uprising, and thirty-six hours later, the newspapers, their accounts expanded, corrected, and mutilated by the attorney-general, talked about it with much mystery and no little menace. Meanwhile the private accounts, coming out of the convents, had gone from mouth to mouth, to the great alarm of those who heard them. The fact, distorted in countless versions, was accepted as true with more or less readiness, according to its fitness to the passions and ideas of the different hearers.

Though public tranquillity was not disturbed, the peace of the hearthstones became like that of a fish-pond, all on top; underneath was commotion. Crosses, gold lace, office, power, honors of all kinds began to hover over one part of the population, like butterflies in a golden sunshine. For the others a dark cloud rose on the horizon, and against this ashy background stood in relief bars, chains, and the fateful arms of the gibbet. Destiny presented the event to the Manila imagination, like certain Chinese fans: one face painted black, the other gilded, and gorgeous with birds and flowers.

There was great agitation in the convents. The provincials ordered their carriages, and held secret conferences; then presented themselves at the palace, to offer their support to the imperiled government.

“A Te Deum, a Te Deum!” said a monk in one convent. “Through the goodness of God, our worth is made manifest in these perilous times!”

“This petty general, this prophet of evil, will gnaw his moustaches after this little lesson,” said another.

“What would have become of him without the religious orders?”

“The papers almost go to the point of demanding a mitre for Brother Salvi.”

“And he will get it! He’s consumed with desire for it!”

“Do you think so?”

“Why shouldn’t he be? In these days mitres are given for the asking.”

“If mitres had eyes, and could see on what craniums——”

We spare our readers other comments of this nature. Let us enter the home of a private citizen, and as we know few people at Manila, we will knock at the door of Captain Tinong, the friendly and hospitable gentleman whom we saw inviting Ibarra, with so much insistence, to honor his house with a visit.

In his rich and spacious drawing-room, at Tondo, Captain Tinong is seated in a great arm-chair, passing his hand despairingly across his brow; while his weeping wife, the Capitana Tinchang, reads him a sermon, listened to by their two daughters, who are seated in a corner, mute with stupefaction.

“Ah, Virgin of Antipolo!” cried the wife. “Ah, Virgin of the Rosary; I told you so! I told you so! Ah, Virgin of Carmel! Ah!”

“Why, no! You didn’t tell me anything,” Captain Tinong finally ventured to reply. “On the contrary, you said I did well to keep up the friendship with Captain Tiago, and to go to his house, because—because he was rich; and you said——”

“What did I say? I didn’t say it! I didn’t say anything! Ah, if you had listened to me!”

“Now you throw the blame back on me!” said the captain bitterly, striking the arm of his chair with his fist. “Didn’t you say I did well to invite him to dinner, because, as he was rich——”

“It is true I said that, because—because it couldn’t be helped; you had already invited him; and you did nothing but praise him. Don Ibarra here, and Don Ibarra there, and Don Ibarra on all sides. But I didn’t advise you to see him or to speak to him at the dinner. That you cannot deny!”

“Did I know, for instance, that he was to be there?”

“You ought to have known it!”

“How, if I wasn’t even acquainted with him?”

“You ought to have been acquainted with him!”

“But, Tinchang, if it was the first time I had ever seen him or heard him spoken of?”

“You ought to have seen him before, you ought to have heard him spoken of; that’s what you are a man for! And now, you will be sent into exile, our goods will be confiscated——Oh, if I were a man! if I were a man!”

“And if you were a man,” asked the vexed husband, “what would you do?”

“What? Why, to-day, this very day, I should present myself to the captain-general, and offer to fight against the rebels, this very day!”

“But didn’t you read what the Diario says? Listen! ‘The infamous and abortive treason has been repressed with energy, force, and vigor, and the rebellious enemies of the country and their accomplices will promptly feel all the weight and all the severity of the laws!’ You see, there is no rebellion!”

“That makes no difference, you should present yourself; many did it in 1872, and so nobody harmed them.”

“Yes! it was done also by Father Bug——” But his wife’s hands were over his mouth.

“Say it! Speak that name, so you may be hung to-morrow at Bagumbayan! Don’t you know it is enough to get you executed without so much as a trial? Go on, say it!”

But though Captain Tinong had wished, he couldn’t have done it. His wife held his mouth with both her hands, squeezing his little head against the back of the chair. Perhaps the poor man would have died of asphyxia, had not a new person come on the stage.

It was their cousin, Don Primitivo, who knew Amat by heart; a man of forty, large and corpulent, and dressed with the utmost care.

“Quid video?” he cried, upon entering; “what is going on?”

“Ah, cousin!” said the wife, weeping, and running to him, “I had you sent for, for I don’t know what will become of us! What do you advise—you who have studied Latin and understand reasoning——”

“But quid quæritis? Nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu.” And he sat down sedately. The Latin phrases seemed to have a tranquillizing effect; the husband and wife ceased to lament, and came nearer, awaiting the counsel of their cousin’s lips, as once the Greeks awaited the saving phrase of the oracle.

“Why are you mourning? Ubinam gentium sumus?”

“You know the story of the uprising——”

“Well, what of it? Don Crisóstomo owes you?”

“No! but do you know that Tinong invited him to dinner, and that he bowed to him on the bridge——in the middle of the day? They will say he was a friend of ours!”

“Friend?” cried the Latin, in alarm, rising; “tell me who your friends are, and I’ll tell you who you are yourself! Malum est negotium et est timendum rerum istarum horrendissimum resultatum. Hum!”

So many words in um terrified Captain Tinong. He became frightfully pale. His wife joined her hands in supplication.

“Cousin, you speak to us now in Latin, but you know we haven’t studied philosophy like you. Speak to us in Tagal or Castilian; give us your advice.”

“It is deplorable that you do not know Latin, my cousin: Latin verities are lies in Tagalo. Contra principi negantem fustibus est arguendum, is, in Latin, a truth as veritable as Noah’s ark. I once put it in practice in Tagalo, and it was I who got beaten. It is indeed a misfortune that you do not know Latin! In Latin it might all be arranged. You have done wrong, very wrong, cousins, to make friends with

this young man. The just pay the dues of sinners. I feel almost like advising you to make your will!” and he moved his head gloomily from side to side.

“Saturnino, what ails you?” cried Capitana Tinchang, terrified. “Ah! Heaven! he is dead! A doctor! Tinong, Tinongy!”

“He has only fainted, cousin; bring some water.” Don Primitivo sprinkled his face, and the unfortunate man revived.

“Come, come! don’t weep! I’ve found a remedy. Put him in bed. Come, come! courage! I am with you, and all the wisdom of the ancients! Call a doctor, and this very day, cousin, go present yourself to the captain-general, and take him a present, a gold chain, a ring; say it’s a Christmas present. Shut the windows and doors, and if any one asks for your husband, say he is seriously ill. Meanwhile I’ll burn all the letters, papers, and books, as Don Crisóstomo did. Scripti testes sunt! Go on to the captain’s. Leave me to myself. In extremis extrema. Give me the power of a Roman dictator, and see whether I save the coun—What am I saying—the cousin!”

He commenced to upset the shelves of the library, and tear papers and letters. Then he lighted a fire on the kitchen hearth, and the *auto-da-fé* began.

“‘Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres,’ by Copernicus. Whew! ite, maledicte, in ignem kalanis!” he cried, throwing it to the flames. “Revolution and Copernicus! Crime upon crime! If I don’t get through soon enough! ‘Liberty in the Philippines!’ What books! Into the fire with them!” The most innocent works did not escape the common fate. Cousin Primitivo was right. The just pay for sinners.

Four or five hours later, at a fashionable gathering, the events of the day were being discussed. There were present a number of elderly married ladies and spinsters, together with the wives and daughters of clerks of the administration, all in European costume, fanning and yawning. Among the men, who, by their manners, showed their position, as did the women, was a man advanced in age, small and one-armed, who was treated with distinction, and who kept a reserved distance.

“I could never before suffer the monks and civil guards, because of their want of manners,” a portly lady was saying, “but now that I see of what service they are,

I could almost marry one of them. I am patriotic.”

“I am of the very same mind,” said a very prim spinster. “But what a pity the former governor isn’t with us!”

“He would put an end to the race of filibusterillos!”

“Don’t they say there are many islands yet uninhabited?”

“If I were the captain-general——”

“Señoras,” said the one-armed man, “the captain-general knows his duty. I understand he is greatly irritated, for he had loaded this Ibarra with favors.”

“Loaded him with favors!” repeated the slim gentlewoman, fanning furiously. “What ingrates these Indians are! Is it possible to treat them like human beings?”

“Do you know what I’ve heard?” asked an officer.

“No! What is it? What do they say?”

“People worthy of confidence say that all this noise about building a school was a pure pretext; what he meant to make was a fort for his own defence when he had been attacked.”

“What infamy! Would any one but an Indian be capable of it?”

“But they say this filibustero is the son of a Spaniard,” said the one-armed man, without looking at anybody.

“There it is again,” cried the portly lady; “always these creoles! No Indian understands anything about revolution. Train crows, and they’ll pick your eyes out!”

“Do you know what I’ve heard?” asked a pretty creole, to turn the conversation. “The wife of Captain Tinong—you remember? We danced and dined at his house at the fête of Tondo—well, the wife of Captain Tinong gave the captain-general, this afternoon, a ring worth a thousand pesos. She said it was a Christmas present.”

“Christmas doesn’t come for a month.”

“She must have feared a downpour,” said the stout lady.

“And so got under cover,” said the slim.

“That is evident,” said the one-armed man, thoughtfully. “I fear there is something back of this.”

“I also,” said the portly lady. “The wife of Captain Tinong is very parsimonious—she has never sent us presents, though we have been to her house. When such a person lets slip a little present of a thousand little pesos——”

“But is it certain?” demanded the one-armed man.

“Absolutely! His excellency’s aide-de-camp told my cousin, to whom he is engaged. I’m tempted to believe it’s a ring she wore the day of the fête. She’s always covered with diamonds.”

“That’s one way of advertising! Instead of buying a lay-figure or renting a shop ——”

The one-armed man found a pretext for leaving.

Two hours later, when all the city was asleep, certain inhabitants of Tondo received an invitation through the medium of soldiers. Authority could not permit people of position and property to sleep in houses so ill guarded. In the fortress of Santiago, and in other government buildings, their sleep would be more tranquil and refreshing. Among these people was the unfortunate Captain Tinong.

LII.

Maria Clara Marries.

Captain Tiago was very happy. During these troublous times, no one had paid any attention to him. He had not been arrested, he had not been subjected to cross-examination, to electrical machines, to repeated foot-baths in subterranean habitations, nor to any other of these pleasantries, well known to certain people who call themselves civilized. His friends, that is to say, those who had been—for he had repudiated his Filipino friends as soon as they had become suspects in the eyes of the Government—had returned home after several days of vacation in the edifices of the State. The captain-general had ordered them out of his possessions, to the great displeasure of the one-armed man, who would have liked to celebrate the approaching Christmas in so numerous a company of the rich.

Captain Tinong returned to his home, ill, pale, another man. The excursion had not been for his good. He said nothing, not even to greet his family, who laughed and wept over him, mad with joy. The poor man no longer left the house, for fear of saluting a filibuster. Cousin Primitivo himself, with all the wisdom of the ancients, could not draw him out of his mutism.

Stories like that of Captain Tinong's were numerous, and Captain Tiago was not ignorant of them. He overflowed with gratitude, without knowing exactly to whom he owed these signal favors. Aunt Isabel attributed the miracle to the Virgin of Antipolo.

"I too, Isabel," said Captain Tiago, "but the Virgin of Antipolo has probably not done it alone; my friends have helped, and my future son-in-law, Señor Linares."

It was whispered that Ibarra would be hung; that in spite of lack of proofs of his guilt, one thing had been found that confirmed the accusation; the experts had declared the school was so designed that it might pass for a rampart, faulty

enough, to be sure, but what one might expect of ignorant Indians.

In the midst of affairs, Doña Victorina, Don Tiburcio, and Linares arrived. As usual, Doña Victorina talked for the three men and herself; and her speech had undergone a remarkable change. She now claimed to have naturalized herself an Andalusian by suppressing d's and replacing the sound of s by that of z. No one had been able to get the idea out of her head; one would certainly have needed to get her frizzes off the outside first. She talked of visits of Linares to the captain-general, and made continual insinuations as to advantages a relative of position would bring.

"As we say," she concluded, "he who sleeps in a good shade, leans on a good staff."

"It's—it's the opposite, wife."

Maria Clara was yet pale, though she had almost recovered from her illness. She kissed Doña Victorina, smiling rather sadly.

"You have been saved, thanks to your connections!" said the doctora, with a significant look toward Linares.

"God has protected my father," said Maria, in a low voice.

"Yes, Clarita, but the time of miracles is past. We, the Spaniards say, trust not in the Virgin, and save yourself by running."

"It's—it's—the contrary, wife!"

"We must talk business," said Doña Victorina, glancing at Maria. Maria found a pretext for leaving, and went out, steadying herself by the furniture.

What was said in this conference was so sordid and mean, that we prefer not to report it. Suffice it to say that when they parted, they were all satisfied. Captain Tiago said a little after to Aunt Isabel:

"Have the caterer notified that we give a reception to-morrow. Maria must get ready for her marriage at once. When Señor Linares is our son-in-law, all the palaces will be open to us; and every one will die of envy."

And so, toward eight o'clock the next evening, the house of Captain Tiago was once more full. This time, however, he had invited only Spaniards, peninsular and Philippine, and Chinese. Yet many of our acquaintances were there. Father Sibyla and Father Salvi, among numerous Franciscans and Dominicans; the old lieutenant of the Municipal Guard, more sombre than ever; the alférez, recounting his victory for the thousandth time, looking over the heads of everybody, now that he is lieutenant with grade of commandant; Dr. Espadaña, who looks upon him with respect and fear, and avoids his glance; Doña Victorina, who cannot see him without anger. Linares had not yet arrived; as a person of importance, he must arouse expectation. There are beings so simple, that an hour's waiting for a man suffices to make him great in their eyes.

Maria Clara was the object of interest to all the women, and the subject of unveiled comments. She had received these ceremoniously, without losing her air of sadness.

"Bah! the proud little thing!" said one.

"Rather pretty," said another, "but he might have chosen some one with a more intelligent face."

"But the money, my dear! The good fellow is selling himself."

In another group some one was saying:

"To marry when one's first fiancé is going to be hung!"

"That is what is called prudent; having a substitute at hand."

"Then, when one becomes a widow——"

Possibly some of these remarks reached the ears of Maria Clara. She grew paler, her hand trembled, her lips seemed to move.

In the circles of men the talk was loud, and naturally the recent events were the subject of conversation. Everybody talked, even Don Tiburcio.

"I hear that your reverence is about to leave the pueblo," said the new lieutenant, whom his new star had made more amiable.

“I have no more to do there; I am to be placed permanently at Manila. And you?” asked Father Salvi.

“I also leave the pueblo,” said he, throwing back his shoulders; “I am going with a flying column to rid the province of filibusters.”

Father Salvi surveyed his old enemy from top to toe, and turned away with a disdainful smile.

“Is it known certainly what is to be done with the chief filibuster?” asked a clerk.

“You are speaking of Don Crisóstomo Ibarra,” replied another. “It is very probable that he will be hung, like those of 1872, and it will be very just.”

“He is to be exiled,” said the old lieutenant dryly.

“Exile! Nothing but exile?” cried numerous voices at once. “Then it must be for life!”

“If the young man had been more prudent,” went on Lieutenant Guevara, speaking so that all might hear, “if he had confided less in certain persons to whom he wrote, if our attorney-generals did not interpret too subtly what they read, it is certain he would have been released.”

This declaration of the old lieutenant’s, and the tone of his voice, produced a great surprise among his auditors. No one knew what to say. Father Salvi looked away, perhaps to avoid the dark look the lieutenant gave him. Maria Clara dropped some flowers she had in her hand, and became a statue. Father Sibyla, who knew when to be silent, seemed the only one who knew how to question.

“You speak of letters, Señor Guevara.”

“I speak of what I am told by Don Crisóstomo’s advocate, who is greatly interested in his case, and defended him with zeal. Outside of a few ambiguous lines in a letter addressed to a woman before he left for Europe, in which the procurator found a project against the Government, and which the young man acknowledged as his, there was no evidence against him.”

“And the declaration made by the tulisan before he died?”

“The defence destroyed that testimony. According to the witness himself, none of them had any communication with Ibarra, except one named José, who was his enemy, as was proven, and who afterward committed suicide, probably from remorse. It was shown that the papers found on his body were forgeries, for the writing was like Ibarra’s seven years ago, but not like his hand of to-day. For this it was supposed that the accusing letter served as a model.”

“You tell us,” said a Franciscan, “that Ibarra addressed this letter to a woman. How did it come into the hands of the attorney-general?”

The lieutenant did not reply. He looked a moment at Father Salvi, and moved off, twisting the point of his gray beard. The others continued to discuss the matter.

“Even women seem to have hated him,” said one.

“He burned his house, thinking to save himself, but he counted without his hostess!” said another, laughing.

Meanwhile the old soldier approached Maria Clara. She had heard the whole conversation, sitting motionless, the flowers lying at her feet.

“You are a prudent young woman,” he said in a low voice; “by giving over the letter, you assured yourself a peaceful future.” And he moved on, leaving Maria with blank eyes and a face rigid. Fortunately Aunt Isabel passed. Maria had strength to take her by the dress.

“What is the matter?” cried the old lady, terrified at the face of her niece. “You are ill, my child. You are ready to faint. What is it?”

“My heart—it’s the crowd—so much light—I must rest. Tell my father I’ve gone to rest,” and steadying herself by her aunt’s arm, she went to her room.

“You are cold! Do you want some tea?” asked Aunt Isabel at the door.

Maria shook her head. “Go back, dear aunt, I only need to rest,” she said. She locked the door of her little room, and at the end of her strength, threw herself down before a statue, sobbing:

“Mother, mother, my mother!”

The moonlight came in through the window, and through the door leading to the balcony. The joyous music of the dance, peals of laughter and the hum of conversation, made their way to the chamber. Many times they knocked at her door—her father, her aunt, Doña Victorina, even Linares. Maria did not move or speak; now and then a hoarse sob escaped her.

Hours passed. After the feast had come the ball. Maria’s candle had burned out, and she lay in the moonlight at the foot of the statue. She had not moved. Little by little the house became quiet. Aunt Isabel came to knock once again at the door.

“She must have gone to bed,” the old lady called back to her brother. “At her age one sleeps like the dead.”

When all was still again, Maria rose slowly, and looked out on the terrace with its vines bathed in the white moonlight.

“A peaceful future!—Sleep like the dead!” she said aloud; and she went out.

The city was mute; only now and then a carriage could be heard crossing the wooden bridge. The girl raised her eyes toward the sky; then slowly she took off her rings, the pendants in her ears, the comb and jewelled pins in her hair, and put them on the balustrade of the terrace; then she looked toward the river.

A little bark, loaded with zacate, drew up to the landing-place below the terrace. One of the two men in it climbed the stone steps, sprang over the wall, and in a moment was mounting the stairway of the terrace. At sight of Maria, he stopped, then approached slowly.

Maria drew back.

“Crisóstomo!” she said, speaking low. She was terrified.

“Yes, I am Crisóstomo,” replied the young man gravely. “An enemy, a man who has reason to hate me, Elias, has rescued me from the prison where my friends put me.”

A sad silence followed his words. Maria Clara bent her head. Ibarra went on:

“By the dead body of my mother, I pledged myself, whatever my future, to try to make you happy. I have risked all that remains to me, to come and fulfil that promise. Chance lets me speak to you, Maria; we shall never see each other again. You are young now; some day your conscience may upbraid you. Before I go away forever, I have come to say that I forgive you. Be happy—farewell!” And he began to move away; she held him back.

“Crisóstomo!” she said, “God has sent you to save me from despair. Listen and judge me!”

Ibarra tried gently to release himself.

“I did not come to call you to account; I came to bring you peace.”

“I want none of the peace you bring me. I shall find peace for myself. You scorn me and your scorn will make even death bitter.”

He saw despair in her poor, young face, and asked what she wished.

“I wish you to believe that I have always loved you.”

He smiled bitterly.

“Ah! you doubt me! you doubt your childhood’s friend, who has never hidden a single thought from you! When you know my history, the sad story that was told me in my illness, you will pity me; you will no longer wear that smile. Why did they not let me die in the hands of my ignorant doctor! You and I should both have been happier!”

She stopped a moment, then went on:

“You force me to this, by your doubts; may my mother forgive me! In one of the most painful of my nights of suffering, a man revealed to me the name of my real father. If he had not been my father, this man said, he might have pardoned the injury you had done him.”

Crisóstomo looked at Maria in amazement.

“What was I to do?” she went on. “Ought I to sacrifice to my love the memory of my mother, the honor of him who was supposed to be my father, and the good name of him who is? And could I have done this without bringing dishonor upon you too?”

“But the proof—have you had proof? There must be proof!” said Crisóstomo, staggered.

Maria drew from her breast two papers.

“Here are two letters of my mother’s,” she said, “written in her remorse. Take them! Read them! My father left them in the house where he lived so many years. This man found them and kept them, and only gave them up to me in exchange for your letter, as assurance, he said, that I would not marry you without my father’s consent. I sacrificed my love! Who would not for a mother dead and two fathers living? Could I foresee what use they would make of your letter? Could I know I was sacrificing you too?”

Ibarra was speechless. Maria went on:

“What remained for me to do? Could I tell you who my father was? Could I bid you ask his pardon, when he had so made your father suffer? Could I say to my father, who perhaps would have pardoned you—could I say I was his daughter? Nothing remained but to suffer, to guard my secret, and die suffering! Now, my friend, now that you know the sad story of your poor Maria, have you still for her that disdainful smile?”

“Maria, you are a saint!”

“I am blessed, because you believe in me——”

“And yet,” said Crisóstomo, remembering, “I heard you were to marry——”

“Yes,” sobbed the poor child, “my father demands this sacrifice; he has loved me, nourished me, and it did not belong to him to do it. I shall pay him my debt of gratitude by assuring him peace through this new connection, but——”

“But?”

“I shall not forget my vows to you.”

“What is your thought?” asked Ibarra, trying to read in her clear eyes.

“The future is obscure. I do not know what I shall do; but I know this, that I can love but once, and that I shall not belong to one I do not love. And you? What will you do?”

“I am no longer anything but a fugitive—I shall fly, and my flight will soon be overtaken, Maria——”

Maria took his head in her hands, kissed his lips again and again, then pushed him away with all her strength.

“Fly, fly!” she said. “Adieu!”

Ibarra looked at her with shining eyes, but she made a sign, and he went, reeling for an instant like a drunken man. He leaped the wall again, and was back in the little bark. Maria Clara, leaning on the balustrade, watched till it disappeared in the distance.

LIII.

The Chase on the Lake.

“Listen, señor, to the plan I have made,” said Elias, as he pulled toward San Gabriel. “I will hide you, for the present, at the house of a friend of mine at Mandaluyong. I will bring you there your gold, that I hid in the tomb of your great-grandfather. You will leave the country——”

“To live among strangers?” interrupted Ibarra.

“To live in peace. You have friends in Spain; you may get amnesty.”

Crisóstomo did not reply; he reflected in silence.

They arrived at the Pasig, and the little bark began to go up stream. On the bridge was a horseman, hastening his course, and a whistle long and shrill was heard.

“Elias,” said Ibarra at length, “your misfortunes are due to my family, and you have twice saved my life. I owe you both gratitude and restitution of property. You advise me to leave the country; well, come with me. We will live as brothers.”

Elias shook his head.

“It is true that I can never be happy in my country, but I can live and die there, perhaps die for my country. That is always something. But you can do nothing for her, here and now. Perhaps some day——”

“Unless I, too, should become a tulisan,” mused Ibarra.

“Señor, a month ago we sat in this same boat, under the light of this same moon. You could not have said such a thing then.”

“No, Elias. Man seems to be an animal who varies with circumstances. I was blind then, unreasonable, I know not what. Now the bandage has been torn from my eyes; the wretchedness and solitude of my prison has taught me better. I see the cancer that is eating into our society; perhaps, after all, it must be torn out by violence.”

They came in sight of the governor-general’s palace, and thought they saw unusual movement among the guards.

“Your escape must have been discovered,” said Elias. “Lie down, señor, so I can cover you with the zacate, for the sentinel at the magazine may stop us.”

As Elias had anticipated, the sentinel challenged him, and asked him where he came from.

“From Manila, with zacate for the iodores and curates,” said he, imitating the accent of the people of Pandakan.

A sergeant came out.

“Sulung,” said he to Elias, “I warn you not to take any one into your boat. A prisoner has just escaped. If you capture him and bring him to me, I will give you a fine reward.”

“Good, señor; what is his description?”

“He wears a long coat, and speaks Spanish. Look out for him!”

The bark moved off. Elias turned and saw the sentinel still standing by the bank.

“We shall lose a few minutes,” he said; “we shall have to go into the rio Beata, to make him think I’m from Peña Francia. You shall see the rio of which Francisco Baltazar sang.”

The pueblo was asleep in the moonlight. Crisóstomo sat up to admire the death-like peace of nature. The rio was narrow, and its banks were plains strewn with zacate. Elias discharged his cargo, and from the grass where they were hidden, drew some of those sacks of palm leaves that are called bayones. Then they pushed off again, and soon were back on the Pasig. From time to time they

talked of indifferent things.

“Santa Ana!” said Ibarra, speaking low; “do you know that building?” They were passing the country house of the Jesuits.

“I’ve spent many happy days there,” said Elias. “When I was a child, we came here every month. Then I was like other people; had a family, a fortune; dreamed, thought I saw a future.”

They were silent until they came to Malapad-na-batô. Those who have sometimes cut a wake in the Pasig, on one of these magnificent nights of the Philippines, when from the limpid azure the moon pours out a poetic melancholy, when shadows hide the miseries of men and silence puts out their sordid words—those who have done this will know some of the thoughts of these two young men.

At Malapad-na-batô, the rifleman was sleepy, and seeing no hope of plunder in the little bark, according to the tradition of his corps and the habit of this post, he let it pass. The guard at Pasig was no more disquieting.

The moonlight was growing pale, and dawn was beginning to tint the east with roses, when they arrived at the lake, smooth and placid as a great mirror. At a distance they saw a gray mass, advancing little by little.

“It’s the falúa,” said Elias under his breath. “Lie down, señor, and I will cover you with these bags.”

The outlines of the government boat grew more and more distinct.

“She’s getting between us and the shore,” said Elias, uneasily; and very gradually he changed the direction of his bark. To his terror he saw the falúa make the same change, and heard a voice hailing him. He stopped and thought. The shore was yet some distance away; they would soon be within range of the ship’s guns. He thought he would go back to Pasig, his boat could escape the other in that direction; but fate was against him. Another boat was coming from Pasig, and in it glittered the helmets and bayonets of the Civil Guards.

“We are caught!” he said, and the color left his face. He looked at his sturdy arms, and took the only resolution possible; he began to row with all his might

toward the island of Talim. The sun was coming up. The bark shot rapidly over the water; on the falúa, which changed its tack, Elias saw men signalling.

“Do you know how to manage a bark?” he demanded of Ibarra.

“Yes. Why?”

“Because we are lost unless I take to the water to throw them off the track. They will pursue me. I swim and dive well. That will turn them away from you, and you must try to save yourself.”

“No, stay, and let us sell our lives dear!”

“It is useless; we have no arms; they would shoot us down like birds.”

As he spoke, they heard a hiss in the water, followed by a report.

“You see!” said Elias, laying down his oar. “We will meet, Christmas night, at the tomb of your grandfather. Save yourself! God has drawn me out of greater perils than this!”

He took off his shirt; a ball picked it out of his hands, and two reports followed. Without showing alarm, he grasped the hand Ibarra stretched up from the bottom of the boat, then stood upright and leaped into the water, pushing off the little craft with his foot.

Outcries were heard from the falúa. Promptly, and at some distance, appeared the head of the young man, returning to the surface to breathe, then disappearing immediately.

“There, there he is,” cried several voices, and balls whistled.

The falúa and the bark from Pasig set out in pursuit of the swimmer. A slight wake showed his direction, more and more removed from Ibarra’s little bark, which drifted as if abandoned. Every time Elias raised his head to breathe, the guards and the men of the falúa fired on him.

The chase went on. The little bark with Ibarra was left far behind. Elias was not more than a hundred yards from the shore. The rowers were getting tired, but so

was Elias, for he repeatedly raised his head above the water, but always in a new direction, to disconcert his pursuers. The deceiving wake no longer told the place of the swimmer. For the last time they saw him, sixty feet from the shore. The soldiers fired—minutes and minutes passed. Nothing again disturbed the tranquil surface of the lake.

A half hour later, one of the rowers claimed to have seen traces of blood near the shore, but his comrades shook their heads in doubt.

LIV.

Father Dámaso Explains Himself.

In vain the precious wedding presents heaped up; not the brilliants in their velvet cases, not embroideries of piña nor pieces of silk, drew the eyes of Maria Clara. She saw nothing but the journal in which was told the death of Ibarra, drowned in the lake.

Suddenly she felt two hands over her eyes, clasping her head, while a merry voice said to her:

“Who is it? Who is it?”

Maria sprang up in fright.

“Little goose! Did I scare you, eh? You weren’t expecting me, eh? Why, I’ve come from the province to be at your marriage——” And with a satisfied smile, Father Dámaso gave her his hand to kiss. She took it, trembling, and carried it respectfully to her lips.

“What is it, Maria?” demanded the Franciscan, troubled, and losing his gay smile. “Your hand is cold, you are pale—are you ill, little girl?” And he drew her tenderly to him, took both her hands and questioned her with his eyes.

“Won’t you confide in your godfather?” he asked in a tone of reproach. “Come, sit down here and tell me your griefs, as you used to do when you were little, and wanted some tapers to make wax dolls. You know I’ve always loved you—never scolded you——” and his voice became very tender. Maria began to cry.

“Why do you cry, my child? Have you quarrelled with Linares?”

Maria put her hands over her eyes.

“No; it’s not about him—now!”

Father Dámaso looked startled. “And you won’t tell me your secrets? Have I not always tried to satisfy your slightest wish?”

Maria raised to him her eyes full of tears, looked at him a moment, then sobbed afresh.

“My child!”

Maria came slowly to him, fell on her knees at his feet, and raising her face wet with tears, asked in a voice scarcely audible:

“Do you still love me?”

“Child!”

“Then—protect my father and make him break off my marriage.” And she told him of her last interview with Ibarra, omitting everything about the secret of her birth.

Father Dámaso could scarcely believe what he heard. She was talking calmly now, without tears.

“So long as he lived,” she went on, “I could struggle, I could hope, I had confidence; I wished to live to hear about him; but now—that they have killed him, I have no longer any reason to live and suffer.”

“And—Linares——”

“If he had lived, I might have married—for my father’s sake; but now that he is dead, I want the convent—or the grave.”

“You loved him so?” stammered Father Dámaso. Maria did not reply. The father bent his head on his breast.

“My child,” he said at last in a broken voice, “forgive me for having made you unhappy; I did not know I was doing it! I thought of your future. How could I let you marry a man of this country, to see you, later on, an unhappy wife and

mother? I set myself with all my strength to get this love out of your mind, I used all means—for you, only for you. If you had been his wife, you would have wept for the unfortunate position of your husband, exposed to all sorts of dangers, and without defence; a mother, you would have wept for your children; had you educated them, you would have prepared them a sad future; they would have become enemies of religion; the gallows or exile would have been their portion; had you left them in ignorance, you would have seen them tyrannized over and degraded. I could not consent to this. That is why I found for you a husband whose children should command, not obey; punish, not suffer—I knew your childhood’s friend was good, and I liked him, as I did his father; but I hated them both for your sake, because I love you as one loves a daughter, because I idolize you—I have no other love; I have seen you grow up, there isn’t an hour in which I do not think of you, you are my one joy——” And Father Dámaso began to cry like a child.

“Then if you love me, do not make me forever miserable; he is dead, I wish to be a nun.”

The old man rested his forehead in his hand.

“A nun, a nun!” he repeated. “You do not know, my child, all that is hidden behind the walls of a convent, you do not know! I would a thousand times rather see you unhappy in the world than in the cloister. Here your complaints can be heard; there you have only the walls! You are beautiful, very beautiful; you were not made to renounce the world. Believe me, my child, time alters all things; later you will forget, you will love, you will love your husband—Linares.”

“Either the convent or—death,” repeated Maria, with no sign of yielding.

“Maria,” said the father, “I am not young. I cannot watch over you always; choose something else, find another love, another husband, anything, what you will!”

“I choose the convent.”

“My God, my God!” cried the priest, burying his face in his hands. “You punish me, be it so! But watch over my daughter!—Maria, you shall be a nun. I cannot have you die.”

Maria took his hands, pressed them, kissed them as she knelt.

“Godfather, my godfather,” she said.

“Oh, God!” cried the heart of the father, “thou dost exist, because thou dost chastise! Take vengeance upon me, but do not strike the innocent; save my daughter!”

LV.

The Nochebuena.

Up on the side of the mountain, where a torrent springs, a cabin hides under the trees, built on their gnarled trunks. Over its thatched roof creep the branches of the gourd, heavy with fruit and flowers. Antlers and wild boars' heads, some of them bearing their long tusks, ornament the rustic hearth. It is the home of a Tagalo family living from the chase and the cup of the woods.

Under the shade of a tree, the grandfather is making brooms from the veins of palm leaves, while a girl fills a basket with eggs, lemons, and vegetables. Two children, a boy and a girl, are playing beside another boy, pale and serious, with great, deep eyes. We know him. It is Sisa's son, Basilio.

"When your foot is well," said the little boy, "you will go with us to the top of the mountain and drink deer's blood and lemon juice; then you'll grow fat; then I'll show you how to jump from one rock to another, over the torrent."

Basilio smiled sadly, examined the wound in his foot, and looked at the sun, which was shining splendidly.

"Sell these brooms, Lucia," said the grandfather to the young girl, "and buy something for your brothers. To-day is Christmas."

"Fire-crackers, I want fire-crackers!" cried the little boy.

"And what do you want?" the grandfather asked Basilio. The boy got up and went to the old man.

"Señor," he said, "have I been ill more than a month?"

"Since we found you, faint and covered with wounds, two moons have passed.

We thought you were going to die——”

“May God reward you; we are very poor,” said Basilio; “but as to-day is Christmas, I want to go to the pueblo to see my mother and my little brother. They must have been looking everywhere for me.”

“But, son, you aren’t well yet, and it is far to your pueblo. You would not get there till midnight. My sons will want to see you when they come from the forest.”

“You have many children, but my mother has only us two; perhaps she thinks me dead already. I want to give her a present to-night—a son!”

The grandfather felt his eyes grow dim.

“You are as sensible as an old man! Go, find your mother, give her her present! Go, my son. God and the Lord Jesus go with you!”

“What, you’re not going to stay and see my fire-crackers?” said the little boy.

“I want you to play hide and seek!” pouted the little girl; “nothing else is so much fun.”

Basilio smiled and his eyes filled with tears.

“I shall come back soon,” he said, “and bring my little brother; then you can play with him. But I must go away now with Lucia.”

“Don’t forget us!” said the old man, “and come back when you are well.” The children all accompanied him to the bridge of bamboo over the rushing torrent. Lucia, who was going to the first pueblo with her basket, made him lean on her arm; the other children watched them both out of sight.



The north wind was blowing, and the dwellers in San Diego were trembling with cold. It was the Nochebuena, and yet the pueblo was sad. Not a paper lantern hung in the windows, no noise in the houses announcing the joyful time, as in other years.

At the home of Captain Basilio, the master of the house is talking with Don Filipo; the troubles of these times have made them friends.

“You are in rare luck, to be released at just this moment,” Captain Basilio was saying to his guest. “They’ve burned your books, that’s true; but others have fared worse.”

A woman came up to the window and looked in. Her eyes were brilliant, her face haggard, her hair loose; the moon made her uncanny.

“Sisa?” asked Don Filipo, in surprise. “I thought she was with a physician.”

Captain Basilio smiled bitterly.

“The doctor feared he might be taken for a friend of Don Crisóstomo’s, so he drove her out!”

“What else has happened since I went away? I know we have a new curate and a new alférez——”

“Well, the head sacristan was found dead, hung in the garret of his house. And old Tasio is dead. They buried him in the Chinese cemetery.”

“Poor Don Astasio!” sighed Don Filipo. “And his books?”

“The devout thought it would be pleasing to God if they should burn them; nothing escaped, not even the works of Cicero. The gobernadorcillo was no check whatsoever.”

They were both silent. At that moment, the melancholy song of Sisa was heard. A child passed, limping, and running toward the place from which the song came; it was Basilio. The little fellow had found his home deserted and in ruins. He had been told about his mother; of Crispin he had not heard a word. He had dried his tears, smothered his grief, and without resting, started out to find Sisa.

She had come to the house of the new alférez. As usual, a sentinel was pacing up and down. When she saw the soldier, she took to flight, and ran as only a wild thing can. Basilio saw her, and fearing to lose sight of her, forgot his wounded foot, and followed in hot pursuit. Dogs barked, geese cackled, windows opened

here and there, to give passage to the heads of the curious; others banged to, from fear of a new night of trouble. At this rate, the runners were soon outside the pueblo, and Sisa began to moderate her speed. There was a long distance between her and her pursuer.

“Mother!” he cried, when he could distinguish her.

No sooner did Sisa hear the voice than she again began to run madly.

“Mother, it’s I,” cried the child in despair. Sisa paid no attention. The poor little fellow followed breathless. They were now on the border of the wood.

Bushes, thorny twigs, and the roots of trees hindered their progress. The child followed the vision of his mother, made clear now and then by the moon’s rays across the heavy foliage. They were in the mysterious wood of the family of Ibarra. Basilio often stumbled and fell, but he got up again, without feeling his hurts, or remembering his lameness. All his life was concentrated in his eyes, which never lost the beloved figure from view.

They crossed the brook, which was singing gently, and to his great surprise, Basilio saw his mother press through the thicket and enter the wooden door that closed the tomb of the old Spaniard. He tried to follow her, but the door was fast. Sisa was defending the entrance—holding the door closed with all her strength.

“Mother, it’s I, it’s I, Basilio, your son!” cried the child, falling from fatigue. But Sisa would not budge. Her feet braced against the ground, she offered an energetic resistance. Basilio examined the wall, but could not scale it. Then he made the tour of the grave. He saw a branch of the great tree, crossed by a branch of another. He began to climb, and his filial love did miracles. He went from branch to branch, and came over the tomb at last.

The noise he made in the branches startled Sisa. She turned and would have fled, but her son, letting himself drop from the tree, seized her in his arms and covered her with kisses; then, worn out, he fainted away.

Sisa saw his forehead bathed in blood. She bent over him, and her eyes, almost out of their sockets, were fixed on his face, which stirred the sleeping cells of her brain. Then something like a spark flashed through them. Sisa recognized her

son, and with a cry fell on his senseless body, pressing it to her heart, kissing him and weeping. Then mother and son were both motionless.

When Basilio came to himself, he found his mother without consciousness. He called her, lavished tender names on her, and seeing she did not wake, ran for water and sprinkled her pale face. But the eyes remained closed. In terror, Basilio put his ear to her heart, but her heart no longer beat. The poor child embraced the dead body of his mother, weeping bitterly.

On this night of joy for so many children, who, by the warm hearth, celebrate the feast which recalls the first loving look Heaven gave to earth; on this night when all good Christian families eat, laugh, and dance, 'mid love and kisses; on this night which, for the children of cold countries, is magical with its Christmas trees, Basilio sits in solitude and grief. Who knows? Perhaps around the hearth of the silent Father Salvi are children playing; perhaps they are singing:

“Christmas comes,
And Christmas goes.”

The child was sobbing. When he raised his head, a man was looking silently down at him.

“You are her son?” he asked.

Basilio nodded his head.

“What are you going to do?”

“Bury her.”

“In the cemetery?”

“I have no money—if you would help me——”

“I am too weak,” said the man, sinking gradually to the ground. “I am wounded. For two days I have not eaten or slept. Has no one been here to-night?” And the man sat still, watching the child’s attractive face.

“Listen,” said he, in a voice growing feebler, “I too shall be dead before morning. Twenty paces from here, beyond the spring, is a pile of wood; put our two bodies on it, and light the fire.”

Basilio listened.

“Then, if nobody comes, you are to dig here; you will find a lot of gold, and it will be all yours. Study!”

The voice of the unknown man sank lower and lower. Then he turned his head toward the east, and said softly, as though praying:

“I die without seeing the light of dawn on my country. You who shall see it and greet it, do not forget those who fell in the night!”

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Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

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24	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
24	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
24	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
26	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
29	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
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37	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
43	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
45	Malacanan	Malacañang
48	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
54	gave	grave
55	Crisostomo's	Crisóstomo's
55	Crisostomo	Crisóstomo
59	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
72	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
110	sacrified	sacrificed
141	sacrified	sacrificed
177	senora	señora
178	Españada	Espadaña
179	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
179	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
198	archibshop	archbishop
198	Crisòstomo	Crisóstomo
205	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
205	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
206	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
206	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
223	havn't	haven't
231	Capain	Captain

246	adminstration	administration
246	[<i>Not in source</i>]	"
246	Senoras	Señoras
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