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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FRIARS AND FILIPINOS ***

Friars and Filipinos

An abridged translation of
Dr. José Rizal's
Tagalog Novel, "Noli Me Tangere."
By
Frank Ernest Gannett.

New York:
The St. James Press.

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by

Frank Ernest Gannett.

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To

JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN,

President of Cornell University.

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Preface.

While serving on the staff of the first United States Commission to the Philippine Islands my attention was called to the life and writings of Dr. José Rizal. I found in his novel, "Noli Me Tangere," the best picture of the life of the people of those islands under Spanish rule, and the clearest exposition of the governmental problems which Spain failed to solve, and with which our own people must deal. It occurred to me that an English translation of Rizal's work would be of great value at the present time. My first intention was to reproduce the entire novel as it was written, but, after careful consideration, I thought best to abridge the story by the omission of some parts which did not seem essential to the main purpose of the work. The present volume is the result.

Readers should not understand any of Rizal's references to priests and friars as reflections upon the Roman Catholic Church. He was throughout his life an ardent Catholic, and died a firm adherent of the Church. But he objected to the religious orders in the Philippine Islands, because he knew well that they were more zealous in furthering their own selfish ends than in seeking the advancement of Christianity. From experience, Dr. Rizal knew that the friars, under cloak of the gospel ministry, oppressed his fellow countrymen, and took advantage of their superstition and ignorance. These wrongs he was brave enough to expose in his writings. In the friars he saw an obstacle to the education and enlightenment of the Filipino people, and, using moderate means, he did his utmost to secure reform. His writings will explain to us the cause of the hatred shown by the Filipinos toward the religious corporations, and will make clearer the nature of one of the present problems in the Philippines.

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There are in the Philippines five religious orders: the Dominicans, Franciscans, Recoletos, Augustines and Jesuits. According to John Foreman, an eminent authority, the members of all of these, except the last named, come from the lower classes in Spain, and are on the whole comparatively ignorant and uncultured. Under the Spanish system of government certain provinces were assigned to each of the orders—except the Jesuits—and the friars were distributed among the different parishes. In the town assigned to him the friar had much authority. He was chief adviser in all civil affairs, and, by his influence over the superstitious natives, maintained absolute control in all matters pertaining to the local government as well as to the local church. So firm was his hold that he led the Spanish government to believe that the islands could not be ruled without his aid. Knowing that his power rested on the ignorance of the people he discouraged education among them. When native Filipinos advanced so far as to prove an obstacle to the religious orders, as did Rizal and many others, the friars sought to destroy them. Forgetting their holy mission, the religious orders became commercial corporations, amassed enormous wealth, and gained possession of the most valuable parts of the islands, though to much of this property the titles are not clear.

From my own observation, and from information derived from the Spaniards themselves, I am convinced that the author has not overdrawn his pictures. In fact I have learned of instances where the oppression and practices of the friars were even worse than those described. Dr. Rizal has given us a portrayal of the Filipino character from the viewpoint of the most advanced Filipino. He brings out many facts that are pertinent to present-day questions, showing especially the Malayan ideas of vengeance, which will put great difficulties in the way of the pacifying of the islands by our forces. The reader will not fail to notice the striking similarity between the life of Ibarra, the hero, and that of Rizal, the author, a short sketch of whose career has been given in the following pages.

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For assistance in preparing this volume for publication I offer sincere thanks to William H. Glasson, Ph.D., Instructor in History in the George School, Newtown, Pa. Dr. Glasson has read the entire manuscript and proofs, and I have been glad to avail myself of his advice on many doubtful points. I desire also to acknowledge my

indebtedness for favors received to Horatio Green, Interpreter to the Supreme Court of the Philippine Islands, to W. G. Richardson, of New York, and to the publishers.

F. E. G.

Ithaca, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1900.

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José Rizal.

Dr. José Rizal, of whose "Noli Me Tangere," the following story, is an abridgement, is the most striking character to be found in the history of the Philippine Islands. He was not only a great martyr to the cause of liberty, and to the advancement of his fellow men, but he was without doubt the greatest Filipino ever born, and his memory is cherished to-day by his people as we ourselves cherish the memory of Washington.

Rizal was born on June 19th, 1861, in the pueblo of Calamba, in the province of Laguna, on the Island of Luzon. He came of a Tagalog family, which, it is said, acknowledged a slight mixture of Chinese blood, and possessed considerable property. As a child he gave evidence of extraordinary precocity. He is said to have written poetry in his native tongue at eight years of age, produced a successful

melodrama at fourteen, and later to have won prizes in literary contests with writers of recognized ability.

After passing through the University of Manila, and receiving much instruction at the hands of the Jesuit fathers, he was sent to Europe to complete his education. He pursued courses of study in Spanish and German universities, and won the degrees of Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy. Besides acquiring a knowledge of seven languages he gained a brilliant reputation for proficiency in the branch of optical surgery. For a time he was the leading assistant in the office of a world-renowned specialist at Vienna.

While in Europe Rizal wrote several books and also gave considerable time to sculpture and painting. His artistic ability was great, and some of his productions are now treasured by friends into whose possession they came. Rizal's best known work is his "Noli Me Tangere," written in Belgium about 1886 or 1887. This novel, with its vivid picture of life in the Philippines, and its exposure of Spanish misrule and oppression, won for him the bitter hatred of the friars, and inspired the relentless persecution which only ended with the taking of his life.

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In 1889 Dr. Rizal returned to the Philippines, but was soon compelled to leave his native land in order to escape forcible banishment. After a short residence in Japan, he went to London, where he published a work on the History of the Philippine Islands. About the same time a sequel to "Noli Me Tangere," entitled "El Filibusterismo," was published. The hatred of the priests against him was further inflamed by this production, and the government in Manila was forced by the friars to forbid the circulation of any of his writings. Copies of his novels were burned in the public squares, and it was worth one's life to be found possessing a copy. Until very recently it has been almost impossible to obtain a copy of Rizal's works, and it was necessary to go to Europe to secure the one from which the following abridged translation was made.

In 1892 Dr. Rizal was so overcome with a desire to see again his beautiful fatherland that he ventured, in the face of all the dangers that threatened him, to return to Manila. He had scarcely set foot on shore, however, before he was arrested and thrown in prison. The friars demanded his execution on the ground that he carried incendiary leaflets for the purpose of stirring up a rebellion, but subsequent inquiries showed that such leaflets had been introduced into his baggage at the custom house through the intrigues of the Augustine friars. Despite his indignant protestations of innocence; Rizal was summarily condemned by the Spanish General, Despujols, to banishment at Dapitan in the island of Mindanao. Although the trickery of the friars became known to him, Despujols lacked courage to revoke his order of banishment, for fear that he, too, would incur the hatred of the powerful religious corporations.

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After four years of exile Rizal saw plainly that the hostility of the friars would make it impossible for him to live in his native land. In 1896 a plague of yellow fever broke out in the island of Cuba and Rizal volunteered to lend his medical services to the Spanish government. Ramon Blanco, then general-in-chief of the Spanish forces in the Philippines, accepted the generous offer and recalled the young man to Manila that he might sail at once for Cuba. Alarmed by demonstrations of popular affection for Rizal, who represented the aspirations of the Filipino people, the Spanish authorities broke faith with him and imprisoned him in the Fuerza de Santiago. He was arraigned on false charges, given a military trial, and at the dictation of the religious orders was sentenced to be shot as a traitor.

At dawn on December 30th, 1896, he was led to the place of execution on the beautiful Luneta, overlooking the tranquil surface of Manila Bay. Notices of the event had been published throughout the islands and the day on which it was to occur was proclaimed a fiesta. Thousands gathered around the place selected, and so evident was the sympathy of the helpless Filipinos for the man who was to die for their sake that Spain marshalled ten regiments of her soldiers about the spot. The populace must be intimidated. A nation's hero was about to become a nation's martyr. With face uplifted he glanced at the multitude about him and smiled. They tied his arms behind him and made him face the waters of the bay. In vain he protested and begged that he might die facing his executioners. A squad of his fellow countrymen, who were serving in Spain's army, were selected for the bloody work. They drew in position to shoot him in the back. The order was given to fire, but only one had the courage to obey. The bullet went straight and the hero fell, but another shot was necessary to despatch his life. His newly wedded wife remained with him to the end. The best hope of the Filipino people was crushed; a light in a dark place was snuffed out.

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Rizal was no extremist, no believer in harsh and bloody methods, no revolutionist. He aimed to secure moderate and reasonable reforms, to lessen the oppressive exactions of the friars, to examine into titles of their land, and to make possible the education and uplifting of his people. He loved Spain as he did his own country,

and repeatedly used his influence against the rebellious measures proposed by other Filipino leaders. His execution was only one of the numerous outrages which characterized Spain's reign in the Philippines.

In closing this short sketch of Rizal's life we can do no better than to quote the estimate of him made by Dr. Ferdinand Blumentritt, professor in the University of Leitmeritz, Austria, who prepared a biographical sketch of Rizal. Dr. Blumentritt said:

"Not only is Rizal the most prominent man of his own people, but the greatest man the Malayan race has produced. His memory will never perish in his fatherland, and future generations of Spaniards will yet learn to utter his name with respect and reverence."

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Friars and Filipinos.

Chapter I.

Don Santiago's Dinner.

In the latter part of October, Don Santiago de los Santos, popularly known as Captain Tiago, gave a dinner. Though, contrary to his custom, he had not announced it until the afternoon of the day on which it was to occur, the dinner became at once the absorbing topic of conversation in Binondo, in the other suburbs of Manila, and even in the walled city. Captain Tiago was generally considered a most liberal man, and his house, like his country, shut its doors to no one, whether bent on pleasure or on the development of some new and daring scheme.

The dinner was given in the captain's house in Analoague street. The building is of ordinary size, of the style of architecture common to the country, and is situated on that arm of the Pasig called by some Binondo Creek. This, like all the streams in Manila, satisfies a multitude of needs. It serves for bathing, mortar-mixing, laundering, fishing, means of transportation and communication, and even for drinking water, when the Chinese water-carriers find it convenient to use it for that purpose. Although the most important artery of the busiest part of the town, where the roar of commerce is loudest and traffic most congested, the stream is, for a distance of a mile, crossed by only one wooden bridge. During six months of the year, one end of this bridge is out of order, and the other end is impassable during the remaining time.

The house is low and somewhat out of plumb. No one, however, knows whether the faulty lines of the building are due to a defect in the sight of the architect who constructed it, or whether they are the result of earthquakes and hurricanes.

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A wide staircase, with green balustrades and carpeted here and there in spots, leads from the *zaguan*, or tiled entrance hall, to the second story of the house. On either side of this staircase is a row of flower-pots and vases, placed upon chinaware pedestals, brilliant in coloring and fantastic in design. Upstairs, we enter a spacious hall, which is, in these islands, called *caida*. This serves to-night for the dining hall. In the middle of the room is a large table, profusely and richly ornamented, fairly groaning under the weight of delicacies.

In direct contrast to these worldly preparations are the motley colored religious pictures on the walls—such subjects as "Purgatory," "Hell," "The Last Judgment," "The Death of the Just," and "The Death of the Sinner." Below these, in a beautiful renaissance frame, is a large, curious linen engraving of two old ladies. The picture bears the inscription "Our Lady of Peace, Propitious to Travellers, Venerated in Antipolo, Visiting in the Guise of a Beggar the Pious Wife of the Famous Captain Inés in Her Sickness." In the side of the room toward the river, Captain Tiago has arranged fantastic wooden arches, half Chinese, half European, through which one can pass to the roof which covers part of the first story. This roof serves as a veranda, and has been illuminated with Chinese lanterns in many colors and made into a pretty little arbor or garden. The *sala* or principal room of the house, where the guests assembled is resplendent with colossal mirrors and brilliant chandeliers, and, upon a platform of pine, is a costly piano of the finest workmanship.

People almost filled this room, the men keeping on one side and the women on the

other, as though they were in a Catholic church or a synagogue. Among the women were a number of young girls, both native and Spanish. Occasionally one of them forgot herself and yawned, but immediately sought to conceal it by covering her mouth with her fan. Conversation was carried on in a low voice and died away in vague mono-syllables, like the indistinct noises heard by night in a large mansion.

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An elderly woman with a kindly face, a cousin of Captain Tiago, received the ladies. She spoke Spanish regardless of all the grammatical rules, and her courtesies consisted in offering to the Spanish ladies cigarettes and betel nut (neither of which they use) and in kissing the hands of the native women after the manner of the friars. Finally the poor old lady was completely exhausted, and, taking advantage of a distant crash occasioned by the breaking of a plate, hurried off precipitately to investigate, murmuring: "*Jesús!* Just wait, you good-for-nothings!"

Among the men there was somewhat more animation. In one corner of the room were some cadets, who chatted with some show of interest, but in a low voice. From time to time they surveyed the crowd and indicated to each other different persons, meanwhile laughing more or less affectedly.

The only people who appeared to be really enjoying themselves were two friars, two citizens and an officer of the army who formed a group around a small table, on which were bottles of wine and English biscuits. The officer was old, tall and sunburnt, and looked as the Duke of Alva might have looked, had he been reduced to a command in the civil guard. He said little, but what he did say was short and to the point. One of the friars was a young Dominican, handsome and dressed with extreme nicety. He wore gold mounted spectacles and preserved the extreme gravity of youth. The other friar, however, who was a Franciscan, talked a great deal and gesticulated even more. Although his hair was getting gray, he seemed to be well preserved and in robust health. His splendid figure, keen glance, square jaw and herculean form gave him the appearance of a Roman patrician in disguise. He was gay and talked briskly, like one who is not afraid to speak out. Brusque though his words might be, his merry laugh removed any disagreeable impression.

As to the citizens, one of them was small in stature and wore a black beard, his most noticeable feature being his large nose—so large that you could scarcely believe that it was all his own. The other was a young blonde, apparently a recent arrival in the country. The latter was carrying on a lively discussion with the Franciscan.

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"You will see," said the friar, "when you have been in the country a few months, and will be convinced that what I say is right. It is one thing to govern in Madrid and another to rule in the Philippines."

"But——"

"I, for example," continued Father Dámaso, raising his voice to prevent the other from speaking, "I, who can point to my twenty-three years of existence on bananas and rice, can speak with some authority on this subject. Do not come to me with theories or arguments, for I know the native. Remember, that when I came to this country, I was sent to a parish, small and largely devoted to agriculture. I did not understand Tagalog very well, but I received the confessions of the women and we managed to understand each other. In fact, they came to think so much of me that three years afterward, when I was sent to another and larger town, where a vacancy had been created by the death of the native parish priest, all the women were in tears. They overwhelmed me with presents, they saw me off with bands of music——"

"But this only shows——"

"Wait, wait! Do not be in a hurry! My successor remained there a still shorter time, but when he left there were more people to see him off, more tears shed, and more music played, although he had treated the people worse than I, and had raised the parish dues to a sum almost double the amount I had exacted."

"But allow me——"

"Furthermore, I was twenty years in the town of San Diego and it was only a few months ago—that—that I left. Twenty years! Surely any one will admit that twenty years is time enough to get acquainted with a town. There were six thousand people in San Diego, and I knew every one of them as if he were my own child. I knew even the private affairs of them all; I knew in what way this man was 'crooked,' where the shoe pinched that one, what slips every girl had made and with whom, and who was the true father of each child, for I received all of their confessions and they always confessed scrupulously. I can prove what I say by

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Santiago, our host, for he has considerable property in that town, and it was there that we became friends. Well, then! This will show you what sort of people the natives are: when I went away, only a few old women and some lay brothers saw me off. And that, after I had been there twenty years! Don't you see that this proves beyond a doubt that all the reforms attempted by the Ministers of the Government in Madrid are perfectly absurd?"

It was now the young man's turn to be perplexed. The lieutenant, who had been listening to the argument, knit his brows. The little man with the black beard made ready to combat or support Father Dámaso's arguments, while the Dominican was content to remain entirely neutral.

"But do you believe——," the young man finally asked in a curious mood, and looking straight at the friar.

"Do I believe it? As I do the Gospel! The native is so indolent!"

"Ah! Pardon me for interrupting you," said the young blonde, lowering his voice and drawing his chair closer, "but you have spoken a word that arouses my interest. Is this indolence an inherent characteristic of the native, or is it true, as a foreign traveller has said in speaking of a country whose inhabitants are of the same race as these, that this indolence is only a fabrication to excuse our own laziness, our backwardness and the faults of our celestial system?"

"Bah! That is nothing but envy! Ask Señor Laruja, who knows this country very well, whether the native has his equal in the world for indolence and ignorance."

"It is a fact," replied the little man referred to, "that nowhere in the world can any one be found more indolent than the native. Positively nowhere!"

"Nor more vicious and ungrateful!"

"Nor with less education!"

Somewhat uneasy, the blonde man began to glance about the room. "Gentlemen," he said in a low voice, "I believe that we are in the house of a native, and these young ladies may——"

"Bah! Don't be so sensitive. How long have you been in the country?"

"Four days," answered the young man somewhat ruffled.

"Did you come here as an employee?"

"No, sir. I came on my own account in order to become acquainted with the country."

"Man, what a rare bird you are!" exclaimed Father Dámaso, looking at him with curiosity. "To come here on your own account for such foolish ends! What a phenomenon! And when so many books have been written about this country——"

Then, striking the arm of his chair with sudden violence, he exclaimed: "The country is being lost; it is lost already. The governing power supports heretics against the ministers of God."

"What do you mean?" again asked the lieutenant, half rising from his chair.

"What do I mean?" repeated Father Dámaso, again raising his voice, and facing the lieutenant. "I mean what I say. I mean that, when a priest turns away the corpse of a heretic from his cemetery, no one, not even the King himself, has the right to interfere, and still less to punish. And yet a general, a miserable little general——"

"Father! His Excellency is the vice-regal representative of His Majesty the King!" exclaimed the officer, rising to his feet.

"What do I care for His Excellency, or for any of your vice-regal representatives!" answered the Franciscan, rising in his turn. "In any other time than the present, he would have been thrown down stairs in the same way as the religious corporations treated the sacrilegious governor Bustamente in his time. Those were the days when there was faith!"

"I'll tell you right here that I don't allow any—His Excellency represents His Majesty the King!"

"I don't care whether he is king or rogue. For us there is no king other than the true——"

"Stop this immediately!" shouted the lieutenant in a threatening manner, and as though he were commanding his own soldiers. "Take back what you have said, or to-morrow I shall inform His Excellency."

"Go and tell him at once! Go tell him!" answered Father Dámaso, sarcastically, at the same time approaching the lieutenant with his fists doubled. "Don't you think for a moment that, because I wear the dress of a monk, I'm not a man. Hurry! Go tell him! I'll lend you my carriage."

The discussion began to grow ridiculous as the speakers became more heated, but, at this point, fortunately, the Dominican interfered.

"Gentlemen!" he said in a tone of authority, and with that nasal twang which is so characteristic of the friars, "there is no reason why you should thus confuse matters or take offense where it is not intended. We should distinguish between what Father Dámaso says as a man, and what he says as a priest. Whatever he may say as a priest cannot be offensive, for the words of a priest are understood to be absolutely true."

"But I understand what his motives are, Father Sibyla!" interrupted the lieutenant, who saw that he would be drawn into a net of such fine distinction that, if he allowed it to go on, Father Dámaso would get off scot free. "I know very well what his motives are, and Your Reverence will also perceive them. During the absence of Father Dámaso from San Diego, his assistant buried the body of a very worthy person. Yes, sir, an extremely worthy person! I had known the man from time to time and had often been his guest. What if he never had been to confession? I do not confess, either. To say that he committed suicide is a lie, a slander. A man such as he, with a son whose success and love were more than all the world to him; a man who believed in God, who fulfilled his duty to society, who was honorable and just—such a man does not commit suicide. That is what I say! I am not telling you all that I think about this matter, and Your Reverence should be very thankful that I restrain myself."

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Turning his back on the Franciscan, he continued: "As I was saying, this priest, when he returned to the town, after maltreating his coadjutor, ordered that the man's body be taken up and thrown out of the cemetery, to be buried I know not where. The town of San Diego was too cowardly to protest, though, in fact, very few people knew much about the matter. The dead man had no relatives in the town and his only son was in Europe. His Excellency, however, learned about the affair, and being at heart upright and just, he ordered that the priest be punished. As a result, Father Dámaso was transferred to another but better town. That is all there was to it. Now you can make all the distinctions you like."

So saying, he left the group.

"I am very sorry to have touched upon so delicate a subject," said Father Sibyla, "but, after all, if the change from one town to another was to your advantage——"

"How could it be to my advantage? How about all the things that I lost?" interrupted Father Dámaso, fairly boiling over with rage.

"Good evening, gentlemen! Good evening, Father!" said Captain Santiago, who at that instant entered the room, leading a youth by the hand. On saluting his guests in this manner, he kissed the hands of the priests, who, by the way, forgot to give him their blessing. The Dominican took off his gold-rimmed spectacles in order to examine the new arrival at better advantage, while Father Dámaso, turning pale at the sight, stared at the youth with eyes wide open.

"I have the honor of presenting to you Don Crisostomo Ibarra, the son of my deceased friend," said Captain Tiago. "The young man has just arrived from Europe, and I have been to meet him." At the mere mention of the name, exclamations were heard in all parts of the room. The lieutenant, forgetting himself entirely, did not stop to salute his host, but at once approached the young man and surveyed him from head to foot. The youth exchanged the usual greetings with those who had gathered around him. He showed no striking peculiarity, except in his sombre dress, which was in deep contrast with that of the other persons present. His athletic build, his appearance, and every movement he made showed, however, that a fine mind and a healthy body had both been highly developed. You could see from his frank and vivacious face that he had Spanish blood in his veins. Although his hair, eyes and complexion were dark, his cheeks had a slight color, due, no doubt, to residence in cold countries.

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"What!" he exclaimed with glad surprise, "the parish priest of my own town! Father Dámaso, my father's intimate friend!" Every one in the room looked at the Franciscan, but the latter made no motion.

"You must excuse me, if I have made a mistake," added Ibarra, somewhat in doubt because of the apathy of the friar.

"You have made no mistake," the priest finally answered in a strained voice, "but your father was never an intimate friend of mine."

Ibarra slowly withdrew the hand which he had offered, looking at the friar with great surprise. As he turned about, he came face to face with the lieutenant just approaching.

"My boy, are you the son of Don Rafael Ibarra?"

The young man bowed in acquiescence. Father Dámaso settled back into his arm-chair and fixed his eyes upon the lieutenant.

"Welcome to your country! May you be more happy in it than was your father!" exclaimed the officer in a trembling voice. "I had many dealings with your father and I knew him well, and I can say that he was one of the most worthy and honorable men in the Philippines."

"Sir," replied Ibarra with emotion, "your praise of my father puts me in doubt as to his fate. Even now I, his own son, am ignorant of it all."

The eyes of the old man filled with tears. He turned and hurriedly withdrew. Ibarra found himself standing alone in the middle of the room. His host had disappeared, and he turned to a group of gentlemen, who, as soon as they saw him coming, formed a semicircle to receive him. [10]

"Gentlemen," he said, "in Germany, when a stranger attends any social function and there is no one present to introduce him, it is allowable for him to introduce himself. Permit me to avail myself of this practice. Gentlemen, my name is Juan Crisostomo Ibarra y Magsalin." The others gave their names in turn, of which the most were comparatively unknown.

"My name is A—a," said one of the young men, bowing stiffly.

"Then, perhaps, I have the honor of addressing the poet whose works have kept up my enthusiasm for my country? I have been told that you have stopped writing, but no one has told me why."

"Why? Because there is no use in invoking the muses for false and foolish ends. A case has been made out against one man for having put into verse a true story of Pero Grullo. I am not going to get myself into a similar scrape. They may call me a poet, but they shall not call me a fool."

"And can you not tell us what that true story was?"

"Yes. The poet said that the son of a lion is also a lion, and for saying this he narrowly escaped being banished."

"Dinner is ready," announced a waiter who had been borrowed from the *Café Campaña*. The guests began to file into the dining room, not, however, without many sighs, and even some prayers among the women, especially the natives, that the dreaded affair would soon be over. [11]

Chapter II.

At the Dinner Table.

Father Sibyla wore a satisfied air. He moved along tranquilly, and his closed, thin lips showed no signs of disdain. On the other hand, the Franciscan was in a very bad humor. As he walked toward the table, he kicked over the chairs which happened to be in his way and boxed the ears of one of the cadets. The lieutenant was very solemn and grave.

The two friars instinctively started for the head of the table, perhaps by force of habit, and, as might have been expected, they met on opposite sides of the same chair. Then, with ponderous courtesy, each entreated the other to sit down, giving in turn his reasons why the other should take precedence. Every one at the table understood how both really felt in the matter, and all knew well that the one who did not take the coveted seat would grumble discontentedly for the remainder of

the evening. The farce proceeded something like this:

"You take it, Brother Dámaso! It is for you!"

"No, you take it, Brother Sibyla!"

"You are an old friend of the family, the confessor of its deepest mysteries; your age, your dignity, your——"

"No, that is all right as far as age goes, but, on the other hand you are the priest of this suburb," answered Father Dámaso in an insincere tone, without, however, leaving the chair.

"As you order it, I obey," concluded Father Sibyla, making ready to sit down.

"But I do not order it," protested the Franciscan, "I do not *order* it."

Father Sibyla was about to take the seat without any further regard to the protests of his brother, when his eyes chanced to meet those of the lieutenant. According to the religious customs in the Philippines, the highest military officer is inferior to even a convent cook. "*Cedent arma togæ*," said Cicero in the Senate. "*Cedent arma cottæ*," say the friars in the Philippines. Father Sibyla, however, was a person of some culture and refinement, and, as soon as he noticed the expression on the lieutenant's face, said: "Here! We are now out in the world, and not in the Church. This seat belongs to you, lieutenant!" But, to judge from the tone of his voice, he thought that, although he was out in the world and not in the Church, the seat nevertheless belonged to him. The lieutenant, either to save himself trouble or in order to avoid sitting between two friars, declined the honor in a very few words.

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Neither of the disputants had thought of the owner of the house. Ibarra saw him looking upon the scene and smiling with satisfaction.

"How is this, Don Santiago! Aren't you going to sit down with us?"

But all of the seats were already occupied, and Lucullus did not dine in the house of Lucullus.

"Sit still! Don't get up!" said Captain Tiago, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. "The fact is that this feast is given in honor of the Virgin on account of your safe arrival. Here! Bring on the *tinola*! I ordered some *tinola* made expressly for you, for I feel quite certain that you have not had any since you left the Philippines a long while ago."

A large dish was brought in, still steaming and filled to the brim with *tinola*. The Dominican, after murmuring the *Benedicite* (to which only a few of those present could give the response), began to serve the contents of the dish. Either from carelessness or for some other reason, he passed to Father Dámaso a plate filled with the soup and stew, but containing only two small pieces of chicken, a bony neck and a tough wing. Meanwhile the others, especially Ibarra, were eating all sorts of choice bits. The Franciscan, of course, noticed this, mused over the stew, took a mouthful of the soup, dropped his spoon with a clatter into his plate, and pushed the dish to one side. While this was going on, the Dominican appeared to be absorbed in conversation with the young blonde. Señor Laruja had also begun to converse with Ibarra.

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"How long has it been since you were last in this country?" said he.

"About seven years," responded Ibarra.

"You must have forgotten all about it."

"On the contrary, although my country seems to have forgotten me, I have always kept her in mind."

"What do you mean?" interposed the blonde.

"I mean that for over a year I have not received any news from here, so that now I feel like a total stranger. I do not yet know how or when my father died."

"Ah!" exclaimed the lieutenant.

"Where have you been that you did not telegraph?" asked one of the ladies. "When I was married, we telegraphed to the Peninsula."

"Señora, for the last two years I have been in northern Europe, in Germany and in Poland."

"And what country of Europe do you like best?" asked the young blonde, who had been listening interestedly.

"After Spain, which is my second fatherland, oh—any free country in Europe."

"You seem to have travelled a great deal—what is the most remarkable thing that you have observed?" asked Laruja.

Ibarra appeared to be reflecting on the question. "Remarkable? In what way?"

"For instance, in the life of the different peoples,—their social, political and religious life—"

Ibarra meditated for some little time. "I always made it a point to study the history of a country before visiting it, and I find that national development invariably follows perfectly natural rules. I have always noticed that the prosperity or poverty of different peoples is in direct proportion to their liberties or their lack of liberty, or, in other words, in proportion to the sacrifices or selfishness of their forefathers."

"And is that all you have observed?" asked the Franciscan, with a loud laugh. Up to this time, he had not uttered a single word, but had given his attention to the dinner. "It was not worth while to squander your fortune for the purpose of learning such a trifle—a thing that every school boy knows."

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Ibarra looked at him intently, doubtful what to say. The guests glanced at each other, fearing that a quarrel would break out. "The dinner has been too long, and Your Reverence is affected by too much wine," Ibarra was about to reply, but he checked himself in time and only said: "Gentlemen, do not wonder at the familiarity with which our old parish priest treats me. He treated me this way when I was a child, and the years that have passed since then have not changed His Reverence. I derive a certain amount of pleasure from it, for I am reminded of those days when His Reverence was a frequent visitor at our house and honored my father's table."

The Dominican glanced furtively at the Franciscan, who was trembling. Ibarra continued, rising from his chair: "You will allow me to withdraw, for I have only just arrived, and I must leave town to-morrow. Besides, I have a great many things to do before I leave. The dinner is practically finished, and I drink very little wine and scarcely touch spirits. Gentlemen, here's to Spain and the Philippines."

Saying this, he emptied the glass, which, until then, he had not touched. The old lieutenant followed his example, but said nothing.

"Do not go!" said Captain Tiago to him in a low voice. "Maria Clara is coming immediately. Isabel has just gone to get her. The new parish priest of your town is also coming, and he is a saint."

"I shall come to-morrow before I leave. I have to make a most important visit yet to-night, and really must go!" With this he took his departure. In the meantime, the Franciscan had recovered himself.

"You see how it is," said he to the young blonde, gesticulating with his dessert knife. "It is nothing but pride. He could not bear to have a priest reprove him. Can decent people believe it? This is the evil consequence of sending young men to Europe. The Government ought to prohibit it."

That night, the young blonde wrote, among other things, in the first chapter of his "Colonial Studies": "How the neck and wing of a chicken in a friar's plate of *tinola* can disturb the gayety of a feast!" And among his other observations were the following: "In the Philippines the most insignificant person at a dinner or a feast is the host. The owner of the house has only to remain out in the street, and everything will go along beautifully. In the present state of affairs, it would be well to forbid the Filipinos to leave their country, and not to teach them how to read."

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Chapter III.

Heretic and Revolutionist.

Ibarra was still confused, but the evening breeze, which, in Manila, is at this time of the year always cool and refreshing, seemed gently to lift the hazy mist which

hung over his eyes. He removed his hat and drew a deep, long breath.

Men of all nationalities passed by in swift carriages or in slow-going, rented *calesas*. He was walking at that slow pace characteristic alike of deep thought and laziness, and was making his way toward the Plaza of Binondo. He looked about in search of any old and familiar objects. Yes, there were the same old streets, the same old houses with white and blue fronts, the same old walls covered with whitewash or repainted in poor imitation of granite; there was the same old church tower, its clock with transparent face still marking the hours; there, too, were the old Chinese shops, with their dirty curtains and iron rods, one of which remained unrepaired as he himself had bent it when a boy.

"Things go slowly here!" he muttered and continued up the street past the vestry.

As they dished up flavored ices, the street vendors were still crying "sorbettes." The same little cocoanut oil lamps furnished light for the stands where native women and Chinese disposed of their sweetmeats and fruit.

"It is marvellous," he exclaimed. "There is the same Chinaman who was at that stand seven years ago. There is that same old woman whom I remember so well. Why, one might think my seven years in Europe but a night's sleep. And, by heavens, they have not yet repaired this broken place in the pavement!"

Indeed, the stone which had been torn out of the pavement before he left Manila had not yet been replaced. While he was meditating upon the wonderful stability of things in so unstable a country, some one placed a hand upon his shoulder. With a start he looked up, and his eyes met those of the old lieutenant, who also had left the Captain's house. A smile had displaced the officer's usual harsh expression and characteristic frown.

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"Be careful, young man!" said he. "Remember what happened to your father!"

"I beg your pardon. You seem to have esteemed my father very highly. Can you tell me what has been his fate?" asked Ibarra, gazing intently into the lieutenant's eyes.

"Do you not know?" said the officer.

"I asked Don Santiago, but he said that he would tell me nothing until to-morrow. Have you no information regarding him?"

"Why, yes; everybody knows about him. He died in prison."

The young man stepped back and stared wildly at the officer. "In prison! Who died in prison?" he asked in astonishment.

"Why, your father, who had been arrested," answered the officer somewhat surprised.

"What! My father in prison! Arrested and imprisoned! Man, what are you talking about? Do you know who my father was? Are you——?" asked the young man, nervously grasping the officer's arm.

"I don't think that I am mistaken: Don Rafael Ibarra."

"Yes. Don Rafael Ibarra," repeated the young man, scarcely able to utter the words.

"I thought that you knew it," said the officer, in a sympathetic voice, as he saw the emotion his words had caused. "I thought that you knew it; but be brave. Here, you know, no man can be honorable without being imprisoned."

"I cannot believe that you are not jesting," replied Ibarra, after a few minutes of deep silence. "Can you tell me for what offense he was imprisoned?"

The old man paused as if to meditate. "It seems strange to me that you have not been kept informed as to the affairs of your family."

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"My father's last letter, which I received a year ago, told me not to be uneasy if he failed to write to me, for he was very busy. He advised me to continue my studies, he sent me his blessing——"

"In that case, he must have written the letter to you shortly before his death. It is almost a year since we buried him in his own town."

"Why was my father arrested?" asked Ibarra in a voice full of emotion.

"The cause of his arrest was an honorable one. I must go to my quarters now; walk

along with me and then I can tell you on the way. Take my arm.”

They walked for some time in melancholy silence. Deep in thought and nervously stroking his goatee, the officer sought inspiration before he could begin the pitiful tale.

“As you very well know,” he at last began, “your father was the richest man in the province, and, although he was loved and highly respected by many, there were some envious persons who hated him. Your father had a great many enemies among the priests and the Spaniards. Some months after your departure, trouble arose between Don Rafael and Father Dámaso, but I do not know what it was all about. Father Dámaso accused your father of not attending confession. In former times, however, he had never attended confession. Nothing was said about it, and he and the priest were good friends, as you will remember. Furthermore, Don Rafael was a very honorable man and much more upright and just than many who go to confession regularly. He was very conscientious, and, in speaking to me in regard to his troubles with Father Dámaso, used to say:

“Señor Guevara, do you believe that God will forgive a crime, a murder for instance, simply because that crime has been confessed to a priest—confessed to a man who is in duty bound to keep it secret? Will God pardon a man whose repentance is brought about by his cowardly fear of hell? I have a very different opinion of God. I cannot see how one evil can be corrected by another, nor how pardon can be procured by mere idle tears and donations to the Church.’ Your father always followed the strictest rules of morality. I may safely say that he never harmed any one, but, on the contrary, always sought by doing good to offset certain unjust deeds committed by your grandfathers. However, his troubles with the priests continued and took on a dangerous aspect. Father Dámaso alluded to him from the pulpit, and, if he did not do so directly by name, it was an oversight on his part, for anything might be expected from a man of his character. I foresaw that sooner or later the affair would have a bad ending.”

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The old lieutenant paused for a few minutes and then continued: “About this time there came to the province a man who had been in the artillery, but had been thrown out of the ranks on account of his brutality and ignorance. This man had to make a livelihood. He was not allowed to engage in the work of an ordinary laborer, since that might damage Spain’s prestige, but somehow obtained the position of collector of taxes on vehicles. He had no education whatever, and the natives soon found it out. A Spaniard who cannot read and write is a wonder to them, and hence he became the subject of all sorts of ridicule. Knowing that he was being laughed at, he became ashamed to collect his taxes. This had a bad effect on his character, which was already bad enough. People used to give him documents upside down to see him pretend to read them. He would make a show of doing so, and then, on the first blank space he found, would fill in some sprawling characters which, I may say, represented him very accurately. The natives continued to pay their taxes, but kept on ridiculing him. He fairly raved with anger and worked himself up to such a frame of mind that he respected none. Finally, he had some words with your father. It happened that one day, while the collector was studying a document which had been given to him in a store, some school boys came along. One of them called the attention of his companions to the collector, and they all began to laugh and point their fingers at the unhappy man. The collector finally lost his patience, turned quickly and chased his tormentors. The boys, of course, ran in all directions, at the same time mimicking a child learning the alphabet. Blind with rage because he could not reach them, he threw his cane, struck one of the boys on the head and knocked him down. Not content with this, he went up and kicked the boy several times. Unfortunately, your father happened to be passing just at the moment. Indignant at what he saw, he seized the tax collector by the arm and severely reproached him for his actions. The tax collector in anger raised his cane to strike, but your father was too quick for him. With that strength which he inherited from his forefathers, he, as some say, struck the collector, or, as others claim, only gave him a push. The fact is that the man staggered and fell to the ground, and, in falling, struck his head against a stone. Don Rafael quietly lifted up the wounded boy and carried him to the court house near by, leaving the collector where he had fallen. The ex-artilleryman began to bleed at the mouth and died without regaining consciousness.

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“Naturally the law stepped in. They showered calumnies of all kinds upon your father and accused him of being a heretic and a revolutionist. To be a heretic is a great misfortune anywhere or at any time, but it was especially so at this particular time, for the chief magistrate of the province was the loudest prayer maker in the Church. To be a revolutionist is still worse. One might better have killed three highly educated tax collectors than be thus accused. Everybody deserted your father, and his books and papers were seized. He was accused of being a subscriber to ‘El Correo del Ultramar’ and to Madrid newspapers, of having sent you to Germany, of having in his possession incriminating papers and

pictures, and—well, I don't know what not. He was even attacked because, although he was the descendant of Spaniards, he wore the dress of the natives. If your father had been anybody else, he would have been acquitted, for the doctors pronounced the death of the collector due to natural causes. His fortune, however, his confidence in the law, and his hatred for everything which seemed unlawful and unjust, cost him his life. I myself, much as I dislike begging for mercy, called upon the Governor General, the predecessor of the present Governor. I brought out the fact that a man who aided every poor Spaniard, who gave food and shelter to all, and whose veins were filled with the generous blood of Spain—such a man could not be a revolutionist. In vain I argued for him, pledged my own life for him, and swore by my military honor. What did it all amount to? I was badly received, curtly and summarily dismissed, and called a fool.”

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The old man paused to take breath. His young companion neither looked up nor made a sound. The narrator proceeded: “I took charge of the case for your father. I called upon the celebrated Filipino lawyer, young A—a, but he refused to undertake the defense. ‘I would lose the case,’ he said, ‘my defense would cause new accusations against him, and perhaps bring them upon me. Go and see Señor M—, who is an eloquent orator, a Spaniard and a man of great reputation.’ I did so, and the celebrated lawyer took charge of the case, which he conducted in a masterful and brilliant manner. But your father had many enemies, some of whom did their work secretly. There were many false witnesses in the case, and their calumnies, which anywhere else would have been overthrown by a single sarcastic phrase from the defending attorney, were here given a great deal of weight. As fast as the attorney proved the falsity of their accusations, new charges were brought forward. They accused him of having wrongfully taken possession of a large tract of land. They sued him for damages and for injuries caused. They said that he had dealings with the organized bandits or *tulisanes*, and that thus he had been able to keep his property unmolested. In fact, the case became so complicated that within a year no one understood it. The chief magistrate was called away from his post and replaced by another of good reputation, but unfortunately this magistrate, too, was displaced in a few months.

“The sufferings, disappointments and discomforts of prison life, and his great grief at seeing the ingratitude of so many supposed friends, finally broke down your father's iron constitution and he became fatally ill. When it was all over; when he had proved himself not guilty of being an enemy to his country, and innocent of the death of the tax collector, he died in prison, with no one to care for him in his last hours. I arrived just as he was expiring.”

The old man had finished all he had to say. Ibarra, overcome with grief at the pathetic story he had heard, could not utter a word. The two had arrived at the gate of the barracks. Stopping and shaking hands with the young man, the officer said: “My boy, Captain Tiago can give you the details. I must say good night, for my duty calls me.” With deep emotion, Ibarra grasped the lean hand of the lieutenant, and then looked after him in silence until he disappeared in the building. Turning slowly about, he saw a carriage passing and made a sign to the cabman.

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“Lala's Hotel,” he said in a low voice.

“This fellow is just out of jail,” said the cabman to himself as he whipped up his horses.

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Chapter IV.

Captain Tiago.

Captain Tiago was short in stature, but both his body and his face were well filled out. His complexion was clear and he did not appear to be more than thirty or thirty-five years old, although he was really more than that. In these times his face always wore a pleasant expression. His head was small, round and covered with hair as black as ebony, long in front and very short behind. This head, according to reports, contained a great many things. His eyes were small but not terrifying, and always without expression. In short, the Captain might have passed for a good-looking little man, if his mouth had not been disfigured by the use of tobacco and the betel nut, the juices of which trickled out of the corners of his lips and destroyed the symmetry of his features. However, despite these habits, both his own teeth and the two that the dentist had made for him, at twelve *pesos* each, were well preserved.

Tiago was considered one of the richest property owners in Binondo, and he also owned large plantations in the provinces of Pampanga and Laguna de Bay, especially in the town of San Diego. The rent of all these lands increased every year. San Diego was his favorite town on account of its excellent bathing place, its famous cockpit and the pleasant memories associated with the neighborhood. He spent at least two months in this town every year. Captain Tiago also had a great deal of property in Santo Cristo, in Analoague Street and in Rosario Street. In partnership with a Chinaman he carried on a profitable business in opium. It is understood that he had contracts with the Government for feeding the prisoners in Bilibid and that he supplied fodder to many of the principal houses in Manila. He was in good standing with the authorities, able, clever, and even daring in his speculations in the necessities of others. Hence it was that at this time the Captain was as happy as a narrow-minded man could be in such a country. He was rich, and was at peace with God, the Government and man.

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That Tiago was at peace with God was indisputable. In fact, there was no reason whatever for his not being so, since he was well situated as far as worldly matters go and had never loaned God any money. He never addressed God in his prayers, not even when he was in dire straits. He was rich, and his money, he thought, could pray for him. For masses and prayers, God had created powerful and lofty priests; for special religious functions and rosaries, God, in His infinite goodness, for the benefit of the rich, had created poor people—poor people who for a *peso* would make half a dozen prayers, and would read all the Holy Books, even to the Hebrew Bible, if the pay were large enough. If at any time he found himself in hard straits and needed heavenly aid and was out of red Chinese candles, he applied to the saints, making them great promises in order to win their favor and convince them of his good intentions.

Captain Tiago was therefore beloved by the priests, respected by the sacristans, fondled by the Chinese candle-makers and fire-cracker merchants, and thoroughly happy in the religion of the world. Some even attributed to him great influence in the ecclesiastical court.

That the Captain was at peace with the Government must not be doubted simply because such a thing seems impossible. Incapable of conceiving a new idea and content with the *modus vivendi*, he was always willing to obey the latest official recruit in any of the Government offices and even ready to give him at all times of the year such presents as hams, capons, turkeys, and Chinese fruit. He was the first to applaud any tax imposed by the Government, especially when he scented behind it a chance of securing the contract for its collection. He always kept orchestras on hand to serenade Government officials of all grades from governor to the lowest Government agent, on their birthdays, saint's days, or when any occasion, such as the death of any of their relatives, or a birth in the family connection should afford a pretext. He even went so far as to dedicate laudatory verses to his royal patrons on these occasions, thus honoring the "suave and loving governor" or the "valiant and mighty alcalde."

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The Captain was a petty governor or *gobernadorcillo* of a rich colony of *mestizos*, in spite of the protests of many who considered him unfit for the position. He held the office for two years, but during this time he wore out ten frock coats, about the same number of high hats, and lost more than a half dozen of *gobernadorcillo* canes. His high hat and frock coat were always in evidence in the city hall, at the Government palace in Melacañan¹ and at the army headquarters, and they always appeared, too, in the cock-pit, in the market, in all processions, and in the Chinese shops. Dressed in this official costume with the tasseled cane, Captain Tiago was to be found everywhere, arranging, ordering, and putting in disorder, everything with which he had anything to do—and all with wonderful activity and with still more wonderful gravity.

Sacrilegious people called him a fool; poor people called him a hypocrite, a cruel man who gained a livelihood by making others miserable; while his inferiors looked upon him as a despot and a tyrant. And the women? Ah, the women! Slanderous rumors circulated in the wretched *nipa* houses, and it was claimed that often lamentations and sobs, mingled with the cries of a child, could be heard. More than one young girl was pointed out by the malicious finger of the neighbors, with the remark: "See what a different expression she wears, and how plainly she shows evidences of her shame." But such things as these never robbed the Captain of any sleep; no young girl disturbed his rest.

Such was the Captain at that time. His past history was as follows: He was the only son of a very wealthy but avaricious sugar manufacturer of Malabon, who was unwilling to spend a cent in his education. For this reason young Santiago became the servant of a good Dominican, a very virtuous man, who tried to teach him all the valuable knowledge which he possessed. About the time when he was to have the happiness of studying logic, the death of his protector, followed by that of his

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father, put an end to his studies and from that time on he devoted himself to business. He married a beautiful girl from Santa Cruz, who increased his fortune and gave him a social position.

Doña Pia Alba was not content with buying sugar, coffee and indigo; she wished to sow and reap, so the young husband bought lands in San Diego. It was in this town that he made the acquaintance and friendship of Father Dámaso and of Don Rafael Ibarra, the richest capitalist of the town.

The lack of an heir for the first six years of his married life gave him a great opportunity to accumulate wealth, which perhaps was a censurable ambition. Although Doña Pia was handsome, robust and well formed, she made her pilgrimages in vain. By advice of the devotees of San Diego, she visited the Virgin of Cayasay in Taal; she gave alms, and she danced in the procession before the Virgin of Turumba in Pakil under the May sun, but it was all in vain. Finally, on the advice of Father Dámaso, she went to Obando, and there danced at the *fiesta* of San Pascual Bailon and asked for a son. It is well known that in Obando there is a trinity—Our Lady of Salambau, Santa Clara and San Pascual—which grants sons or daughters as required. Thanks to this wise triumvirate, Doña Pia became a mother, but like the fisherman in Macbeth, who ceased to sing after he found a rich treasure, Doña Pia lost her gayety, became very sad and was never seen to smile again. Every one, even to Captain Tiago, declared that it was a pure caprice. A puerperal fever put an end to her grief, leaving a beautiful daughter motherless. Father Dámaso baptized the child, and, as San Pascual had not given the son which had been asked for, the name of Maria Clara was given to it in honor of the Virgin of Salambau and of Santa Clara. The little girl grew up under the care of her aunt Isabel,—that good old lady with the manners of a friar whom we met before. The little girl lived the greater part of the time in San Diego on account of the healthful climate, and while there Father Dámaso paid her much attention.

Maria Clara did not have the small eyes of her father. Like her mother, her eyes were large, black and shaded by long lashes, brilliant and smiling when she was playing, but sad, deep and pensive at other times. When a child her wavy hair was almost blond. Her nose was well formed, neither too large nor too flat. Her mouth was small and beautifully shaped like that of her mother, and her cheeks were set with dimples. Her skin was like silk and as white as snow, but her fond parent found traces of the paternity of Captain Tiago in her small and well shaped ears.

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Aunt Isabel attributed the child's semi-European features to impressions made upon Doña Pia. She remembered having seen the mother a short time before the child was born, weeping before the image of San Antonio. Then, too, a cousin of Captain Tiago had the same features, the only difference being in the choice of the saints, by which the phenomenon was explained. With her it was either the Virgin or San Miguel. A cousin of Captain Tiago, a famous philosopher, who knew Amat² by heart, explained it all by attributing it to the effect of the planets.

Maria Clara, the idol of all, grew up surrounded by love and smiles. She won the favor of even the friars when she was dressed in white for some religious procession, her long, wavy hair interwoven with flowers, two silver or golden wings attached to the shoulders of her dress, and holding two white doves, tied with blue ribbons, in her hand. When she grew up, she was so full of childish mischief that Captain Tiago did nothing but bless the saints of Obando and advise everybody to buy handsome statues of that trinity.

In tropical countries a girl becomes a woman at the age of thirteen or fourteen years, like the plant which buds at night and blooms the following morning. During this period of transition, so full of mystery and romance, on the advice of the parish priest, Maria Clara entered the religious retreat of Santa Catalina in order to receive from the nuns a strictly religious education. She left Father Dámaso in tears, and likewise the only friend of her childhood, Crisostomo Ibarra. Shortly after the entrance to the convent, Ibarra went to Europe. For seven long years, the girl lived under the vigilance of the Mother Superior in the iron-grated building, shut off from any communication with the outer world.

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Don Rafael and Captain Tiago, in the meantime, while Ibarra was in Europe and Maria Clara in the convent, noticing the trend of affairs, and at the same time having in mind their own interests, decided that the children should be married. It is needless to say that this agreement, which was arrived at some years after Ibarra had left for Europe, was celebrated with equal joy by two hearts, on opposite sides of the world and amid very different surroundings.

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1 Street in Manila.

2 Archbishop and author of theological works.

Chapter V.

An Idyl on the Azotea.¹

On the morning after the dinner party, Aunt Isabel and Maria Clara went to mass early: the former carefully carrying her glasses, so that she might be able to read "The Anchor of Salvation" during communion; the latter beautifully dressed, carrying her rosary of blue beads as a bracelet. The priest had scarcely left the altar when, to the disgust and surprise of her good aunt, who thought that her niece was as pious and as fond of prayer as a nun, the young girl desired to go home. After a great deal of grumbling, the old lady crossed herself several times, and the two arose to leave. "Never mind," said Maria, to cut off the scolding, "the good God will pardon me. He ought to understand the heart of a girl better than you, Aunt Isabel."

After breakfast, Maria Clara occupied herself with some embroidery while her aunt bustled about with a duster removing the traces of the social event of the preceding evening. Captain Tiago was busy examining some papers.

Every noise in the street and every passing carriage made the girl tremble with anxiety and wish that she were again back in the convent among her friends. There, she thought, she could see him without trembling and with perfect equanimity.

"I believe, Maria, that the doctor is right," said Captain Tiago. "You ought to go to the provinces. You are looking very pale and need a change of air. How does Malabon strike you, or San Diego?"

At the mere mention of the latter name, Maria Clara blushed and was unable to speak.

"Now, you and Isabel go to the convent to get your things and say good bye to your friends," continued the Captain, without raising his head. "You will not return there. And in four or five days, when your clothes are ready we shall go to Malabon. —Your godfather, by the way, is not in San Diego at present. The priest whom you saw here last night, that young fellow, is now the priest in the town. He is a saint."

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"I think you will find San Diego better, cousin," said Aunt Isabel. "Our house there is better than the one in Malabon, and besides, it is nearly time for the *fiesta* to take place."

Maria Clara was about to embrace her aunt for these welcome words, but just then a carriage stopped in front of the house and the young girl suddenly turned pale.

"That's so," said the Captain, and then, in a changed tone, exclaimed, "Don Crisostomo!"

Maria Clara let fall the work which she was holding in her hands. A nervous trembling passed over her. Then steps were heard on the stairs and presently a young, manly voice. And, as if this voice had some magic power, the girl shook off her emotion, started to run, and hid herself in the oratory. Both father and aunt had to laugh at this, and even Ibarra heard the closing of the door behind her.

Pale and panting, the girl finally subdued her emotion and began to listen. She could hear his voice, that voice which for so long a time she had heard only in her dreams. Beside herself with joy, she kissed the nearest saint, which, by the way, happened to be San Antonio, the abbot. Happy saint! Whether alive or carved in wood, always tempted in the most charming manner! Becoming quite herself again, she looked about for some crack through which she might get a peep at the young man. Finally, when he came in range of the key-hole and she again saw his fine features, her face beamed with smiles. In fact, the sight filled her with such joy that when her aunt came to call her, Maria Clara fell on the old lady's neck and kissed her repeatedly.

"You goose! What is the matter with you?" the old lady was finally able to ask, after wiping away her tears.

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Maria Clara, in her modesty, covered her face with her round arm.

"Come! Hurry up and get yourself ready!" said the old lady in an affectionate tone. "While he is talking with your father about you— Come, do not waste time!"

The girl did not respond, but allowed herself to be picked up like a child and carried to her room.

Captain Tiago and Ibarra were talking earnestly when at last Aunt Isabel appeared, half dragging her niece by the hand. At first the girl looked in every direction but at the persons present. At last, however, her eyes met Ibarra's.

The conversation of the young lovers was at first confined to the usual trifling remarks, those pleasant little things which, like the boasts of European nations, are enjoyable and interesting to those who are concerned and understand them, but ridiculous to outsiders.

Finally, she, like all sisters of Cain, was moved by jealousy and asked: "Have you always thought of me? Have you never forgotten me in your many travels among so many great cities and among such beautiful women?"

And he, a true brother of Cain, dodged the issue, and, being something of a diplomat, answered: "Could I forget you?" And then, gazing into her deep, dark eyes, "Could I break a sacred vow? Do you remember that stormy night when you, seeing me in tears beside my dead mother, came to me and placed your hand—that hand which I have not touched for so long—upon my shoulder, and said: 'You have lost your mother,—I never had one.' And then you wept with me. You loved my mother, and she loved you as only a mother can love a daughter. It was raining then, you will remember, and the lightning flashed, but I seemed to hear music and to see a smile on the face of my dead mother.—O, if my parents were only living and could see you now!—That night I took your hand and, joining it with my mother's, I swore always to love you and make you happy, no matter what fate Heaven might have in store for me. I have never regretted that vow, and now renew it."

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"Since the day that I bade you good-bye and entered the convent," she answered, smiling, "I have always remembered you, and have never forgotten you in spite of the commands of my confessor, who imposed severe penances on me. I remembered the little games we used to play together and our little quarrels. When we were children you used to find in the river the most beautiful shells for our games of *siklot* and the finest and most beautifully colored stones for our game of *sinkat*. You were always very slow and stupid and lost, but you always paid the forfeit, which I gave you with the palm of my hand. But I always tried to strike lightly, for I was sorry for you. You always cheated, even more than I, in the game of *chouka* and we generally quarrelled over it. Do you remember that time when you really became angry? Then you made me suffer, but when I found that I had no one to quarrel with, we made peace immediately. We were still children when we went with your mother one day to bathe in the stream under the shade of the reeds. Many flowers and plants grew on the bank of the river, and you used to tell me their strange Latin and Spanish names, for you were then studying at the Athenæum. I paid little attention, but amused myself by chasing butterflies and in trying to catch the little fish which slipped away from me so easily among the rocks and weeds of the shore. You suddenly disappeared from sight, but when you returned you brought a wreath of orange flowers and placed it on my head. On our way home, as the sun was hot, I collected some sage leaves from the side of the road for you to put into your hat and thus prevent headache. Then you laughed, we made up, and came the remainder of the way home hand in hand."

Ibarra smiled as he listened attentively to every detail of the story. Opening his pocket book, he took out a paper in which he had wrapped some withered but fragrant sage leaves. "Your sage leaves," said he in answer to her questioning glance. "The only thing you have ever given me."

She, in turn, drew a little, white satin bag from the bosom of her dress. "Stop!" she said, tapping his hand with her own. "You must not touch it; it is a letter of farewell."

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"The one that I wrote you before leaving?"

"My dear sir, have you ever written any other?"

"And what did I say then?"

"Many falsehoods; excuses of a bad debtor," replied she, smiling and showing how agreeable these falsehoods had been to her. "But be quiet! I will read it to you, but I will omit your polite speeches out of consideration for your feelings."

Raising the paper to the height of her eyes, in order to conceal her face, she began. "'My—,' I shall not read you what follows that, for it is not true." She ran her eyes over some lines and began to read again: "'My father wishes me to go away, in spite of my entreaties. He says that I am a man and must think of my

future and my duty; that I must learn how to live, which I cannot do in my own country, so that in the future I may be of some use. He says that if I remain at his side, in his shadow, in this atmosphere of business, I will never learn how to look ahead, and that when he is gone, I shall be like the plant of which our poet Baltazar speaks—as it always lives in the water, it never learns how to endure a moment's heat.—He reproached me because I wept, and his reproach hurt me so that I confessed that I loved you. My father stopped, thought a moment and, placing his hand on my shoulder, said in a trembling voice: "Do you think that you alone know how to love, that your father does not love you, and that his heart is not pained at being separated from you? It is a short time since your mother died, and I am already reaching that age when the help and counsel of youth are needed. And yet I consent to your going, not even knowing that I shall ever see you again. The future is opening to you, but closing to me. Your loves are being born; mine are dying. Fire blazes in your blood, but cold is gradually finding its way into mine. And yet you weep, and are not willing to sacrifice the present for a future useful to yourself and your country." The eyes of my father filled with tears and I fell upon my knees at his feet and embraced him. I asked his pardon and said that I was willing to go."

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The emotion which Ibarra manifested put an end to the reading. As pale as death, he arose and began to walk nervously from one side to the other.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"You have made me forget that I have duties to perform, and that I ought to leave immediately for my town. To-morrow is the *fiesta* in memory of the dead."

Maria Clara stopped and silently fixed her large and dreamy eyes upon him for some minutes. Then taking some flowers from a vase near by, she said with emotion: "Go! I do not wish to detain you. We shall see each other again in a few days. Place these flowers on the graves of your father and mother."

A few moments later, Ibarra descended the stairs, accompanied by Captain Tiago and Doña Isabel, while Maria Clara locked herself up in the oratory.

"Do me the favor to tell Andeng to get the house ready, and that Maria and Isabel are coming. A pleasant journey!" While the Captain was saying this, Ibarra got into the carriage and drove off in the direction of the Plaza of San Gabriel.

A few minutes later the Captain shouted to Maria Clara, who was weeping by the side of the image of the Virgin: "Hurry up and light two *peseta* candles in honor of San Roque and another in honor of San Rafael, the patron saint of travellers. And light the lamp of Our Lady of Peace and Protector of Travellers, for there are many bandits about. It is better to spend four *reales* for wax and six *cuartos* for oil than to have to pay a big ransom later on."

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¹ Roof of the first story used as a veranda.

Chapter VI.

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Things Philippine.

Father Dámaso drove up in front of Captain Tiago's house and the Franciscan stepped to the ground just as Aunt Isabel and Maria Clara were getting into their silver-trimmed carriage. They saluted Father Dámaso, and he, in his preoccupation, gently patted Maria Clara on the cheek.

"Where are you going?" the friar asked.

"To the convent to get my things," replied the younger.

"Ah, ha! Ah, ha! We'll see who is the stronger. We'll see!" he muttered and turned away, leaving the two women in wonder as to what it all meant. The friar stepped along lightly, and reaching the stairs, went up.

"He must be studying his sermon," said Isabel. "Get in, Maria; we shall be late."

Whether Father Dámaso was studying his sermon or not we cannot say. At any rate, he was absorbed in some important matter, for he even forgot to extend his hand to Captain Tiago upon entering, greatly to the embarrassment of the Captain, who had to feign kissing it.

"Santiago, we have some very important matters to talk over; let us go to your office."

The Captain, somewhat disturbed, was unable to reply, but he obeyed and followed the big priest into his office. Father Dámaso shut the door behind them.

While they are conferring in secret, let us find out what has become of Brother Sibyla. The wise Dominican was not to be found at his parochial residence, for early, immediately after mass, he had gone to the Dominican convent, situated near the gate called Isabel the Second or Magallanes, according to which family is in power in Madrid. Paying no attention to the delicious odor of chocolate or to the rattling of money boxes and coins in the treasurer's office, and scarcely answering the deferential salute of the treasurer, Father Sibyla went upstairs, crossed several corridors and rapped on a door.

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"Come in!" answered a voice.

"May God give back health to Your Reverence!" was the greeting of the young Dominican as he entered.

A very feeble old priest was seated in a large arm-chair. His complexion was as yellow as the saints which Revera paints; his eyes were sunk deep in their orbits, and his heavy eyebrows, which were nearly always knit in a frown, added to the brilliant glare of his death-foreboding eyes.

"I have come to talk to you about the charge with which you have entrusted me," said Father Sibyla.

"Ah, yes. And what about it?"

"Pshaw!" answered the young man with disgust, seating himself and turning his face away with disdain. "They have been telling us a lot of lies. Young Ibarra is a prudent boy. He does not seem to be a fool. I think he is a pretty good sort of a chap."

"Do you think so?"

"Hostilities began last night."

"So soon? And how did it come about?"

Father Sibyla related briefly what had taken place between Father Dámaso and Crisostomo Ibarra.

"Furthermore," he added, in conclusion, "the young man is going to marry that daughter of Captain Tiago, who was educated in the college of our sisters. He is rich and would not want to make any enemies who might cause the loss of his happiness and his fortune."

The sick man bowed his head as a sign of assent. "Yes, that is my opinion. With such a wife and such a father-in-law we can hold him body and soul. And if not, it will be all the better for us if he declares himself our enemy."

Father Sibyla looked at the old man with surprise.

"That is to say, for the good of our whole corporation," he added, breathing with difficulty. "I prefer open attacks to the foolish praise and adulations of friends, for, the truth is, flattery is always paid for."

"Does Your Reverence think so?"

The old man looked at him sadly. "Always bear this in mind," he answered, panting with fatigue, "that our power will endure as long as it is believed in. If they attack us, the Government says, 'They attack them, because they see in them an obstacle to their liberty, therefore let us preserve them.'"

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"And if the Government gives them a hearing? Sometimes the Government——"

"The Government will do no such thing."

"Nevertheless, if some bold and reckless man, impelled by covetousness, should dare to think that he wanted our possessions——"

"Then, woe to him!"

For a moment both remained silent.

"Furthermore," continued the sick man, "it will do us good to have them attack us

and wake us up. It would show us our weaknesses and strengthen us. The exaggerated praises which we get deceive us, and put us asleep. We are becoming ridiculous and on the day that we become ridiculous we shall fall as we fell in Europe. Money will no longer flow into our churches, no one will longer buy our scapularies or girdles, and when we cease to be rich we shall no longer possess the great influence which we wield at present.”

“Pshaw! We shall always have our property, our plantations——”

“We shall lose them all as we lost them in Europe. And the worst of it is that we are working for our own ruin. For instance, this immeasurable ambition to raise the incomes from our lands each year, this eagerness to increase the rents, which I have always opposed in vain, this eagerness will be our ruin. The natives already find themselves forced to buy land in other localities if they want lands as good as ours. I fear that we are degenerating. ‘Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.’ For this reason we should not be too hard on the people, for they are already grumbling under our exactions. You have considered well. Let us leave this thing to others, and keep up the prestige which we have and let us endeavor to appear before God with clean hands. May the God of pity have mercy on our weaknesses!”

“So you believe that the tax or tribute——”

“Let us talk no more of money!” interrupted the sick man with disgust. “You were saying that the lieutenant and Father Dámaso last night——”

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“Yes, Father,” answered the young priest smiling. “But this morning I saw the lieutenant again and he told me that he was sorry for what had occurred at the dinner. He said he thought that he had been affected by too much wine and that the same was true of Father Dámaso. ‘And your boast to tell the Governor?’ I asked jokingly. ‘Father,’ he answered, ‘I know when to make my word good so long as it does not stain my honor. That is just the reason why I wear only two stars.’”

After talking over several minor matters, Father Sibyla took his leave.

As a matter of fact the lieutenant had not gone to the Governor General’s palace in Melacañan with any report in regard to the occurrence of the preceding evening. However, the Governor General had learned of it through another source, and discussing the matter with one of his aides, he said:

“A woman and a priest can give no offense. I intend to live peaceably while I remain in this country and I do not wish to have any trouble with men who wear skirts. And, furthermore, I have found out that the Father Provincial has evaded my orders in this matter. I asked for the removal of that friar as a punishment. What was done? They removed him, but they gave him another and much better town. ‘Tricks of the friars,’ as they say in Spain.”

But when His Excellency found himself alone he ceased to smile. “Ah!” he sighed, “if the people were not so stupid they would put a limit to their reverences. But every people deserves its fate, and we are no different in this respect from the rest of the world.”

Meanwhile Captain Tiago had concluded his conference with Father Dámaso, or rather Father Dámaso had concluded it.

“I have already warned you!” said the Franciscan on taking his leave. “You could have avoided all of this had you consulted with me before, and, if you had not lied to me, when I asked you about it. See to it that you do not do any more such foolish things, and have faith in your godfather.”

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Captain Tiago took two or three steps towards the *sala*, meditating and sighing. All at once, as if some good idea had struck him, he ran to the oratory and put out the candles and the lamps which had been lighted for Ibarra’s protection.

“There is still time enough,” he murmured, “for he has a long road to travel.”

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Chapter VII.

San Diego and Its People.

Not far from the shores of the Laguna de Bay lies the town of San Diego,

surrounded by fertile fields and rice plantations. It exports sugar, rice, coffee, and fruits, or sells them at ridiculously low prices to the Chinese, who make large profits out of the credulity and vices of the laborers.

When the sky was serene and the atmosphere clear, the boys used to climb to the very peak of the old moss and vine covered church tower. And what exclamations they would utter when, from that high pinnacle, they looked out at the beautiful panorama that surrounded them. There before them lay a great mass of roofs, some *nipa*, some thatch, some zinc and some made out of the native grasses. And out of that mass, which here and there gave way to an orchard or a garden, every one of those boys could find his own little home, his own little nest. To them everything was a landmark; every tamarind tree with its light foliage, every cocconut tree with its load of nuts, every bending cane, every *bonga* tree, every cross. Beyond the town is the crystal river, like a serpent asleep on a carpet of green. Here and there, its tranquil surface is broken by rocks projecting from its sandy bottom. In places, it is hemmed in between two high banks, and there the rapidly rushing waters turn and twist the half-bared roots of the overhanging shade trees. But further on it spreads itself out again and becomes calm and peaceful.

But what always attracts attention is a peninsula of forest projecting into this sea of cultivated land. There can be found hollow-trunked trees, a century old, trees which die only when struck by lightning and set on fire. They say, also, that even in that case the fire never spreads to any other tree. This old grove is held in a certain degree of awe, for around it have been woven many strange legends. Of these the most probable, and consequently the least known and believed is the following:

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When the town was still a miserable group of huts, when weeds grew in abundance in the so-called streets, and deer and wild boar roamed about at night, there arrived one day an old Spaniard. His eyes were deep and thoughtful and he spoke Tagalog fluently. After visiting the different estates and peddling out some goods he inquired for the owners of this grove, which by the way, also contained several hot water springs. A number of persons claiming to be the owners presented themselves, and the old man purchased from them the grove, paying in exchange some money, jewelry and clothing. A short time afterward he disappeared, no one knew where.

His sudden disappearance made the people think for a time that he had been spirited away, but later on a fetid odor was noticeable near the grove, and some shepherds, upon investigation, found the body of the old man in a badly decomposed condition hanging from the limb of a *baliti* tree. When alive the old man had terrorized many by his deep and resonant voice, his sunken eyes and his silent laugh, but now that he was dead, and a suicide at that, the mere mention of his name gave the town women nightmare. Some of them threw the jewelry that they had bought from him into the river and burned all the clothing, and, for a long time after the body had been buried at the foot of the *baliti* tree, no one cared to venture near it. All sort of stories became current about the haunted place.

A shepherd, looking for his flock, said that he had seen lights in the grove. A party of young men, passing near the place, heard groans and lamentations. An unfortunate lover, in order to make an impression on the disdainful object of his affections, promised to spend a night under the tree and to bring her a branch from its trunk, but on the next day he was taken ill with a quick fever and died.

Before many months had passed, a youth came to the town one day. He was apparently a Spanish *mestizo*, declared himself the son of the dead stranger, and established himself in that far-off corner of the world. He began to farm the land and devoted himself especially to the cultivation of indigo. Don Saturnino was a taciturn young man, violent and sometimes cruel, but very active and industrious. He built a wall around his father's grave and, from time to time, went all alone to visit it. A few years later he married a young girl from Manila who bore him a son, Rafael, the father of Crisostomo.

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Don Rafael, from his earliest youth, was fond of farming. Under his care, the agriculture which had been started and fostered by his father was rapidly developed. New inhabitants flocked to the vicinity, and among them were a great many Chinese. The village grew very fast and was soon supporting a native priest. After it had become a *pueblo*, the native priest died and Father Dámaso took his place.

Still the grave and the adjoining lands were respected. At times, children, armed with sticks and stones, ventured to wander about, exploring the surrounding country and gathering *guayabas*, *papays*, *lomboy* and other native fruits. Then, all of a sudden, while they were busily engaged collecting the fruits, some one would catch a glimpse of the old rope hanging from the *baliti* tree, and stones would be

heard to fall. Then some one would cry, "The old man!" "The old man!" Dropping fruit, sticks and stones, and leaping from the trees, the boys would flee in all directions through the thickets and between the rocks, not stopping until they emerged from the grove, pale and panting, some laughing, some crying.

You could not say that Don Rafael, while alive, was the most influential man in San Diego, although it is true that he was the richest, owned the most land, and had put almost everybody else under obligations to him. He was modest and always belittled his own deeds. He never tried to form a party of his own, and, as we have already seen, no one came to his aid when his fortune seemed to fail him.

Whenever Captain Tiago arrived in town, his debtors received him with an orchestra, gave him a banquet, and loaded him down with gifts. If a deer or a wild boar was caught he always had a quarter of it for his own table; if any of his debtors found a beautiful horse, within a half hour it would be in the Captain's stable. All of this is true, but still when the Captain had his back turned they made fun of him and referred to him as Sacristan Tiago. [43]

The *gobernadorcillo*¹ was an unhappy fellow who never commanded but always obeyed; he never attacked any one, but was always attacked; he never ordered anybody, but everybody ordered him; and besides, he had to take the responsibility for everything that they had commanded, ordered or disposed. The position had cost him five thousand *pesos* and many humiliations, but, considering the profits he made, the price was very cheap.

San Diego was like Rome; not the Rome of the time of Romulus, when he marked out the walls with a plough, nor when, later, he bathed in his own blood and that of others and dictated laws to the world: no, San Diego was like the Rome of contemporaneous history, with this difference—instead of being a city of marble, monuments and coliseums, it was a city of *sauali*² and cock-pits. The parochial priest of San Diego corresponded to the Pope in the Vatican; the *alferez*³ of the Civil Guard to the King of Italy in the Quirinal, but both in the same proportion as the *sauali* or native wood and the *nipa* cock-pits corresponded to the monuments of marble and coliseums. And in San Diego, as in Rome, there was continual trouble. Everybody wanted to be the leading señor, and there was always some one else in the way. Let us describe two of these ambitious citizens.

Friar Bernardo Salvi was the young and silent Franciscan whom we mentioned in a preceding chapter. He had even more of the customs and manners of his brotherhood than had his predecessor, the violent Father Dámaso. He was slender, sickly, almost always pensive, and very strict in the fulfillment of his religious duties as well as very careful of his good name. A month after his arrival in the parish almost all the inhabitants became brothers of the "Venerable Third Order," to the great grief of its rival, "The Brotherhood of the Most Sacred Rosary." His heart leaped with joy at seeing on every neck in the town from four to five scapularies, a knotted cord around every waist, and every funeral procession dressed in habits of *guingon*. The sacristan mayor or head warden of the order made quite a little capital by selling and giving away all those things considered necessary to save the soul and overcome the devil. [44]

The only enemy of this powerful soul saver, with tendencies in accord with the times, was, as we have already stated, the *alferez*. The women relate a story of how the devil tried one day to tempt Father Salvi and how the latter caught him, tied him to the bed post, whipped him with a lash and kept him tied fast for nine days. Thus he had been able to conquer the devil entirely. As a result, any one who persisted in being an enemy of the priest was generally considered a worse man than the devil himself—an honor which the *alferez* alone enjoyed. But he merited this reputation. He had a wife, an old, powdered and painted Filipino by the name of Doña Consolación. The husband and several other people called her by a different name, but that does not matter. Anyway, the *alferez* was accustomed to drown the sorrows of unhappy wedlock by getting as drunk as a toper. Then, when he was thoroughly intoxicated he would order his men to drill in the sun, he himself remaining in the shade, or, perhaps, he would occupy himself in beating his wife.

When her husband was dead drunk, or was snoring away in a siesta, and Doña Consolación could not fight with him, then, wearing a blue flannel shirt, she would seat herself in the window, with a cigar in her mouth. She had a dislike of children and so from her window she would scowl and make faces at every girl that passed. The girls, on the other hand, were afraid of her, and would hurry by at a quick pace, never daring to raise their eyes or draw a breath. But say what you may, Doña Consolación had one great virtue; she was never known to look into a mirror.

These were the leading people of San Diego.

Toward the west of San Diego, surrounded by rice fields, lies a village of the dead.

A single, narrow path, dusty on dry days, and navigable by boats when it rains, leads thither from the town. A wooden gate, and a fence, half stone and half bamboo, seem to separate the cemetery from the people in the town, but not from the goats and sheep of the parochial priest of the immediate vicinity. These animals go in and out to rummage among the tombs or to make that solitary place glad with their presence.

One day a little old man entered the cemetery, his eyes sparkling and his head uncovered. Upon seeing him, many laughed, while a number of the women knit their eyebrows in scorn. The old man seemed to take no notice of these manifestations, but went directly toward a pile of skulls, knelt down and began to search among the bones. After he had sorted over with considerable care the skulls one by one, he drew his eyebrows together, as though he did not find what he was looking for, moved his head from side to side, looked in all directions, and finally got up and went over toward a grave-digger.

“Eh, there!” he shouted to him.

The grave-digger raised his head.

“Do you know where that beautiful skull is, the one white as the meat of a cocoanut, with a complete set of teeth, which I had over there at the foot of the cross under those leaves?”

The grave-digger shrugged his shoulders.

“Look you!” added the little old man, bringing out of his pocket a handful of silver. “I have more than that, but I will give it to you if you find the skull for me.”

The glitter of the coin made the grave-digger reflect. He looked over in the direction of the bone pile and said: “Isn’t it over there? No? Then I don’t know where it is.”

“Don’t you know? When my debtors pay me, I will give you more,” continued the old man. “It was my wife’s skull, and if you find it for me——”

“Isn’t it there. Then I don’t know where it is,” repeated the grave-digger with emphasis. “But I will give you another.”

“You are like the grave that you are digging,” cried the old man irritably. “You don’t know the value of what you lose. For whom is this grave?”

“For a dead person, of course,” replied the bad-humored man.

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“Like a tomb! Like a tomb!” repeated the old man dryly. “You don’t know what you throw out nor what you swallow. Dig! dig!”

At this the old man, who was Tasio, the village philosopher, turned and started toward the gate.

In the meantime, the grave-digger had finished his job, and two little mounds of fresh, red clay were piled on either side of the grave. He took some betel nut out of his broad-brimmed hat, and began to chew away, looking with an air of stupidity at everything within his horizon.

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1 Petty governor, the highest local official.

2 Trellis work made of reeds.

3 Local commander of the Civil Guard.

Chapter VIII.

Ibarra and the Grave-Digger.

Just as the old man was leaving the cemetery, a carriage stopped at the entrance. It looked as though it had made a long journey; the horses were sweating and the vehicle was covered with dust. Ibarra stepped out and was followed by an old servant. He made a gesture to the driver and then turned down the path into the cemetery. He was silent and grave.

“My sickness and my work have not permitted me to return, since the day of the funeral,” said the old servant timidly. “Captain Tiago said that he would see to it

that a niche was arranged for, but I planted some flowers on the grave and erected a cross made by my own hands."

Ibarra did not reply.

"Right there behind that large cross, señor," continued the servant, making a gesture toward one of the corners just as they passed through the gate.

Ibarra was so preoccupied with sad thoughts that he did not notice the astonishment which some of the people in the cemetery manifested when they saw him enter. Those who were kneeling broke off their prayers and followed the young man, their eyes full of curiosity.

Ibarra walked along very carefully, and avoided stepping on the graves, which could be easily distinguished by the sunken ground. In other times he had walked over them; but to-day he respected them. His father lay in one of them. On coming to the other side of the large cross, he stopped and looked in all directions. His companion was confused and out of countenance. He searched for marks on the ground but could not find the cross anywhere.

"Is it here?" he murmured between his teeth. "No, it is over there, but the earth has been removed."

Ibarra looked at him with an expression of anguish.

"Yes," he continued. "I remember that there was a stone by the side of the grave. The grave was a little short, a farm hand had to dig it, as the grave-digger was sick at the time, but we will ask him what he has done with the cross."

They turned toward the grave-digger, who looked at them with curiosity. He saluted them, taking off his hat.

"Can you tell us which of the graves over there is the one which had a cross?" asked the servant.

The grave-digger looked toward the place and seemed to reflect. "A large cross?"

"Yes, a large cross," answered the old man with joy, looking significantly at Ibarra, whose face was somewhat animated.

"An ornamented cross, and fastened with reeds?" repeated the grave-digger, questioning the servant.

"That's it, that's it, yes, yes! Like this, like this," and the servant traced an outline of a Byzantine cross.

"And were there some flowers sown on the grave?"

"*Adelphas, sampagas* and pansies! That's it," added the servant, delighted, and offering the grave-digger a cigar. "Tell us where the grave is and where the cross."

The grave-digger scratched his ear and replied, yawning: "Well, the cross—I have already burned it up."

"Burned it? and why have you burned it?"

"Because the head priest so ordered."

"Who is the head priest?" asked Ibarra.

"Who? The one who does the whipping."

Ibarra put his hand to his head.

"But you can at least tell us where the grave is? You ought to remember."

The grave-digger smiled. "The body is no longer there," he replied tranquilly.

"What do you say?"

"Yes, no longer," the man added in a joking tone. "Only a week ago I buried a woman in its place."

"Are you crazy?" the servant asked. "Why, it is not yet a year since we buried him."

"Then that is the one, for it was many months ago that I took up the body. The head priest of the parish ordered me to do it, in order to bury it in the Chinese cemetery. But as it was heavy and it was raining that night——"

The man could not finish. He stepped back, half frightened at the expression on Crisostomo's face. Ibarra made a rush at him, and, grabbing him by the arm, shook him.

"And what did you do?" the young man asked, in an indescribable tone.

"Honored sir, do not get angry," he replied, pale and trembling. "I did not bury the body among the Chinese. In my opinion a person might better be a suicide than be buried among the Chinese. I threw the body into the lake."

Ibarra laid both his hands on the man's shoulders and looked at him for a long time in a terrifying manner. "You are only an unfortunate fellow," he said, at last, and left the place on a run across bones, graves, and crosses, like a madman.

The grave-digger felt of his arm and murmured: "What would they do with the dead! The head priest whips me with his cane for having left the body in the cemetery when I was sick. Now this fellow comes along and nearly breaks my arm for having taken it up. That is just like the Spaniards! I'll lose my place yet."

Ibarra went on in great haste, keeping his eyes fixed in the distance. The old servant followed him, crying. Already the sun was hidden; a large, dark cloud hung over the western horizon; and a dry wind bent the tops of the trees and made the fields of sugar cane groan. With hat in hand, he went on. Not one tear dropped from his eye, not one sigh came from his breast. He hurried on as if he were fleeing from somebody, or something—perhaps the shade of his father, perhaps the tempest which was approaching. He hurried through the town and headed toward the outlying country, toward that old house which he had not entered for so many years. The house was surrounded by a wall, near which many cacti grew, and as he approached they seemed to signal to him. The windows seemed to open, the *ilang-ilang* joyfully waved its branches, and the doves fluttered about the little tower on the peak of their garden house.

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But the young man did not notice these signs of welcome on his return to his old home. His eyes were riveted on the form of a priest who was advancing from the opposite direction. It was the priest of San Diego, that meditative Franciscan, the enemy of the *alferez* whom we have mentioned. The wind was playing with the wide wings of his hat, and the robe of *guingon* was flattened out, moulded by the wind to the outline of his form, marking his slender thighs and bow-legs. In his right hand he carried a cane. It was the first time that he and Ibarra had met.

As they approached each other, the young man stopped and looked at him fixedly. Father Salvi avoided the look and was somewhat distracted. This vacillation lasted only a moment. Ibarra made a rush toward him, and stopped the priest from falling only by grasping his shoulder. Then, in a voice scarcely intelligible, he exclaimed:

"What have you done with my father?"

Friar Salvi, pale and trembling, as he read the unmistakable sentiments which were depicted on the young man's face, could not reply.

"What have you done with my father?" he asked again, his voice almost choking him.

The priest, shrinking from the tight grasp of Ibarra's hand, at last made a great effort and said: "You are mistaken. I have done nothing with your father."

"What? No?" continued the young man, the weight of his hand on the priest's shoulder almost making him kneel.

"No, I assure you. It was my predecessor. It was Father Dámaso——"

"Ah!" exclaimed the young man, throwing the priest down and giving him a slap in the face. And leaving Father Salvi, he turned quickly and went toward the house.

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Chapter IX.

Adventures of a School Teacher.

Laguna de Bay, surrounded by mountains, sleeps tranquilly in the stillness of the elements, as if it had not joined the chorus of the tempest on the night before. As first rays of dawn appear in the eastern sky and awaken the phosphorescent

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myriads in the water, long, grey shadows appear in the dim distance, almost on the border of the horizon. They are shadows of fishermen's boats at work drawing in the nets.

Two men, dressed in deep mourning, from a lofty height contemplate the scene in silence. One is Ibarra, and the other is a young, meek-looking man with a melancholy countenance.

"Here is the place!" said the latter. "Here is where your father's body was thrown into the water! The grave-digger brought Lieutenant Guevara and me here and pointed out the spot."

Ibarra, with emotion, warmly grasped the young man's hand.

"You need not thank me!" replied the latter. "I owed your father for many favors he did me. The only thing I could ever do for him was to accompany his body to the grave. I had come to the town without knowing anybody, without any recommendations, without a reputation, without money, just as I am now. Your father protected me, procured a house for me, helped secure whatever was needed to advance education; he used to come to the school and distribute pennies among the poor and diligent pupils; he provided them with books and papers. But that, like all good things, did not last long."

Ibarra took off his hat and seemed to pray for a short time. Then he turned to his companion and said: "Did you tell me that my father used to help the poor children? How is it now?"

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"Oh, now they do the best they can."

"And don't they come to school regularly?"

"No, for their shirts are ragged and they are ashamed."

Ibarra kept silent for a few moments.

"How many pupils have you now?" he asked, with a certain interest.

"There are more than two hundred on the register, but only twenty-five in the class."

"How does that happen?"

The school teacher sadly smiled.

"It is a long and tedious story," said he.

"Don't think that I am asking out of vain curiosity," replied Ibarra, looking seriously at the distant horizon. "I have been meditating a great deal on the matter, and I believe that it is far better to try to carry out the ideas of my father than to try to avenge him. His tomb is sacred Nature; and his enemies were the people and the priest. I can forgive the people for their ignorance, and as to the priest, I will pardon his character because I wish to respect the religion which he represents. I wish to be inspired with the spirit of the one who gave me life, and, that I may lend my help, I wish to know what are the obstacles here in the way of education."

"The country will bless your memory, Señor, if you can carry out the beautiful and noble ideas of your dead father," said the school teacher. "You wish to know what the obstacles are? Very well. We are now in such circumstances that unless something powerful intervenes, there will never be any education here. First, because there is no incentive or stimulus to the children, and, secondly, even when there is an incentive, lack of means and many prejudices kill it. They say that the son of a German peasant studies eight years in the town school. Who would want to spend half of that time in our schools, when the benefits to be derived are so small? Here the children read, and commit to memory verses and at times entire books in Spanish, but all without understanding a single word. What good can the sons of our farmers get out of the school so long as this is the case?"

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"And you see the evil; have you not thought out a remedy?"

"Ah, poor me!" replied the teacher, shaking his head, "a poor teacher cannot alone fight against prejudices, against existing influences. Above all, I would need to have a school house, so that I would not, as I do now, have to teach from the priest's carriage, under the convent. There, when the children want to read aloud, they naturally disturb the Father, who at times comes down and very nervous, especially when he has his attacks, finds fault with the children and insults me. You know very well that under such conditions no one can do any teaching. The

child does not respect the teacher from that moment when he sees him mistreated by some one else without maintaining his rights. The teacher, if he is to be listened to, or if his authority is not to be doubted, needs prestige, a good name, moral strength, and a certain amount of freedom. If you will allow me, I will give you an illustration. I wished to introduce some reforms and they laughed at me. In order to remedy the evil that I spoke of a moment ago, I tried to teach the children Spanish, because, not only does the Government order it, but because it will be a great advantage for them to know the language. I employed the simplest method, used simple phrases and nouns without making use of hard rules, with the expectation of teaching them the grammar as soon as they had learned the language. At the end of several weeks, almost all the smarter ones in the school understood me and were able to compose phrases in Castellano."

The teacher stopped and seemed to be in doubt. Then, as if he had made up his mind, he began again.

"I ought not to be ashamed of the history of my grievances. If any one had been in my place, he would have had the same story to tell. As I was saying, I began well. Several days later the priest, who was then Father Dámaso, sent the sacristan mayor to tell me that he wanted to see me. As I knew his character and was afraid to make him wait for me, I went up immediately, saluted him and said good morning to him in Spanish. As was customary, when I saluted him, I advanced to kiss the hand which he held out, but just at that moment he withdrew it and, without replying to me, began to chuckle scoffingly. I was naturally disconcerted, and it was all done in the presence of the sacristan mayor. At the moment, I did not know what to say. I stood and looked at him while he went on laughing. I had already become impatient and saw that I was on the point of committing an indiscretion. All of a sudden, he stopped laughing and added insult to injury. With a cunning air, he said to me: 'So it is *buenos días*, eh? *buenos días*, ha, ha! How funny! Why, you know how to speak Spanish, do you?' And then he continued his laugh."

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Ibarra could not keep back his smile.

"You laugh," replied the teacher, also smiling. "I confess that I did not feel like smiling at that time. I felt the blood rush to my head, and a thunderbolt seemed to dazzle my brain. I saw the priest far off, very far from me. I started toward him to reply. The sacristan mayor interposed and said very seriously, in Tagalog: 'You want to stop wearing borrowed clothes. Be content to speak in your own language and do not spoil Spanish, which is not meant for you. You have heard about Ciruela? Well, Ciruela was a teacher who did not know how to read, but he taught school.' I wanted to detain him for a moment, but he went quickly into his room and closed the door violently. What was I to do? In order to collect my salary I have to have the approval of the priest on my bill, and have to make a journey to the capital of the province. What could I do to him—the moral, political and civil authority of the town, sustained by his corporation, feared by the Government, rich, powerful, always consulting, advising, listening, believing and attending to everything—what could I do to him? If he insulted me, I had to keep my mouth closed. If I talked back, he would throw me out of work, spoiling my career. And what good would it do—education? On the contrary, everybody would take up the priest's side of the matter; they would criticise me, they would call me vain, proud, arrogant, a poor Christian, poorly educated, and when not this, they would call me an anti-Spaniard and an agitator. The school teacher should have no authority. He should only be lazy, humble, and resigned to his low position. May God pardon me if I do not speak conscientiously and truthfully, but I was born in this country, I have to live, I have a mother to support and I have to be resigned to my lot."

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"And have you continued to be discouraged on account of this trouble? Have you attempted nothing since?"

"Would to God that it had ended there!" he replied. "Would to God that that had been the end of my misfortunes. The truth is that from that day I began to take a dislike to my profession. Every day the school brought to my mind my disgrace and made every hour a bitter one for me. But what could I do? I could not disappoint my mother. I had to tell her that the three years of sacrifices which she had made for me in order that I might learn the profession now made me happy. I had to make her believe that the profession was a most honorable one, that the work was most pleasant, that the road was strewn with flowers and that the fulfillment of my duty produced nothing but friendships. If I had told her the contrary, I myself would still be as unhappy and would only make another unhappy, which was not only useless but a sin. So, I kept at my work and tried not to be discouraged. I tried to fight it down."

The school teacher made a short pause and then began again.

"You know that the books in most of the schools are in Spanish, excepting the

Tagalog catechism, which varies according to the corporation which appoints the priest of the parish. The books generally used in the school are novenaries, the 'Doxology' and Father Astete's catechism, which are no more edifying than the books of heretics. On account of the fact that it was impossible to teach the children Spanish, as I wanted to do, and owing to the fact that I could not translate so many books into the native language, I decided to try to substitute for them gradually, short verses, extracts from the best Tagalog books, such as the 'Treatise on Urbanity' by Hortensio y Feliza, and some of the little pamphlets on agriculture. Sometimes I myself translated small works, such as the 'History of the Philippines,' by Father Barranera, and afterward dictated to the pupils for their note books, adding at times some of my own observations. As I had no maps to teach them geography, I copied one of those of the province which I saw in the capital, and with this reproduction and, by the aid of the tiles on the floor, I was able to give them some ideas about the country. The new priest sent for me. Although he did not reprimand me severely, he told me, however, that my first duty was to teach religion, and that before I began to teach any such things I must prove by an examination that all the children knew by heart the 'Mysteries,' the 'Doxology,' and the 'Catechism of the Christian Doctrine.'

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"So, in the meantime, I am endeavoring to convert the children into parrots so that they will know by heart all of these things of which they do not understand a single word. Many of the pupils already know the 'Mysteries' and the 'Doxology,' but I fear that I am making Father Astete's efforts useless, inasmuch as my pupils do not even distinguish between the questions and the answers, or what either of them signifies. Thus we shall die and thus shall do those who are yet to be born; yet in Europe they talk about Progress!"

"Let us not be so pessimistic," replied Ibarra, rising to his feet. "The *teniente mayor* has invited me to attend a town meeting to be held in the tribunal. Who knows but that some plan for improvement may there be adopted!"

The school teacher arose to go, shaking his head in token of doubt.

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Chapter X.

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Lights and Shadows.

The people of the town have made their preparation for the festival in honor of the patron saint, San Diego, and are gossiping about it, and about the arrival of Maria Clara, accompanied by her aunt Isabel. They rejoiced over it, because they liked her, and admired her beauty very much. They also rejoiced in the change it had made in the priest, Father Salvi. "He is often absent-minded during the holy services," they said. "He scarcely speaks with us, and he plainly grows more thin and taciturn." His cook saw this constantly and complained of the little honor that he did his dishes. But what most excited the wonder of the people were the two lights which one could see shining in the convent during the night, while Father Salvi was visiting at the house of Maria Clara! The old dames crossed themselves and kept on gossiping.

Juan Crisostomo Ibarra had telegraphed from the capital of the province his compliments to Aunt Isabel and her niece, but he had not explained his absence. Many thought that he had been arrested for assaulting Father Salvi on the afternoon of "All Saint's Day." But the comments increased still more when, on the afternoon of the third day, they saw Ibarra get out of a carriage in front of the little house of his betrothed, and courteously salute the priest, who was also making his way thither.

If we go to Maria Clara's house, we will find it like a little nest among orange and *ilang-ilang* trees, surrounded by flowers and vines which creep up on bamboo sticks and wires, diffusing their delicious perfume. The rich fragrance of the *ilang-ilang* reaches even to the window which looks out on the lake. Here sit the two young lovers. Ibarra was saying to Maria Clara:

"To-morrow, before the first ray of morning, your desire shall be fulfilled. To-night, I shall arrange all so that nothing will be lacking."

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"Then I will write to my friends, so that they may come along. Arrange it so that the priest cannot come."

"And why?"

"Because he seems to be watching me. His deep and sombre eyes pain me. When he fixes them upon me, they frighten me. He speaks to me of extraordinary things, so incomprehensible, so strange. He asked me once if I had not dreamed about my mother's letters. I believe he is half crazy. My friend Sinang, and Andeng, my foster sister, say that he is a little out of his head, for he neither eats nor bathes, and he lives entirely in the darkness. Don't have him come!"

"We cannot but invite him," replied Ibarra. "The customs of the country require it. He is the priest of your house and, besides, he has conducted himself nobly toward me. When the *Alcalde* consulted him on the business of which I have spoken to you, he had nothing but praises for me and did not pretend to offer the slightest obstacle. But I see that you are serious. I shall take care that he does not accompany us in the boat."

Light steps were heard. They were those of the priest, who was approaching with a forced smile on his lips. They began to talk of different subjects, about the weather, the town and the festival. Maria Clara devised an excuse and went out.

"And while we are speaking about festivals," said Ibarra, "allow me to invite you to the one which we are going to celebrate to-morrow. It is going to be a country picnic, which we and our friends are planning."

"And where will it be held?"

"The girls want to hold it near the brook in the woods, near the *balití* tree. So we will have to get up early to reach the place before the sun gets hot."

The priest reflected, and a moment later replied: "The invitation is very tempting, and I accept it in order to prove that I hold no grudge against you for what has happened in the past. But I will have to be a little late, as I must fulfill my religious duties first. How happy to be like you, entirely free and independent!"

A few minutes later, Ibarra took his leave in order to arrange for the picnic on the following day. It was already quite dark when he left the house.

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Chapter XI.

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The Fishing Party.

The stars were still shining in the sapphire heavens, and the birds were sleeping on the branches of the trees, when a jolly little party, by the light from the pitch torches, wandered through the streets of the town toward the lake.

Five young maidens, clinging to each other's hands or belts, tripped along briskly. Behind them came several elderly women and a number of servants gracefully carrying on their heads baskets filled with provisions and various dishes for the picnic. On seeing their joyful faces, with their youthful smiles, their beautiful black hair as it floated in the breeze, and the wide folds of their pretty dresses, you would have taken them for goddesses of the night and would have thought that they were fleeing from day—if perchance you had not already known that it was Maria Clara and her four friends: jolly Sinang; her cousin, the serious Victoria; beautiful Iday; and the pensive Neneng, pretty, modest and timid.

They were talking with animation; they laughed; pinched each other; whispered in each other's ears and then burst out in shouts of merriment.

"You girls will wake up everybody in town. Don't you know that people are still asleep?" said Aunt Isabel, reprimanding them. "When we were young, we didn't make such a noise."

"But you didn't get up as early as we do, nor were the old men such great sleepers in your day," replied little Sinang.

They were quiet for a moment and were trying to talk in a low voice, but they quickly forgot themselves and were again filling the streets with their youthful laughter and melodious voices.

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Several young fellows were coming down the street, lighting their way with large bamboo torches. They were marching along almost noiselessly to the tune of a guitar.

"That guitar sounds as though some beggar were playing it," said Sinang, laughing. But when the young fellows caught up with the rest of the party, the girls suddenly became as quiet and as serious as though they never had learned how to laugh. The young men, however, chatted away, saluted the ladies, laughed and smiled and asked half a dozen questions without giving the girls time to answer any one of them.

The two large *bancas*,¹ which had been secured to transport the picnic party to the fishing grounds, were fastened together and picturesquely adorned with wreaths and garlands of flowers and a large number of vari-colored candles. Paper lanterns hung from the improvised covering of the *bancas*. Alternately with these were roses, pinks and baskets of fruits such as pineapples, *kasuys*, bananas, *guayabas* and *lanzones*. Ibarra had brought his carpets, blankets and rugs and arranged comfortable seats for the ladies. The poles and paddles used to propel the *bancas* had also been ornamented. In the better *banca* were a harp, guitars, accordions, and a buffalo horn; while, in the other boat, a little fire had been lighted in an improvised stove in order that tea, coffee and *salabat*² might be prepared for the light breakfast.

"The women sit here; the men, there," said the mothers on stepping into the *banca*. "Sit still and don't move, or we will be capsized."

"Cross yourselves before we start," said Aunt Isabel, as she traced the form of a cross on her breast.

"And are we to be here all by ourselves," asked Sinang, on seeing how the girls had been separated from the young men, by the assignment of the seats. Then making a grimace she asked again, "Are we going to be all alone? *Aray!*"

This *aray* was caused by a little pinch which her mother had given her on the arm in the way of a reprimand for her complaint.

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The *bancas* were now putting off slowly from the shore. The light from the torches and Japanese lanterns was reflected in the water, for the lake was as smooth as a mirror. In the far eastern horizon could be seen the first rosy tints of the approaching dawn.

Everything was very quiet. The young women, in consequence of the separation from the young men, seemed to be absorbed in meditation.

As the water was smooth as glass and the bamboo weirs where the fish were to be found were not far off, and, it was still early, it was decided that all should stop paddling and take breakfast. The lights were put out, for the day had dawned and preparations were made for *desayuno*.³

The entire party became jolly as they breathed in the light breeze that had come up. Even the women, so full of presentiments a few moments ago, were now laughing and joking among themselves.

One young man alone of all the party remained silent. He was the pilot, an athletic-looking fellow, and interesting on account of his large, sad eyes and the severe lines of his lips. His long, black hair fell gracefully over his powerful neck. He wore a shirt of coarse dark cloth, through which his powerful muscles could be plainly seen as he manipulated with his strong arms the wide, heavy paddle as if it were only a pen. This paddle served both to propel and to steer the *bancas*.

More than once he was embarrassed when he caught Maria Clara looking at him. Then he would turn his eyes quickly to some other direction and look far off toward the mountain, or the shore of the lake. The young maiden pitied him in his solitude and offered him some biscuits. The pilot looked at her with surprise, but only for a moment. He took the biscuits, thanked her very briefly and in a voice scarcely audible.

No one else took any notice of him. The happy laughter and jolly conversation of the young men did not cause him to relax a single muscle of his face. Not even Sinang, with all her jollity, had any effect on him.

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"Wait a minute!" said Aunt Isabel to the boatman's son, who had made ready his net and was just about to go up on the *baklad* to take out the fish from the little enclosure at the end of the weir. "We must have everything ready, so that the fish may pass directly from the water to the pot."

Andeng, the pretty foster sister of Maria Clara, despite her clear complexion and laughing face, had the reputation of being a good cook. She prepared the rice, tomatoes, and *camias*,⁴ while some of the young men tried to aid or bother her, perhaps in order to win her good will. The other girls were busy cleaning and

making ready the lettuce, cabbage and peas, and cutting up paayap in pieces about the size of a cigarette.

Finally Andeng announced that the kettle was ready to receive its guests—the fish.

The fisherman's son went up on top of the rack at the end of the weir. He took a position at the narrow entrance, over which might have been written: "All who enter here leave hope behind," if indeed the unfortunate fish would know how to read and understand it, for a fish who enters never gets out except to die. The rack is almost circular in form and about a meter in diameter, and is so arranged that a man can stand on top of one end of it and thus take out the fish with his net.

"There, it wouldn't tire me a bit to fish that way," said Sinang, quite joyful.

All were watching attentively. Already some of them in their vivid imaginations thought they could see the fish wiggling their tails and trying to get out of the little net, their scales shining in the bright sun. However, the young man failed to catch a single fish in his first attempt.

"It ought to be full of fish," said Albino, in a low voice. "It is more than five days since we visited the place last."

The fisherman drew out his net a second time, but not a fish was there in it. The water, as it trickled through the meshes of the net in countless drops which reflected the rays of the sun, seemed to laugh in silvery tones. An "Ah" of surprise, disgust, and disappointment escaped from the lips of all.

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The young fellow repeated the same operation, but with a similar result.

"You don't understand your business!" said Albino to him as he stepped up on the rack and took the net from the hands of the youngster. "Now you will see! Andeng, open up the kettle!"

But Albino did not understand his business, either. The net came up empty as before. All began to laugh.

"Don't make any noise," he said, "or the fish will hear it and will keep from being caught. This net must have a hole in it somewhere."

But every mesh in the net was perfect.

"Let me take it!" said Leon, Iday's lover, to Albino.

Leon first made sure that the enclosure was in good condition and then examined the net carefully and satisfied himself that there was nothing wrong with it. He then asked: "Are you sure that no one has been out here for five days?"

"We are sure! The last time any one was out here was on All Saints' Day."

"Well, then, I am going to bring out something this time, unless the lake is bewitched."

Leon lowered the net by its bamboo handle into the water, but a look of surprise was painted on his face. In silence he looked toward the neighboring mountain and continued moving the handle of the net from one side to the other. Finally, without taking the net out of the water, he murmured in a low voice: "An alligator."

"An alligator!" exclaimed half a dozen voices, and the word was repeated again while all stood frightened and stupefied.

"What did you say?" they asked.

"I say that there is an alligator caught in the rack," said Leon, and sticking the handle of the net into the water again he continued: "Do you hear that sound? That is not sand, it is hard skin, the back of the alligator. Do you see how he wiggles the bamboo pickets in the rack? He is struggling hard but he cannot do anything. Wait. He is a large fellow; his body measures a palm or more in width."

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"What shall be done?" was the question.

"Catch him," said one.

"*Jesús!* And who will catch him?"

Nobody offered to dive down to the bottom of the rack. The water was very deep.

"We ought to tie him to our *banca* and drag him along in triumph," said Sinang. "The idea of his eating the fish which we ought to have!"

"I have never seen to this day a live alligator," said Maria Clara.

The pilot rose to his feet, took a long rope and went up cautiously to the platform on the top of the rack. Leon gave up his position to him.

With the exception of Maria Clara, none up till now had paid any attention to him. Now every one was admiring his fine stature.

To the great surprise of all and in spite of all their cries, the pilot leaped into the enclosure.

"Take this knife!" shouted Crisostomo, drawing out a wide-bladed Toledo knife.

But already a thousand little bubbles were rising to the surface of the water, and all that was going on in the depths below was wrapped in mystery.

"*Jesús, María y José!*" exclaimed the women. "We are going to have a misfortune. *Jesús, María y José!*"

"Don't be alarmed, señoras," said the old boatman. "If there is any one in this province who can do it, it is that fellow who has just gone down."

"What is his name?" they asked.

"We call him 'The Pilot'; he is the best I have ever seen, only he does not like his profession."

The water was being stirred violently, and it seemed that a fierce fight was being waged in the depths of the lake. The sides of the enclosure swayed to and fro, while the water seemed to be swirled by a dozen currents. All held their breath. Ibarra grasped tightly the handle of his sharp knife.

The fight seemed to be at an end. The head of the young man rose to the surface of the water, and the sight was greeted by joyful shouts from all. The eyes of the women were full of tears.

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The pilot crawled up on the platform carrying in his hand the end of the rope, and as soon as he was able pulled on it.

The monster appeared on top of the water. He had the rope tied twice around his neck, and once behind his forelegs. He was a large fellow, as Leon had already announced. He was beautifully colored and green moss was growing on his back. He bellowed like an ox, struck his tail against the sides of the enclosure, snapped at them, and opened his black, frightful-looking mouth, showing his long teeth.

The pilot, unassisted, raised him up out of the water. No one offered to help him. Just as soon as the animal was out of the water and placed on the platform, the pilot put his foot on his back. Then, closing the animal's massive jaws, he tried to tie his big snout tight with the rope. The reptile made a last effort, doubled up his body, struck the floor of the platform with his powerful tail and, breaking loose, made a leap into the water of the lake, on the other side of the weir, at the same time dragging with him his captor. It seemed that the pilot would be a dead man. A cry of horror went up from all.

Like a flash of lightning, another body leaped into the water. So quickly was it done that they had scarcely time to see that it was Ibarra. Maria Clara did not faint, simply because the Filipinos do not know how to faint.

They all saw the water become colored, and tinged with blood. The young fisherman leaped to the bottom with his bolo in his hand; his father followed him. But, scarcely had they disappeared, when they saw Crisostomo and the pilot reappear, clinging to the body of the reptile. The monster's white belly was slashed, while in his throat the knife still stuck like a nail.

It is impossible to describe the joy that came over the party at the sight; all arms were extended to help them out of the water. The old women were half crazed with joy, and laughed and prayed. Andeng forgot that her kettle had been boiling three different times; now it was leaking and had put out the fire. The only one who could not speak was Maria Clara.

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Ibarra was unhurt. The pilot had a slight scratch on his arm.

"I owe you my life!" said he to Ibarra as the latter wrapped himself up in the shawls and blankets. The voice of the pilot had a ring of sincerity.

"You are too bold," replied Ibarra. "Another time you must not tempt God."

"If you had never come back!" exclaimed Maria, pale and trembling.

"If I had never come back and you had followed after me," replied the young man, "I would have been with all my family in the bottom of the lake." Ibarra was thinking that in those depths lay the remains of his father.

The mothers of the girls did not want to go to the other *baklad* or weir. They preferred to go back home happy, for the day had commenced with a bad omen and they feared that they would suffer many misfortunes.

"It is all because we have not heard mass," sighed one of them.

"But what misfortune have we had, señoras?" asked Ibarra. "The alligator was the unfortunate one."

"That goes to show," concluded Albino, "that, in all his fishing life, this reptile has never heard mass. I never saw him, I am sure, among the other reptiles who frequent the church."

The *bancas* were turned toward the other fish rack, and it was necessary for Andeng to get the water boiling again.

The day was advancing; a breeze was blowing; little waves were stirred up on the water, and rippled around the alligator. The music began again. Iday was playing the harp, while the young men were playing the accordeons and guitars with more or less skill. But the one who played best was Albino.

The other weir was visited with an entire lack of confidence. Many of the party expected to find there the mate to the alligator, but Nature fooled them and every time that the net was lowered it was brought up full of fish.

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They then headed for the shore of the lake, where is situated the forest of trees centuries old, owned by Ibarra. There in the shade and near the crystal brook the party were to take their breakfast among the flowers or under improvised tents.

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1 A narrow canoe.

2 A drink made of honey and ginger.

3 A light, early breakfast.

4 A native fruit.

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Chapter XII.

In the Woods.

Very early that morning Father Salví had said mass, cleaning, according to his custom, a dozen dirty souls in a few minutes. The reading of a few letters, which had arrived well sealed with wax, seemed to cause the worthy curate to lose his appetite, for he allowed his chocolate to get cold.

"The Father is ill," said the cook as he prepared another cup. "It is several days since he has eaten anything; of six dishes which I put on the table for him, he has not touched two."

"It must be that he does not sleep well," replied the servant. "He has nightmare since he changed his bedroom. Every day his eyes are sinking deeper, he grows gradually thinner, and is very yellow."

As a matter of fact, it was a pitiful sight to behold Father Salví. He did not care to touch his second cup of chocolate, nor to taste the Cebu cakes. He walked pensively to and fro in the spacious *sala*, crumpling between his bony fingers some letters which he would read from time to time. Finally, he called for his carriage, got ready and ordered the coachman to take him to the woods where the picnic was to be held. Arriving at the place, Father Salví dismissed the carriage and all alone, entered the forest.

A shady but difficult path runs through the thicket and leads to the brook which is formed by the hot springs so plentiful at the base of Mount Makiling.

For some time, Father Salví was wandering among the thick underbrush, here trying to evade the thorns which entangled his habit of *guingon* as if to detain him; there trying to step over the roots of the trees which stuck up through the ground and made the inexperienced traveler stumble again and again. Suddenly he

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stopped. Mirthful laughter and the sound of young voices reached his ears. The voices and the laughter seemed to come from the direction of the brook and each time seemed to be coming nearer.

"I am going to see if I can find a heron's nest," said a voice, beautiful and sweet, and at once recognized by the curate. "You know they say that if a person possesses one of those nests he can make himself invisible to everybody. How I would like to see *him* and not have him see me! I could follow him everywhere."

Father Salví hid behind the thick trunk of an old tree and listened.

"That is to say, you want to do with him what the curate does with you: watch him everywhere?" replied the merry voice. "Be careful, for jealousy makes one grow thin and the eyes sink in."

"No, no. It is not jealousy, it is pure curiosity," replied the silvery voice, while the other repeated, "yes, yes, jealousy; that's what it is." And then she broke out in a merry chuckle.

"If I were jealous of *him* I would not use the heron's nest to make myself invisible to him, but would make him invisible to everybody else."

"But then you yourself would not be able to see him and you would not want that to happen. The best thing to do, if we find a heron's nest is to give it to the priest. Then he could watch us as much as he pleased, and we would not be troubled with the sight of him. What do you think of the idea?"

"But I don't believe in the story about the heron's nests, anyway," replied one. "But if I were really jealous I would know how to keep watch of a person and make myself invisible...."

"And how? How would you do it? Perhaps you would do as Sister Listener does in the convent?"

This reference to days passed in the convent provoked a jolly laugh all around.

Father Salví saw from his hiding-place Maria Clara, Victoria, and Sinang, wading in the stream. All three were looking into the water, which was like a mirror, in search of the heron's nest. They were getting wet up to their knees, the wide folds of their bathing skirts allowing one to guess how graceful were the curves of their limbs. They were wearing their hair loose and their arms were bare. Striped, bright-colored bodices covered their breasts. The three lasses, at the same time that they were hunting for that which did not exist, collected flowers and plants which were growing on the banks of the stream.

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The religious Acteon, pale and immovable, stood gazing upon Maria Clara, that chaste Diana. The eyes which shone in those dark orbits never tired of admiring those white and beautiful arms, that pretty, round neck, those tiny and rosy feet as they played in the water. As he contemplated all this, strange feelings were awakened in his breast, new dreams took possession of his burning mind.

The three pretty forms disappeared in a thick growth of bamboo behind a bend in the stream, but their cruel allusions could still be heard by the curate. Intoxicated with the strange ideas in his head, staggering, and covered with perspiration, Father Salví left his hiding-place and looked about him in all directions with staring eyes. He stood immovable, in doubt. He took a few steps as if to follow the young women, but he turned about, and walked along the bank of the stream in order to find the rest of the picnic party.

Some distance ahead, in the middle of the stream, he could see a bathing place well enclosed by bamboo. He could hear, merry laughter and feminine accents coming from that direction. Still further down the stream he could see a bamboo bridge and some men in bathing. In the meantime, a multitude of servants were bustling about the improvised fireplaces, some engaged in plucking chickens, others in washing rice and roasting pig. And there on the opposite bank, in a clearing which had been made, were a number of men and women under a tent. The tent had been made by hanging canvas from the limbs of some of the old trees and by erecting a few poles. There in the group was the *alferez*, the *teniente mayor*, the coadjutor, the *gobernadorcillo*, the school teacher, a number, of past captains and lieutenants, including even Captain Basilio, who was Sinang's father, and the former rival of the deceased Don Rafael. Ibarra had said to him: "The mere fact that we are parties to a law-suit does not mean that we have to be enemies." So it was that the celebrated orator of the conservative party had accepted the invitation to the picnic with enthusiasm, and had even brought along three turkeys and put his servants at the disposition of the young man.

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The parish priest was received with respect and deference by all, even by the

alferez.

"But where did Your Reverence come from?" some one asked on seeing his face full of scratches, and his habit covered with leaves and pieces of dried branches. "Has Your Reverence fallen down?"

"No, I lost my way," replied Father Salví, looking down and examining his clothes.

Bottles of lemonade were opened, green cocoanuts were cut in two so that those who were coming out of the bath might have the refreshing milk to drink and the delicate meat to eat. The young women in addition received rosaries of *sampagas* interwoven with roses and *ilang-ilang*, which gave a beautiful fragrance to their loose hair. Some were sitting or lying in hammocks which had been hung from the branches of the trees; others were entertaining themselves in a game that was going on around a large, flat stone. Playing cards, checkers, dice and many other games were in progress.

They showed the alligator to the curate, but he seemed absorbed and paid no attention until they mentioned the fact that the wide wound in the animal's neck had been made by Ibarra. Then, too, the pilot, the principal figure in the incident, had disappeared and could not be found anywhere.

Finally Maria Clara came out of the bath, accompanied by her friends, fresh as a rose when first it blooms, and when the dew on its divine petals glistens like diamonds. Her first smile was for Ibarra; and her first frown for Father Salví. The latter noticed this, but he did not even sigh.

It was now time to eat. The curate, the coadjutor, the *alferez*, the *gobernadorcillo*, and some of the captains, together with the *tenente mayor* sat down at the table over which Ibarra presided. The mothers of the girls did not allow any one to eat at the table with their charges.

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"Do you know anything yet, Señor Alferez, about the criminal who assaulted Father Dámaso?" asked Father Salví.

"About what criminal, Father?" asked the *alferez*, looking at the parish priest through his empty wine glass.

"About whom could it be? About the one who, day before yesterday, struck Father Dámaso, of course."

"Struck Father Dámaso?" asked a number of voices.

The coadjutor was seen to smile.

"Yes; and Father Dámaso is now in bed. It is believed that the culprit was that same Elias who once threw you into a mud-hole, Señor Alferez."

The *alferez* colored up a little, either from shame or too much wine.

"I thought that you were interested in the affair," continued Father Salví, with a little jeering in his manner.

The *alferez* bit his lips and mumbled out a silly excuse.

The meal ended and, while tea and coffee were being served, the young and old distributed themselves about in various groups. Some picked up playing cards and others dice, but the young women, anxious to know the future, preferred to try their luck with the wheel of fortune.

"Come, Señor Ibarra," shouted Captain Basilio, who was a little bit jolly. "We have a law-suit that has been pending for fifteen years, and there isn't a judge in the Supreme Court in Manila who can decide it. Let us see if we can settle it on the chess board. What do you say?"

The game of chess began with much solemnity.

"If the game is a draw," said Ibarra, "it is understood that the suit is off."

About the middle of the game, Ibarra received a telegram which made his eyes glisten and his face grow pale. He put it in his pocket-book, not, however, without directing a glance at the group of young women who continued with much laughter to play the wheel of fortune.

"Check to the king!" said the young man.

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Captain Basilio had no other resort than to hide him behind the queen.

"Check to the queen!" said Ibarra, threatening it with his rook, which was defended by a pawn.

Not being able to cover the queen, nor to retire it on account of the fact that the king was behind it, Captain Basilio asked permission to study the situation a little.

"Certainly, with much pleasure," replied Ibarra. "I will take advantage of the opportunity, for I have something to say to some of the members of that group over there."

And rising to his feet, he gave his opponent half an hour to study it out.

Iday held in her hands the strip of cardboard on which was written forty-eight questions, while Albino held the book which contained the answers.

"That's a lie! It's not so! It lies!" cried Sinang, half in tears.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Maria Clara.

"Just imagine it: I asked the question 'When will I have some sense?' I threw the dice and he, this all-night-watching priest (Albino, the ex-seminary student) reads from the book: 'When the frogs grow hairs.' What do you think of that?"

And Sinang made a face at the former religious student, who was still laughing heartily.

"Who told you to ask such a question?" said her cousin Victoria. "Any one who asks such a question deserves just such an answer."

"You ask a question!" said they all to Ibarra. "We have agreed that the one who receives the best answer shall receive a gift from the others. We have all asked our questions already."

"And who has received the best answer?"

"Maria Clara, Maria Clara!" replied Sinang. "We made her ask the question whether you loved her or not: 'Is your lover faithful and constant,' and the book replied—"

But Maria Clara colored up, and, putting her hands over Sinang's mouth, did not allow her to finish what she had to say.

"Then, let me try it," said Crisostomo, smiling.

He asked the question: "Will I succeed in my present undertaking?"

"You are going to get a bad answer," exclaimed Sinang.

Ibarra threw the dice, and noting the number, they looked for the page in the little book with the corresponding answer.

"Dreams are only dreams," read Albino.

Ibarra took out his pocket-book and opened it trembling.

"This time your book has lied," he said, full of joy. "Read this!"

"Plan for school house approved; other matter decided in your favor."

"What does that mean?" they all asked.

"Did you not tell me that the one who received the best answer was to get a present?" the young man asked, his voice trembling with emotion while he carefully divided the paper into two parts.

"Yes, yes!"

"Well, then! This is my gift," he said handing half of the telegram to Maria Clara. "I am going to have a school house for boys and girls erected in the town. This school house will be my gift."

"And this other piece: what does that mean?"

"I will give that to the one who has obtained the worst answer."

"Then that is for me!" exclaimed Sinang.

Ibarra gave her the piece of paper and quickly went off.

"And what does this mean?"

But the happy young man was already far away from the little group and he did not reply. He had gone to finish the game of chess.

After making the present to his betrothed, Ibarra was so happy that he began to play without stopping to think or even examining carefully the position of the chess. As a result, although Captain Basilio had defended himself only by the greatest effort, the young man made so many mistakes that the game resulted in a draw.

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"We end the suit, we end the suit!" said Captain Basilio, happy over his success.

"Yes, we declare it off," repeated the young man, "whatever decision the judges may have been able to reach."

Each grasped the hand of the other and shook it with effusion.

In the meantime, while those present were celebrating the ending of the law-suit, of which both had long been tired, four Civil Guards and a sergeant suddenly arrived on the scene. They were all armed and had their bayonets fixed, a fact which naturally disturbed the merriment and brought fright into the circle of women.

"Let everybody be quiet!" cried the sergeant. "Whoever moves will be shot!"

In spite of this gruff boast, Ibarra rose to his feet and approached the sergeant.

"What do you wish?" he asked.

"That you give up at once the criminal named Elias who acted as pilot for your party this morning," he replied, in a threatening tone.

"A criminal? The pilot? You must be mistaken!" replied Ibarra.

"No, sir; that Elias is now accused of another crime, of having laid his hands on a priest—"

"Ah! And is the pilot the one?"

"He is the same one, so we are told. You are allowing people of bad reputation to attend your festivals, Señor Ibarra."

Ibarra looked at him from head to foot and replied with supreme contempt: "I don't have to account to you for my actions. At our festivals everybody is well received, and you yourself, if you had come, would have been given a seat at the table, the same as the *alferez* who was here among us two hours ago."

Saying this, Ibarra turned his back to him. The sergeant bit his mustache and ordered his men to search everywhere among the trees for the pilot, whose description he had on a piece of paper.

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Don Filipo said to him: "Take note that this description corresponds to that of nine-tenths of the natives. Take care that you do not make a mistake!"

At last the soldiers returned, saying that they had not been able to discover either a *banca*, or a man that aroused their suspicion. The sergeant murmured a few indistinct words and then marched off.

Soon the people became jolly again, but questions, wonder and comments were without end.

So the afternoon passed and the hour for departure arrived. Just as the sun was dropping below the horizon they left the woods. The trees seemed sad and all the surroundings seemed to bid them farewell and say: "Good-bye, happy youth; good-bye, dream of a day."

And a little later, by the light of glowing torches of bamboo and with the music of guitars, we leave them on the road toward the town.

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In the House of Tasio.

On the morning of the following day, Juan Crisostomo Ibarra, after visiting his estates, went to the house of Tasio, the philosopher, his father's friend.

Quiet reigned in the old man's garden. The swallows were flying about the gables of the house, but they were making scarcely a sound. The windows were covered with vines which clung to the old, moss-covered wall and made the house appear all the more solitary and quiet. Ibarra tied his horse to a post and, walking almost on tip-toes, crossed the clean and well-cultivated garden. He went up the stairs and, as the door was open, walked in. An old man leaned over a book in which he seemed to be writing. On the walls of the room were collections of insects and leaves, maps, and some shelves of books and manuscripts.

Tasio was so absorbed in his work that he did not notice the arrival of the youth. The latter, not wishing to disturb the philosopher, tried to retire from the place, but the old man, looking up, said: "What? Are you here?" and showed no little surprise in his look.

"Excuse me," replied Ibarra, "I see that you are very busy."

"As a matter of fact I was writing a little, but it is not urgent, and I want to rest myself. Can I be useful to you in any way?"

Ibarra drew some papers from his pocket-book and replied: "My father was wont to consult you in many things, and I remember that he never had to do other than congratulate himself when he followed your advice. I have on my hands a small undertaking and I want to be assured of success."

Ibarra then related to him briefly his plan for the erection of a school house in honor of his betrothed. He showed the stupefied philosopher the plans which had been returned from Manila.

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"I wish that you would advise me as to what persons I ought first to have on my side in order to make the undertaking most successful. You are well acquainted with the inhabitants of the town. I have just arrived here and am almost a stranger in my country."

The old man examined the plans which were laid out before him. His eyes were full of tears.

"That which you are going to carry out was a dream of mine, the dream of a poor fool," he exclaimed, greatly moved. "And now, my first advice to you is that you never come to consult me in regard to the matter."

The young man looked at him in surprise.

"Because sensible people," he continued, in an ironical tone, "will take you for a fool, like myself. People always consider every one a fool who does not think just as they do and, for this reason, they call me crazy. But I am obliged to them for that, for woe be to me when the time arrives that they say I have sense! That day, should it ever come, would deprive me of the little liberty which I have purchased by sacrificing my reputation for being sane."

And the old man shook his head, as if to drive away a thought and continued: "My second advice to you is that you consult the curate, the *gobernadorcillo*, and all the people of good standing. They will all give you bad, foolish and useless advice, but to consult does not mean to obey. Try to appear to be following their advice as far as possible and make them think you are working according to their wishes."

Ibarra sat thinking for a moment and then replied: "The advice is good but difficult to follow. Could I not carry out my work without a shadow reflecting upon it? Could I not carry out the good work in spite of all? Does truth need to be clothed in the garments of falsehood?"

"That's it. Nobody likes the bare truth."

"I hope to be able to realize all my hopes without encountering great resistance," said Ibarra.

"Yes, if the priests lend you their hand; no, if they draw it away. All your efforts will be battered to pieces against the walls of the curate's house. The *alcalde* will deny to you to-morrow what he has granted you to-day. Not a mother will let her son attend the school, and then all your efforts will have just an opposite effect to

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that intended. You will discourage all others who might wish to attempt beneficent undertakings."

"Nevertheless," replied Ibarra, "I cannot believe in this power of which you speak. And even supposing it to be true, admitting that it is as you say, would I not still have on my side the sensible people and the Government?"

"The Government! The Government!" exclaimed the philosopher, raising his eyes and looking at the ceiling. "However much the Government may desire to uplift the country for its own benefit and that of the mother country; however generous may be the Catholic Kings in spirit, I must remind you in confidence that there is another power which does not allow the Government to see, hear, or judge except what the curates or provincial priests wish. The Government is afraid of the advancement of the people, and the people are afraid of the forces of the Government. So long as the Government does not understand the people of the country, the country will never get out from this guardianship. The people will live like weak, young children who tremble at the sound of the voice of their tutor, whose mercy they beg. The Government has no dreams of a great future, a healthy development of the country. The people do not complain, because they have no voice. They do not move, because they are too carefully watched. You say that they do not suffer, because you have not seen what would make your heart bleed. But some day you will see it! alas! some day you will hear it. When the light of day is thrown on their monstrous forms, you will see a frightful reaction. That great force, held back for centuries, that poison, distilled drop by drop, those sighs, so long repressed—all will come to light and will some day burst forth.... Who will then pay the accounts which the people will present and which History preserves for us on its bloody pages?"

"God, the Government, and the Church will never allow that day to come!" replied Crisostomo, impressed in spite of himself. "The Filipinos are religious and they love Spain. The Filipinos will always know how much this nation has done for them. There are abuses; yes! There are defects; I do not deny it. But Spain is working to introduce reforms which will correct them; she is devising plans; she is not selfish. Can it be that my love for my native land is incompatible with love for Spain? Is it necessary to lower one's self to be a good Christian, to prostitute one's own conscience to bring about good? I love my fatherland, the Philippines, because I owe to her my life and my happiness—because every man should love his native land. I love Spain, the fatherland of my ancestors, because, in spite of all that may be said, the Philippines owe to Spain, and always will owe to her, their happiness and their future. I am a Catholic. I hold dear the belief of my fathers, and I do not see why I have to bow my head when I am able to raise it; nor why I have to entrust it to my enemies, when I can trample on them."

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"Because the field in which you are sowing your seed is in the hands of your enemies, and you are weak in comparison to them.... It is necessary that you first kiss the hand—"

But the young man did not allow him to go farther and exclaimed violently: "To kiss their hands! You forget that, between them, they killed my father; they threw his body out of its sepulchre: but I, I who am his son, I do not forget it, and, if I do not avenge myself, it is because I consider the prestige of the Church."

The old philosopher bowed his head. "Señor Ibarra," he replied slowly, "if you keep those memories—memories which I cannot advise you to forget—if you keep those memories, give up your plans and your undertaking and try to work good for your countrymen in another way. The undertaking needs another man than you for its execution, because to carry it out will not only require money and care, but, in our country, self-denial, tenacity and faith are also needed. The land is not ready for it; it has been sown only with darnel."

Ibarra understood the weight of these words, but he was not going to be discouraged. Thoughts of Maria Clara filled his mind; he must fulfill his promise to her.

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"Does not your experience suggest something other than this hard method?" he asked in a low voice.

The old man took him by the arm and led him to the window. A cool breeze was blowing from the north. Before his eyes lay the garden, stretching out to the large forest which served as a park.

"Why do we not have to do the same as that weak young bush loaded with roses and buds?" said the philosopher pointing to a beautiful rose bush. "The wind blows, shakes it and it bends itself down as if trying to hide its precious load. If the bush kept itself erect, it would be broken off, the wind would scatter its flowers and the buds would be blighted. The wind passes over, and the bush straightens

itself up again, proud of its treasure. Thus it would be with you, a plant transplanted from Europe to this stony ground, if you did not look about for some support and belittle yourself. Alone and lofty, you are in bad condition."

"And would this sacrifice bring the fruits that I hope for?" asked Ibarra. "Would the priest have faith in me and would he forget the offense? Would his kind not be able to feign friendship, to make a false show of protecting me, and then, from behind in the darkness, fight me, harass me and wound my heels, thus making me waver more quickly than they could by attacking me face to face? Given these premises, what do you think could be expected?"

The old man remained silent for some time, not being able to reply. At last he said: "If such a thing took place, if the undertaking failed, I would console you with the thought that you had done all that was in your power. And even so, something would be gained. Lay the first stone, sow the first seed and after the tempest has passed over, some little grain perhaps would germinate."

"I believe you," exclaimed Ibarra, stretching out his hand. "Not in vain did I look for good advice. This very day I shall go and make friends with the curate."

Taking leave of the old man, he mounted on his horse and rode away.

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"Attention!" murmured the pessimistic philosopher to himself, as he followed the young man with his eyes. "Let us observe carefully how Destiny will unfold the tragedy which began in the cemetery."

But this time the philosopher was truly mistaken. The tragedy had begun long before.

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Chapter XIV.

The Eve of the Fiesta.

It is the tenth of November, the eve of the *fiesta* to be celebrated in the town of San Diego. Departing from its habitual monotony, the town is displaying extraordinary activity in the church, houses, streets, cock-pit, and the fields. Windows are draped with flags and many-colored decorations. Music and the sound of exploding fireworks fill the air. Everywhere there is rejoicing.

In the streets at fixed intervals, beautiful arches of bamboo are raised, the wood carved and worked in a thousand different ways. The arches are surrounded with ornaments, the very sight of which brings joy to the heart of the small boy. In the church yard, a large and costly awning has been erected. It is propped up by bamboo poles and so arranged that the procession may pass under it. Under its shade the children play, run, jump, fall and otherwise manage to tear and soil their new shirts, which have been intended for the day of the festival.

In the public square a platform has been built of bamboo, nipa and boards, to serve as the stage. It is here that the comedy company from Tondo will tell wonderful tales, and will compete with the gods in the performance of miracles. Here Marianito, Chananay, Balbino, Ratia, Carvajal, Yeyeng, Liceria and the others will sing and dance. The Filipino loves the theatre, and always attends dramatic productions with a great deal of pleasure. The *gobernadorcillo* was very fond of the theatre, and, with the advice of the curate, he had selected for the *fiesta* the fantastic comedy: "Prince Villardo, or the Nails Pulled Out of the Infamous Cave," a play full of magic and fireworks.

From time to time the bells ring out their merry sounds. Firecrackers and the booming of little cannon rend the air. The Filipino pyrotechnist, who has learned his art without a teacher of any renown, displays his skill, setting up pieces representing towers, castles, and the like. Already the small boys are running at break-neck speed toward the outskirts of the town to meet the bands of music. Five organizations have been hired, besides three orchestras.

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A band enters the town playing lively marches, and is followed by a lot of ragged and half naked pickaninnies: this one, perhaps, has on his brother's shirt; that one, his father's trousers. As soon as the music stops, these little tots know by memory the piece that has been played; they whistle and hum it with great delight, showing at this early age their musical talent.

In the meantime wagons and carriages arrive, bringing relatives, friends, and

strangers. Gamblers are also on hand with their best fighting cocks and bags of money, ready to risk their fortunes on the green cloth or in the cock-pit.

"The *alferez* gets fifty dollars a night," murmured a little, chubby man when he heard of the recent arrivals, for there were already many rumors that these people bribed the officer so that they might not be interfered with by the law. "Captain Tiago," he added, "is going to come and will be banker in the monte game. Captain Joaquin brings eighteen thousand. There is going to be a *liam-po*,¹ and the Chino Carlos is going to back it with ten thousand *pesos* capital. Big bettors will come from Tanauan, Lipa, and Batangas, as well as from Santa Cruz. It's going to be great! It's going to be great! This year Captain Tiago will not skin us as he has in the past, for he has not paid for more than three masses this year, and besides, I have a *mutya*² of cacao. And how are all the family?"

"Very well, very well, thank you!" replied the visitors from the country.

But the place where the greatest animation reigns, where there is almost a tumult, is over there on the level piece of ground, a short distance from Ibarra's house. Pulleys creak, and the place resounds with the sound of the hammer, the chiseling of stones, hewing of beams and the shouting of voices. A gang of workmen is making an excavation which will be wide and deep; others are busy piling up quarry stone, unloading carts, sifting sand, putting a capstan in place and so on.

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"Put that here! That, there! Come, be lively about it!" shouts a little, old man with an animated and intelligent physiognomy as he goes about, a yard stick and plumb line in hand. He is the director of the work, Ñor Juan, architect, mason, carpenter, whitewasher, locksmith, painter, stone cutter, and, on occasion, sculptor.

"We must finish it immediately! To-morrow nothing can be done, and day after to-morrow the ceremony of laying the corner stone is to take place! Come, be lively!"

"Make the hole just large enough for this cylinder!" said he to one of the stone cutters who was chiseling off a large quadrangular stone. "Inside of this our names will be kept."

Then he would repeat to every countryman who came along what he had already said a thousand times: "Do you know what we are going to build? Well, it is a school house, a model of its kind, something like those in Germany, but still better. The architect, Señor R., draughted the plans and I, I am in charge of the work. Yes, sir, you see this is going to be a regular palace with two wings, one for the boys and one for the girls. Here in the middle is to be a large garden with three fountains. There, on the sides, groves, where the children can sow and cultivate plants during the hours of recreation, thus improving the time. Just see how deep the foundations are to be: three meters and seventy-five centimeters. The building is going to have a cellar where the indolent pupils will be confined. This will be very close to the playing ground and the gymnasium, so that those who are punished may hear the diligent pupils enjoying themselves. Do you see this large space? Well, this will be a place for them to run and jump. The girls will have a separate garden with benches, swings, a special place for jumping the rope and rolling hoops, fountains and a bird-house. This is going to be magnificent!"

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He kept going from one end to the other, inspecting everything and passing his opinion on all.

"I find that you have got too much lumber here for a crane," said he to a yellowish-looking fellow, who was directing some other laborers. "I would have enough, with three large beams, to form the tripod and with three others to serve as supporters."

"O, pshaw!" replied the other, smiling in a peculiar way. "The more apparatus we give ourselves, the greater effect we will produce. The massiveness of it will make a bigger show and give it more importance. They will say: 'What a lot of work has been done!' You look at that crane that I am constructing. In a little while, I am going to ornament it with *banderolas*, garlands of flowers and leaves, and ... you will say afterward that you were right in hiring me, and Señor Ibarra cannot wish for more than that!"

The man laughed. Ñor Juan also smiled and shook his head.

As a matter of fact, the plan for the school had been approved by everybody and all were talking about it. The curate had asked to be allowed to be one of the patrons of the enterprise and he himself was to bless the laying of the corner stone, a ceremony which would take place on the last day of the San Diego festival, as it was considered one of the great solemnities.

The dismal presentiments of the old Tasio seemed to have been dissipated forever.

One day Ibarra told the old man so, but the old pessimist only replied: "Things may go well at first, but be on your guard against masked enemies."

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1 A Chinese gambling game.

2 A little white, pearl-like substance sometimes found in the cacao tree, which is supposed to be a lucky omen.

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Chapter XV.

As Night Comes On.

Great preparations had also been made in the house of Captain Tiago. We are already acquainted with the man. His love for pomp and his pride in being a resident of Manila made it necessary that he should outdo the residents of the province in the splendor of his celebration. There was another thing, too, which made it necessary that he should try to eclipse all others—the fact that his daughter Maria Clara and his future son-in-law were also there. His prospective connection with Ibarra caused the Captain to be often spoken of among the people.

Yes, as a matter of fact, one of the most serious newspapers in Manila had printed an article on its first page, headed "Imitate Him!" in which they offered Ibarra much advice and highly eulogized him. The article spoke of him as "the illustrious and rich young capitalist." Two lines below, he was termed "the distinguished philanthropist," and, in the following paragraph, referred to as the "disciple of Minerva who went to his Mother Country to salute the real birthplace of arts and sciences." Captain Tiago was burning with generous emulation and was wondering whether he ought not to erect a convent at his own expense.

Days before the week of festivities, numerous boxes of provisions and drinks, colossal mirrors, pictures, paintings and his daughter's piano had arrived at the house. Maria Clara and Aunt Isabel were already living there. Captain Tiago came on the day before the beginning of the festival. As he kissed his daughter's hand, he made her a present of a beautiful religious relic. It was solid gold, and set with diamonds and emeralds, and contained a little sliver from Saint Peter's boat, in which Our Saviour sat while fishing.

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The Captain's interview with his future son-in-law could not have been more cordial. Naturally, the school house was the subject of conversation. Captain Tiago wanted him to call the school "The San Francisco School."

"Believe me!" he said. "San Francisco is a good patron saint. If you call it 'The Primary School,' you gain nothing. Who is Primary, anyway?"

Some friends of Maria Clara arrived and invited her to go for a walk.

"But return quickly," said the Captain to his daughter, who asked for his permission. "You know that Father Dámaso is going to dine with us to-night. He has just arrived."

And turning to Ibarra who was deep in thought, he added: "You will dine with us, too? You will be all alone at home."

"With the greatest pleasure, I assure you, if I did not have to be at home to-night to receive visitors," replied the young man, mumbling his words and evading Maria Clara's glance.

"Bring your friends along with you," replied Captain Tiago cheerfully. "In my house there is always enough to eat. And, besides I would like to have you and Father Dámaso understand each other."

"There'll be time enough for that," replied Ibarra, putting on a forced smile and making ready to accompany the young ladies.

They went downstairs. Maria Clara was walking between Victoria and Iday, while Aunt Isabel followed behind.

As they passed down the street, people stood aside respectfully and gave them the inside of the way. Maria Clara was surprisingly beautiful now. Her paleness had disappeared, and although her eyes were thoughtful, her mouth, on the contrary,

seemed all smiles. With that amiability known only to a happy maiden, she saluted friends she had known from childhood who to-day were admirers of her youthful beauty. In less than fifteen days she had regained that frank confidence, that childish chatter, which seemed for awhile to have been left behind in the narrow walls of the convent. It seemed as though the butterfly upon leaving its shell knew all the flowers at once. It was enough that she be given a moment of flight and an opportunity to warm herself in the golden rays of the sun, in order to throw off the rigidity of the chrysalis. New life shone out in every part of her young being. Everything she met with was good and beautiful. Her love was manifested with virginal grace, and innocent in thought, she saw nothing to cause her to put on false blushes. However, she was wont to cover her face with her fan when they joked with her, but her eyes would smile and a gentle tremor would pass over her whole being.

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In front of Captain Basilio's house were some young men who saluted our acquaintances and invited them into the house. The merry voice of Sinang was heard, as she descended the stairs on a run and at once put an end to all excuses.

"Come up a moment so that I can go out with you," said she. "It bores me to be among so many strangers who talk about nothing but fighting-cocks and playing cards."

They went upstairs. The house was full of people. Some advanced to greet Ibarra, whose name was known to all. They contemplated with ecstasy Maria Clara's beauty, and some of the matrons murmured as they chewed their betel-nut: "She looks like the Virgin!"

After they had partaken of chocolate they resumed their walk. In the corner of the plaza a beggar was singing the romance of the fishes, to the accompaniment of a guitar. He was a common sight, a man miserably dressed and wearing a wide-brimmed hat made out of palm leaves. His clothing consisted of a frock coat covered with patches, and a pair of wide trousers such as the Chinese wear, but torn in many places. From beneath the brim of his hat two fiery orbs flashed out a ray of light. He was tall and from his manner seemed to be young. He put a basket down on the ground and, afterwards walking away from it a little distance, he uttered strange, unintelligible sounds. He remained standing, completely isolated, as if he and the people in the street were trying to avoid each other. Women approached his basket, and dropped into it fish, fruit and rice. When there was no one else to approach the basket, other sadder but less mournful sounds could be heard; perhaps he was thanking them. He picked up his basket and walked away to do the same in another place.

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Maria Clara felt that this was a pitiful case. Full of interest, she asked about the strange being.

"It is a leper," replied Iday. "He contracted the disease some four years ago; some say by taking care of his mother, others by having been confined in a damp prison. He lives there in the field near the Chinese cemetery. He does not communicate with any one: everybody flees from him on account of the fear of contagion. You should see his fantastic little house! The wind, the rain and the sunshine go in and out of it as a needle goes through cloth. They have prohibited him from touching anything belonging to anybody. One day a little child fell into the canal. The canal was deep, but this man happened to be passing near and helped to get the little child out. The child's father learned of it, made a complaint to the *gobernadorcillo* and the latter ordered that he be given six stripes in the middle of the street, the whip to be afterwards burned. That was atrocious! The leper ran away howling; they pursued him and the *gobernadorcillo* cried out: 'Catch him! One might better be drowned than have that disease!'"

"That is true," murmured Maria Clara. And then, without noticing what she was doing, she went up to the basket of the unfortunate wretch and dropped into it the relic which her father had just presented to her.

"What have you done?" her friends asked her.

"I have nothing else to give him," she replied, concealing the tears in her eyes by a smile.

"And what is he going to do with the relic?" said Victoria to her. "One day they gave him money but he pushed it away from him with his cane. Why would he care for it, if no one would accept anything coming from him? If he could only eat the relic!"

Maria Clara looked longingly at the women who were selling provisions and shrugged her shoulders.

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But the leper approached the basket, picked up the piece of jewelry which shone in his hands, knelt down, kissed it, and, after taking off his hat, buried his face in the dust on which the young girl had walked.

Maria Clara hid her face behind her fan and raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

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Chapter XVI.

The Hoisting Crane.

While two of the actors were singing the *Incarnatus est* in the church at the celebration of mass on the last day of the *fiesta*, and all were kneeling and the priests were bowing their heads, a man whispered in Ibarra's ear: "During the ceremony of the blessing of the corner stone, do not go near the priest, do not go in the ditch, do not approach the corner stone. Your life will depend on it."

Ibarra looked and saw that it was Elias, the pilot, but, as soon as he had spoken, he lost himself in the crowd.

The yellow-skinned man kept his word. It was not a simple lifting crane which he had built over the ditch for the purpose of lowering the enormous block of granite. It was not the mere tripod which Ñor Juan had wanted for holding a tackle-block. It was something more. It was at the same time a machine and an ornament, grand and imposing.

The confusing and complicated scaffolding had been raised to a height of more than eight meters. Four heavy timbers buried in the ground and supporting each other with colossal, diagonal braces, served as the base. The braces were joined to each other by immense nails, about half driven into the wood, perhaps because the apparatus was only of a provisional nature, and it could then be more easily taken down. Enormous cables were hanging from all sides, giving the entire apparatus an aspect of solidity and grandeur. The top was gay with flags and banners of various colors, floating pennants, and massive garlands of flowers and leaves, all artistically interwoven.

On high, in the shade of the projecting timbers, banners and wreaths, a large three-wheeled tackle-block was suspended by ropes and iron hooks. Over the shining rims of these pulleys great cables passed, holding suspended in the air a massive stone. The center of this stone had been chiseled out so that when lowered upon the hollowed stone, which had already been placed in the ditch, a small enclosure would be formed between the two. This space was to contain an account of the ceremonies, newspapers, manuscripts and coins, to be transmitted, perhaps, to other generations, in the far distant future. From this tackle-block at the top of the structure, the cable passed down to another smaller pulley which was fastened at the base of the apparatus. Through this pulley, the cable passed to the cylinder of a windlass which was held to the ground by massive beams. This windlass which can be operated by only two hands, multiplies man's strength by means of a series of cog-wheels. Although there is a gain in force, there is of course a loss in velocity.

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"Look!" said the yellow-skinned man, as he gave the crank a turn. "Look, Ñor Juan, with my strength alone, I can raise and lower that massive block of stone. This is so nicely arranged that I can control the ascent or descent of the stone by inches. Thus one man below can arrange the two stones in place, while I manipulate the apparatus from here."

Ñor Juan could but admire the man as he smiled in such a peculiar manner. The curious people standing about made comments and praised the yellow-skinned man for his work.

"Who taught you the mechanism?" asked Ñor Juan.

"My father, my father who is now dead," he replied, with that same peculiar smile.

"And who taught your father?"

"Don Saturnino, the grandfather of Don Crisostomo."

"I did not know that Don Saturnino——"

"Oh, he knew a good many things. Not only did he know how to whip well and how

to expose his workmen to the rays of the sun, but he knew also how to awaken the sleeping and how to make those awake sleep. In time, you will see what my father has taught me, you will see!"

And the yellow fellow smiled in a strange manner.

At two eating stands, there was now being prepared a sumptuous and abundant breakfast. However, on the table designated for the little ones of the school, there was no wine, but instead a larger amount of fruit. In a covered passage which joined the two stands, there were seats for the musicians and a table covered with sweetmeats, candies and flasks of water, ornamented with leaves and flowers, for the thirsty public.

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The crowd, resplendent in gay-colored clothes, was already fleeing from the hot rays of the sun and gathering under the shade of the trees or of the covering. The small boys climbed the trees near the place, in order to get a better view of the ceremony, and looked with envy upon the school children, who, clean and well dressed, were occupying a place designated for them. The fathers of the school children were enthusiastic. They, poor countrymen that they were, would have the pleasure of seeing their children eat on a white table cloth, just like the curate and the *Alcalde*. Merely to think of it was enough to drive away their hunger.

Soon strains of music were heard in the distance. A promiscuous crowd of persons of all ages and dress was preceding the band. The yellow-looking man was uneasy and was examining the whole apparatus. A curious countryman was also following his glances and was observing every movement he made. This countryman was Elias, who had also come to attend the ceremony. His hat and his style of dress almost concealed his identity. He had secured the best possible place for himself, right up close to the crane, on the edge of the excavation.

With the band of music came the *Alcalde*, the officials of the town, the friars, with the exception of Father Dámaso, and the Spanish employees of the Government. Ibarra was conversing with the *Alcalde*, for they had become quite friendly from the time the young man paid him some high compliments on his insignia, decorations and cordon. Pride in belonging to an aristocratic family was a weakness of His Excellency. Captain Tiago, the *alferez* and several wealthy persons, with their shining silk hats, walked along, surrounded by a group of youngsters. Father Salví followed, the same as ever, silent and pensive.

The young man could feel his heart beat as they approached the designated place. Instinctively, he glanced at the strange-looking scaffolding which had been raised there. He saw, too, the yellow-looking man who saluted him with respect, and, for a moment, Ibarra fixed his eyes on him. To his surprise, Ibarra also discovered Elias on the edge of the excavation. He gave the young pilot a significant look, letting him understand that he remembered what he had said in the church.

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The curate put on his sacerdotal vestments and began the ceremony. The one-eyed sacristan mayor held the book and a choir boy was charged with the water-sprinkler and the vessel of blessed water. The others who stood around about, their heads uncovered, maintained a deep silence. In spite of the fact that Father Salví read in a low tone, it could be noticed that his voice trembled.

In the meantime the articles, such as manuscripts, newspapers, medals and coins, which were to be placed in the corner stone had been enclosed in a little glass box, and hermetically sealed in a leaden cylinder.

"Señor Ibarra, do you wish to put the box in its place? The curate awaits it," said the *Alcalde* to Ibarra.

"I would do so with much pleasure," replied he, "but I would be usurping the honorable duty of the Señor Notary. The Notary ought to attest the act."

The Notary took it seriously, descended the carpeted stairs to the bottom of the excavation and, with fitting solemnity, deposited the box in the hollow which had been made in the stone. The curate then took up the sprinkler and sprinkled the stones with holy water.

The time had now come for each one to put his trowelful of mortar on the surface of the stone, which lay in the ditch, so that the other stone might fit upon it and be made to adhere to it.

Ibarra presented the *Alcalde* with a trowel, upon whose wide silver blade was engraved the date. But His Excellency first delivered an address in Spanish.

"Citizens of San Diego," he said in a solemn tone. "I have the honor to preside at a ceremony the importance of which you already understand. A school is being founded. The school is the base of society. The school is the book in which is

written the future of the people. Show me the schools of a people and I will tell you what those people are.

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"Citizens of San Diego! Thank God that he has given you virtuous priests; and the Mother Country that she untiringly diffuses her civilization over these fertile islands, protected by her glorious flag. Thank God that she has had pity for you, bringing you these humble priests that they may enlighten you and teach you the divine word. Thank the Government for the great sacrifices it has made, makes now and will make in the future for you and your sons.

"And now that the first stone of this great edifice has been blessed, I, *Alcalde Mayor* of this province, in the name of His Majesty, the King, whom God guard, King of the Spains, in the name of the illustrious Spanish Government, and under its spotless and ever victorious banner, I consecrate this act and begin the building of this school.

"Citizens of San Diego! Long live the King! Long live Spain! Long live the Church! Long live the priests! Long live the Catholic religion!"

"*Viva! Viva!*" replied the others. "Long live the *Alcalde!*"

The *Alcalde* majestically descended to the accompaniment of the music which had begun to play. He placed some trowels of mortar on the stone and with equal majesty ascended the stairs.

The Government employees applauded.

Ibarra offered another silver trowel to the curate, who, after fixing his eyes on him for a moment, descended slowly to the bottom of the excavation. When about half way down the stairs, he raised his eyes to look at the stone which hung suspended in the air by the powerful cables, but he only looked at it for a second and then descended. He did the same as the *Alcalde* had done, but this time more applause was heard, for the Government employees were assisted by the other friars and Captain Tiago.

Father Salví seemed to be searching for some one to whom to hand the trowel. He looked with hesitation toward Maria Clara, but, changing his mind, he offered it to the Notary. The latter, for the sake of gallantry, approached Maria Clara, who declined it with a smile. The friars, the Government employees and the *alferez*, one after another went down and repeated the ceremony. Captain Tiago was not forgotten.

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Ibarra had been omitted. He was about to order the yellow man to lower the other stone, when the curate remembered him. In a pleasant tone and, with an affectation of familiarity, he said to him. "Aren't you going to put on your trowelful, Señor Ibarra?"

"I would be like the fellow who made the stew and then ate it," replied the young man in the same tone.

"O, go on!" said the *Alcalde*, giving him a gentle push. "If you don't, I will order them not to lower the stone and then we will have to wait here till Judgment Day."

So terrible a threat forced Ibarra to obey. He exchanged the small silver trowel for a larger iron one, which made some of the people smile. He advanced quietly and descended the stairs. Elias looked at him with an indescribable expression. If you had seen him, you would have thought that all his life was concentrated in his eyes. The yellow man looked down into the abyss opening at his feet.

Ibarra, after glancing at the stone which hung over his head, and then at Elias and the yellow man, said to Ñor Juan in a trembling voice: "Give me the bucket of mortar and find another trowel for me above."

The young man stood alone. Elias was no longer looking at him; his eyes instead were riveted on the yellow man's hand, while the latter leaned over the ditch and followed with anxiety the movements of Ibarra.

The noise of the trowel removing a mass of sand and lime was heard, accompanied by the low murmur of the employees who were congratulating the *Alcalde* on his address.

Suddenly there was a frightful creaking. The pulley which was tied to the base of the crane jumped and then the windlass struck the apparatus like a battering-ram. The timbers swayed, ropes flew into the air and, in a second, all came down with a terrible crash. A cloud of dust was raised, and a thousand cries filled the air. Nearly all fled; a few hurried to the ditch. Only Maria Clara and Father Salví remained in their places without moving, both pale and silent.

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When the cloud of dust had partially cleared away, Ibarra could be seen standing among a mass of beams, bamboos, and cables, between the windlass and the massive stone, which in its descent had shaken and crushed everything. The young man was still holding the trowel in his hand, his eyes staring with fright at the dead body of a man which was lying at his feet, half buried under the timbers.

"Are you hurt?—Are you still alive? For God's sake speak!" said some of the employees, full of terror.

"Miracle! a miracle!" cried some.

"Come and remove the body of this unfortunate man," said Ibarra, as if awakening from a dream.

On hearing his voice, Maria Clara felt her strength giving way and she fell, half fainting, into the arms of her friends.

Great confusion reigned. Everybody was talking, gesticulating, and running from one side to the other, up and down the stairs, all stupefied and full of consternation.

"Who is the dead man? Is he still alive?" asked the *alferez*.

The body was identified as the yellow workman who had been standing beside the windlass.

"Let proceedings be brought against the superintendent of the work," was the first thing that the *Alcalde* said.

They examined the body, felt of the heart, but it was no longer beating. The blow had fallen on the head and blood was oozing from the nose, ears and mouth. Some strange marks were seen on the man's neck. There were four deep dents on one side and a single but deeper one on the other. It looked as though an iron hand had grasped it like a pair of pinchers.

The priests warmly congratulated the young man and shook his hand.

"When I think that only a few moments ago I was standing there," said one of the employees. "Say! If I had been the last! *Jesús!*"

"It makes my hair stand on end," said another, who was bald.

Ibarra had departed, to ascertain the condition of Maria Clara.

"Let this not prevent the festival from continuing," said the *Alcalde*. "God be praised! The dead man is neither a priest nor a Spaniard! Your escape must be celebrated! Just think—if the stone had fallen on you!"

"There is such a thing as a presentiment!" said the Notary. "I said so. Señor Ibarra was reluctant to descend. I saw it!"

"Let the festival go on! Give us some music! Weeping will not bring the dead man to life. Captain, serve warrants right here! Let the clerk of the tribunal come. Arrest the superintendent of the work!"

"Put him in the stocks!"

"Put him in the stocks! Eh? Some music, music! Put the *maestrillo* in the stocks."

"Señor Alcalde," replied Ibarra gravely, "if weeping cannot bring the dead man back to life, neither can anything be gained by putting a man in prison when we do not know that he is culpable. I will give bail for him and ask that he be given liberty for some days at least."

"Well, well! But such a misfortune must not be repeated!"

All kinds of comments were circulating among the people. The theory that it was a miracle was already accepted. Father Salví, however, seemed to rejoice very little over the miracle, which the people attributed to a saint of his order and of his parish.

There were some who claimed to have seen, as the crane was falling, a figure dressed in black like the Franciscans, go down in the ditch. It was without doubt San Diego himself. It was supposed, too, that Ibarra had heard mass and that the yellow man had not. It was all as clear as the light of the sun.

Ibarra went home to change his clothes.

"Hm! Bad beginning," said Old Tasio as he left the place.

Ibarra had just finished dressing when a servant announced that a countryman was asking for him. Supposing that it was one of his laborers, the young man ordered that they show him into his study, which also served as a library and a chemical laboratory. But, to his great surprise, he met the muscular figure of the mysterious Elias.

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"You recently saved my life," said he in Tagalog, at once comprehending Ibarra's movement. "I have paid you only half of the debt, and you are not indebted to me; rather the contrary. I have come to ask a favor of you...."

"Speak out!" replied the young man, in the same language and somewhat surprised at the gravity of the peasant.

For some seconds, Elias looked fixedly into Ibarra's eyes and then replied: "If human justice should ever wish to clear up this mystery, I beg of you not to speak to any one about the warning that I gave you in the church."

"Don't be troubled about that," replied the young man with a certain note of displeasure in his voice. "I know that they are hunting you, but I am no informer."

"Oh, it is not for my sake, it is not for me!" exclaimed Elias, not without some pride. "It is for your sake. I have nothing to fear from men."

Ibarra's surprise increased. The tone in which the countryman was speaking was new to him and did not seem to be in accord either with his state or his fortune.

"What do you mean?" asked Ibarra, interrogating the mysterious man with his look.

"I do not speak in enigmas; I try to express myself clearly. For your greater security, it is necessary that your enemies think you unsuspecting and off your guard."

Ibarra stepped back.

"My enemies? Have I enemies?"

"All of us have, sir, all from the lowest insect to man, from the poorest to the richest and most powerful. Enmity is the law of life. You have enemies in the highest and in the lowest ranks. You are planning a great undertaking; you have a past; your father, your grandfather had enemies because they had passion. In life it is not criminals who provoke the most hatred, but rather honorable men."

"Do you know my enemies?"

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Elias did not reply at once, but meditated.

"I knew one, the one who has died," he replied. "Last night I discovered that something was being plotted against you, through some words that were exchanged between him and an unknown man who lost himself in the crowd. 'The fish will not eat this one as they did his father; you will see to-morrow,' said he. These words attracted my attention, not only on account of their meaning but because they were spoken by this man, who only a few days ago had presented himself to the superintendent of the work with the express desire that he be given charge of the work of placing the corner stone. He did not ask for a large wage, but made a great show of his knowledge. I had no sufficient reasons to attribute evil designs to him, but something told me that my suspicions were right. For this reason, in order to warn you, I chose a moment and an occasion when you could not ask me any questions. You already know the rest."

Elias was then silent for some moments; yet Ibarra did not reply nor utter a word. He was meditating.

"I am sorry that the man is dead," he replied at last. "We might have been able to learn something more about it from him."

"If he had lived he would have escaped from the trembling hand of blind, human justice. God has now judged him! God has killed him! Let God be the only judge!"

Crisostomo looked a moment at the man who was speaking to him in this manner. He noticed that his muscular arms were covered with bruises and black and blue spots.

"Do you also believe in the miracle version of the affair?" he said, smiling—"this miracle of which the people speak?"

"If I believed in miracles, I would not believe in God. I would believe in a deified man. In fact, I would believe that man had created God after his image and likeness," he replied solemnly. "But I believe in Him. More than once I have felt His hand. When all was falling headlong, threatening destruction for everything which was in the place, I held the criminal. I put myself by his side. He was struck and I am safe and sound."

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"You? So that you...?"

"Yes! I held him when he wanted to escape, once he had begun his fatal work. I saw his crime. I say: 'Let God be the only judge among men. Let Him be the only one who has the right to take away life. Let man never think of substituting himself for him!'"

"And, still you this time..."

"No!" interrupted Elias, foreseeing the objection that he was going to raise. "It is not the same thing. When a man as judge condemns another to death or destroys his future forever, he does it with impunity and makes use of the force of other men to carry out his sentence. Yet, after all, the sentence may be wrong and unjust. But I, in exposing the criminal to the same danger which he had prepared for others, ran the same risks. I did not kill him. I allowed the hand of God to kill him."

"Do you not believe in chance?"

"To believe in chance is like believing in miracles. Both theories suppose that God does not know the future. What is a casualty? A happening which absolutely nobody knows beforehand. What is a miracle? A contradiction, a contortion of the laws of nature. Lack of foresight and contradiction in the All Knowing, who directs the machinery of the world, are two great imperfections."

"Who are you?" Ibarra asked again, with a certain dread. "Have you studied?"

"I have had to believe in God a great deal because I have lost my faith in men," replied the pilot, evading the question.

Ibarra thought that he understood this man; young and proscribed, he disregarded human justice; denied the right of man to judge his equals, he protested against power and superiority of certain classes of men over others.

"But you must admit the necessity of human justice, however imperfect it may be," he replied. "God, although he has ministers on the earth, cannot, that is to say, cannot clearly give his judgment upon the millions of contentions which are stirred up by our passions. It is necessary, it is just, that a man should sometimes judge his fellows."

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"For good, yes; for bad, no. To correct and improve, yes; but not to destroy, for if he fails in his judgment, there is no power that can remedy the evil that has been done. But," he added, changing his tone, "this discussion is beyond and above me, and I am keeping you from those who are now awaiting you. But do not forget what I have just said: You have enemies. Take care of yourself for the good of your country!"

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Chapter XVII.

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The Banquet.

There, under the shade of the decorated pavilion, the great men of the province were banqueting. The *Alcalde* occupied one end of the table; Ibarra, the other. On the young man's right sat Maria Clara, and on his left, the Notary. Captain Tiago, the *alferez*, the *gobernadorcillo*, the friars, the employees, and the few señoritas who were present were seated, not according to rank but according to their own fancy.

The banquet was very animated, but, before it was half over, a messenger with a telegram came in search of Captain Tiago. The Captain asked permission to read the message, and naturally all begged of him to do so.

The worthy Captain at first knit his eyebrows; and then raised them. His face became pale, and then brightened up. Doubling up the sheet of paper hurriedly, he

arose.

"Gentlemen," said he, confused, "His Excellency, the Governor General, is coming this afternoon to honor my house."

And then he started on a run, taking with him the telegram and the napkin, but not his hat. All sorts of questions and exclamations were shouted after him. The announcement of the coming of the *tulisanes* could not have had a greater effect. "But listen! When does he come? Tell us about it! His Excellency!" But Captain Tiago was already far away.

"His Excellency is coming and will be a guest at Captain Tiago's house!" exclaimed some one, without considering that the Captain's daughter and future son-in-law were present.

"The choice could not have been a better one," replied another.

The friars looked at each other. Their expressions seemed to say: "The Governor General is committing another of his errors, offending us in this way. He ought to be the guest of the convent." But despite the fact that they thought this, they all kept silent and no one of them expressed his opinion.

"Even yesterday he was speaking to me about it," said the *Alcalde*, "but, at that time, His Excellency was not decided."

"Do you know, Your Excellency, Señor Alcalde, how long the Governor General intends to remain here?" asked the *alferez*, a little uneasy.

"No, not positively. His Excellency likes surprises."

"Here come some other telegrams!"

The messages were for the *Alcalde*, the *alferez*, and the *gobernadorcillo*, and announced the same thing to each of them. The friars noticed that none came addressed to the curate.

"His Excellency will arrive at four o'clock this afternoon, gentlemen," said the *Alcalde* solemnly. "We can finish at our leisure."

Leonidas, in the pass of Thermopylæ, could not have said with better grace "Tonight we will dine with Pluto."

"I notice the absence of our great preacher," said one of the government employees timidly. The speaker had an inoffensive look and before this had not opened his mouth, except to eat, during the entire morning.

All who knew the life of Crisostomo's father twitched their eyes significantly and seemed to say by their movements: "Go on! It's a bad beginning that you have made!" But others, more benevolently disposed, replied: "He must be somewhat fatigued."

"What? Somewhat fatigued!" exclaimed the *alferez*. "Why, he must be exhausted. What did you think of the sermon this morning?"

"Superb, gigantic!" said the Notary.

"To be able to speak like Father Dámaso, a man needs lungs," observed Father Manuel Martin.

The Augustine did not concede more than lung power.

"And such easiness of expression," added Father Salví.

"Do you know that Señor Ibarra has the best cook in the province," remarked the *Alcalde*, cutting off the conversation.

"So they say," replied one of the Government employees, "but his fair neighbor does not wish to do honor to his table, for she scarcely takes a mouthful."

Maria Clara blushed.

"I thank you, Señor.... You occupy yourself too much about me ... but ..." she said timidly.

"But your presence honors him sufficiently," concluded the gallant *Alcalde*. Then turning to Father Salví: "Father Curate, I notice that you have been silent and pensive all day long."

"It is my nature," muttered the Franciscan. "I would rather listen than talk."

"Your Reverence seeks always to gain and never to lose," replied the *alferez*, in a joking manner.

But Father Salví did not take it as a joke. His eyes flashed a moment and he replied: "You know very well, Señor Alferez, that, during these days, I am not the one who gains most!"

The *alferez* overlooked the fling with a false laugh and pretended not to hear it.

"But, gentlemen, I do not understand how you can be talking about gains and losses," intervened the *Alcalde*. "What will these amiable and discreet young women, who honor us with their presence, think of us? To my mind, the young women are like Æolian harps in the night. It is only necessary to lend an attentive ear to hear them, for their unspeakable harmonies elevate the soul to the celestial spheres of the infinite and of the ideal...."

"Your Excellency is a poet," said the Notary gayly; and both drained their wine glasses.

"I cannot help it," said the *Alcalde*, wiping his lips. "The occasion, if it does not always make the thief, makes the poet. In my youth I composed verses, and they certainly were not bad ones."

"So Your Excellency has been unfaithful to the Muses, deserting them for Themis."

"Psh!" What would you do? It has always been my dream to run through the whole social scale. Yesterday I was gathering flowers, and singing songs; to-day I hold the wand of Justice and serve Humanity. To-morrow...."

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"To-morrow Your Excellency will throw the wand into the fire to warm yourself with it in the winter of life, and will then take a portfolio in the Ministry," added Father Sibyla.

"Psh! Yes ... no.... To be a Minister is not precisely my ideal. The unexpected always happens, though. A little villa in the north of Spain to pass the summer in, a mansion in Madrid, and some possessions in Andalusia for the winter.... We will live remembering our dear Philippines.... Of me Voltaire will not say: '*Nous n'avons jamais été chez ces peuples que pour nous y enrichir et pour les calomnier.*'"

The Government employees thought that His Excellency intended a joke and they began to laugh to make a show of appreciating it. The friars imitated them since they did not know that Voltaire was the *Volta-i-ré* whom they had so often cursed and condemned to Hades. Father Sibyla, however, recognized the name and assumed a serious air, supposing that the *Alcalde* had uttered some heresy.

Father Dámaso was waddling down the road. He was half smiling, but in such a malignant manner, that on seeing him, Ibarra, who was in the act of speaking, lost the thread of his remarks. All were surprised to see Father Dámaso, but, excepting Ibarra, they greeted him with marks of pleasure. They had already reached the last course of the dinner, and the champagne was foaming in the glasses.

Father Dámaso showed a little nervousness in his smile when he saw Maria Clara seated on the right of Crisostomo. But, taking a chair by the side of the *Alcalde*, he asked in the midst of a significant silence: "Were you not talking about something, señores? Continue!"

"We were drinking a toast," replied the *Alcalde*. "Señor Ibarra was mentioning those who had aided him in his philanthropic enterprise and was speaking of the architect when Your Reverence...."

"Well, I don't understand architecture," interrupted Father Dámaso, "but architects and the dunces who go to them make me laugh! You have an example right here. I drew the plan for a church and it has been constructed perfectly: so an English jeweler who was one day a guest at the convent told me. To draught a plan, one need have but a small degree of intelligence."

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"However," replied the *Alcalde*, seeing that Ibarra was silent, "when we are dealing with certain edifices, for example a school, we need a skilled man (*perito*)."

"He who needs a *perito* is a *perrito* (little dog)!" exclaimed Father Dámaso, with a scoff. "One would have to be more of a brute than the natives, who erect their own houses, if he did not know how to build four walls and put a covering over them. That's all that a school house is."

All looked toward Ibarra. But the young man, even if he did look pale, kept on conversing with Maria Clara.

"But Your Reverence should consider...."

"Just look you," continued the Franciscan without allowing the *Alcalde* to speak. "See how one of our lay brothers, the most stupid one we have, has built a good hospital, handsome and cheap. It is well built and he did not pay more than eight *cuartos* a day to those whom he employed even those who came from other towns. That fellow knows how to treat them. He does not do like many fools and *mesticillos*¹ who spoil them by paying them three or four *reales*."

"Does Your Reverence say that he only paid eight *cuartos*? Impossible!" said the *Alcalde*, trying to change the course of the conversation.

"Yes, Señor; and those who brag of being good Spaniards ought to imitate him. You can see very well now, since the Suez Canal was opened, corruption has come here. Before, when we had to double the Cape, there were not so many worthless people coming out here, nor did Filipinos go abroad to be corrupted and spoiled."

"But, Father Dámaso!"

"You know very well what the native is. As quickly as he learns anything, he goes and becomes a doctor. All these ignoramuses who go to Europe...."

"But listen, Your Reverence ..." interrupted the *Alcalde*, becoming uneasy at such harsh words.

"They are all going to end as they merit," he continued. "The hand of God is upon them and one must be blind not to see it. Even in this life, the fathers of such vipers receive their punishment.... They die in prison, eh?"

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But he did not finish his remarks. Ibarra, his face flushing, had been following him with his eyes. On hearing the allusion to his father, he rose and, with a single bound, brought down his strong hand on the head of the priest. Stunned with the blow, the friar fell on his back.

Full of astonishment and terror, no one dared to intervene.

"Keep back!" cried the young man, with a menacing voice, and brandishing a sharp knife in his hand. In the meantime, he held the friar down with his foot on his neck. The latter was recovering consciousness. "Let no one approach who does not want to die!"

Ibarra was beside himself. His body trembled, and his threatening eyes almost burst from their sockets. Friar Dámaso struggled and raised himself, but the young man, seizing him by the collar, shook him till he fell on his knees and collapsed.

"Señor Ibarra! Señor Ibarra!" cried some.

But nobody, not even the *alferez*, dared to approach the glistening blade, considering the strength of the young man and the state of his mind. All were paralyzed.

"All of you people here have said nothing! Now the matter concerns me! I have avoided him. God now brings him to me. Let God judge!"

The young man was breathing hard. With iron hand he held the Franciscan down, and the latter struggled in vain to break loose.

"My heart beats tranquilly. My hand is sure."

He looked about him and continued: "Is there among you any one who does not love his father; any one who hates his memory, any one who was born in disgrace and humiliation? See! Do you observe this silence? Priest of a peaceful God, with your mouth full of sanctity and religion, and a miserable heart, you could not have known what a father is. You should have thought of your own! Do you see? Among this crowd which you scorn, there is none such as you! You are judged!"

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The people around him made a stir, believing that he was going to strike.

"Back!" he again cried in a threatening voice. "What? Do you fear that I would soil my hand with his impure blood? Have I not told you that my heart beats tranquilly? Back from us, all! Listen, priests, judges, you who think yourselves different from other men, and who claim other rights for yourselves! Listen! My father was an honorable man. Ask these people who venerate his memory. My father was a good citizen. He sacrificed himself for me and for the good of his country! His house was open. His table was ready for the stranger or the exile who came to it in his

misery. He was a good Christian; he always did what was right. He never oppressed the helpless, nor brought sorrow to the miserable and wretched. To this man, he opened the door of his house. He had him sit at his table and he called him his friend. What has he done in return? He has calumniated him, persecuted him, has armed ignorance against him, violating the sanctity of his office, has thrown him out of his tomb, dishonored his memory, and persecuted him even in death's repose. And not content with that, he now persecutes his son. I have fled from him, I have avoided his presence. You heard him this morning profane the pulpit; you saw him point me out to the popular fanaticism; I said nothing. Now he comes here in search of a quarrel. To your surprise, I suffered in silence; but he again insults the sacred memory of my father, that memory which every son holds dear.... You who are here, you priests, you judges, have you seen your father watching over you night and day and working for you? Have you seen him deprive himself of you for your good? Have you seen your father die in prison, heart broken, sighing for some one to caress him, searching for some being to console him, alone in sickness, while you were in a foreign land? Have you heard his name dishonored afterward? Have you found his tomb vacant when you wished to pray upon it? No? You are silent. Then by that silence you condemn him!"

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He raised his arm; but a young maiden, quick as a flash, put herself between them and with her delicate hands stopped the arm of the avenger. It was Maria Clara.

Ibarra looked at her with an expression that seemed to reflect madness. Gradually, he loosened the vise-like fingers of his hand, allowed the body of the Franciscan to fall, and dropped his knife upon the ground. Covering his face, he fled through the crowd.

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¹ Little *mestizos* or half breeds. Used in contempt.

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Chapter XVIII.

The First Cloud.

The house of Captain Tiago was no less disturbed than the imagination of the people. Maria Clara, refusing to listen to the consolation of her aunt and foster sister, did nothing but weep. Her father had forbidden her to speak to Ibarra until the priests should absolve him from the excommunication which they had pronounced upon him.

Captain Tiago, though very busy preparing his house for the reception of the Governor General, had been summoned to the convent.

"Don't cry, my girl," said Aunt Isabel as she dusted off the mirrors. "They will certainly annul the excommunication; they will write the Pope.... We will make a large donation.... Father Dámaso had nothing more than a fainting spell.... He is not dead."

"Don't cry," said Andeng to her, in a low voice. "I will certainly arrange it so that you can speak to him. What are the confessionals made for, if we are not expected to sin? Everything is pardoned when one has told it to the curate."

Finally, Captain Tiago arrived. They scanned his face for an answer to their many questions, but his expression announced too plainly his dismay. The poor man was sweating, and passing his hand over his forehead. He seemed unable to utter a word.

"How is it, Santiago?" asked Aunt Isabel, anxiously.

He answered her with a sigh and dried away a tear.

"For God's sake, speak! What has happened?"

"What I had already feared!" he broke out finally half crying. "All is lost! Father Dámaso orders that the engagement be broken. If it is not broken off, I am condemned in this life and in the next. They all tell me the same thing, even Father Sibyla! I ought to shut the doors of my house and ... I owe him more than fifty thousand *pesos*. I told the Fathers so, but they would take no notice of it. 'Which do you prefer to lose,' they said to me, 'fifty thousand *pesos*, or your life and your soul?' Alas! *Ay! San Antonio!* If I had known it, if I had known it!"

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Maria Clara was sobbing.

"Do not cry, my daughter," he added, turning to her. "You are not like your mother. She never cried ... she never cried except when she was whimsical just before your birth.... Father Dámaso tells me that a relative of his has just arrived from Spain ... and that he wants him to be your fiancé."...

Maria Clara stopped up her ears.

"But, Santiago, are you out of your head?" cried Aunt Isabel. "Speak to her now of another fiancé! Do you think that your daughter can change lovers as easily as she changes her dress?"

"I was thinking the same thing, Isabel. Don Crisostomo is rich.... The Spaniards only marry for love of money.... But what would you have me do? They have threatened me with excommunication. They say that I am in great peril: not only my soul, but also my body ... my body, do you hear? My body!"

"But you only give sorrow to your daughter. Are you not a friend of the Archbishop? Why don't you write him?"

"The Archbishop is also a friar. The Archbishop does only what the friars say. But, Maria, do not cry. The Governor General will come. He will want to see you and your eyes are all inflamed.... Alas! I was thinking what a happy afternoon I was going to pass.... Without this misfortune, I would be the happiest of men and all would envy me.... Calm yourself, my girl. I am more unfortunate than you and I do not cry. You can have another and better fiancé, but I lose fifty thousand *pesos*. Ah! Virgin of Antipolo! If I could only have some luck to-night!"

Noises, detonations, the rumbling of carriages, the galloping of horses, and a band playing the *Marcha Real* announced the arrival of His Excellency, the Governor General of the Philippine Islands. Maria Clara ran to hide in her bedroom.... Poor girl! Gross hands were playing with her heart, ignorant of the delicacy of its fibers.

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In the meantime, the house filled with people. Loud steps, commands, and the clanking of sabers and swords resounded on all sides. The afflicted maiden was half kneeling before an engraving of the Virgin, a picture representing her in that attitude of painful solitude, known only to Delaroche, as if she had been surprised on returning from the sepulchre of her Son. But Maria Clara was not thinking of the grief of that Mother; she was thinking of her own. With her head resting on her breast and her hands on the floor, she looked like a lily bent by the storm. A future, cherished for years in her dreams; a future whose illusions, born in her infancy and nursed through her youth, gave form to the cells of her being—that future was now to be blotted from the mind and heart by a single word!

Maria Clara was as good and as pious a Christian as her aunt. The thought of an excommunication terrified her. The threat to destroy the peace of her father demanded that she sacrifice her love. She felt the entire strength of that affection which until now she had not known. It was like a river which glides along smoothly; its banks carpeted with fragrant flowers, its bed formed by fine sand, the wind scarcely rippling its surface, so quiet and peaceful that you would say that its waters were dead; until suddenly its channel is pent up, ragged rocks obstruct its course, and the entangled trunks of trees form a dike. Then the river roars; it rises up; its waves boil; it is lashed into foam, beats against the rocks and rushes into the abyss.

She wanted to pray, but who can pray without hope? One prays when there is hope. When there is none, we surrender ourselves to God and wail. "My God!" cried her heart, "why shouldst thou separate me thus from him I love? Why deny me the love of others? Thou dost not deny me the sun, nor the air, nor dost thou hide the heavens from my sight. Why dost thou deny me love, when it is possible to live without sun, without air, and without the heavens, but without love, never?"

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"Mother, mother," she was moaning.

Aunt Isabel came to take her from her grief. Some of her girl friends had arrived and the Governor General also desired to talk with her.

"Aunt, tell them that I am ill!" begged the frightened maiden. "They wish to make me play the piano and sing."

"Your father has promised it. You are not going to go back on your father?"

Maria Clara arose, looked at her aunt, clasped her beautiful arms about her and murmured: "Oh, if I had ..."

But, without finishing the sentence, she dried her tears and began to make her toilet.

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Chapter XIX.

His Excellency.

"I want to speak with that young man," said His Excellency to an adjutant. "He has awakened my interest."

"They have already gone to look for him, General! But there is a young man here from Manila who insists on being introduced. We have told him that Your Excellency has no time and that you have not come to give audiences, but to see the town and the procession. But he has replied that Your Excellency always has time to dispense justice."

His Excellency turned to the *Alcalde* as if in doubt.

"If I am not mistaken," said the latter, making a slight bow, "it is a young man who this morning had a difficulty with Father Dámaso about the sermon."

"Still another? Has this friar undertaken to disturb the province, or does he think that he is in command here? Tell the young man to come in!"

His Excellency was walking nervously from one end of the *sala* to the other.

In the lower part of the house, in the ante-room, were several Spaniards, mingled with army officers and officials of the town of San Diego and some of the neighboring villages. They were grouped in little circles and were conversing about one thing and another. All of the friars were there except Father Dámaso, and they wanted to go in and pay their respects to His Excellency.

"His Excellency, the Governor General, begs Your Reverences to wait a moment," said the adjutant. "Walk in, young man!"

The young man from Manila entered the *sala*, pale and trembling.

Everybody was surprised. His Excellency must be irritated to dare to make the friars wait. Father Sibyla said: "I have nothing to say to him.... I am losing time here!"

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"It's the same with me," said an Augustine. "Shall we go?"

"Would it not be better for us to find out what he thinks?" asked Father Salví. "We would avoid a scandal ... and ... we would be able to call to his mind his duty to ... the Church."

"Your Reverences can walk in, if you wish," announced the adjutant, as he escorted out the young man, whose face was now, however, glowing with satisfaction.

Friar Sibyla entered first. Behind him came Father Salví, Father Manuel Martin and the other priests. They all humbly saluted the Governor General, with the exception of Father Sibyla, who preserved even in his bow, an air of superiority. Father Salví, on the contrary, almost touched the floor with his head.

"Which of Your Reverences is Father Dámaso?" asked His Excellency unexpectedly, without having them sit down, or even asking about their health, and without addressing them with any of those courteous phrases which are customary with such high personages.

"Father Dámaso is not among us, señor," replied Father Sibyla, rather dryly.

"Your Excellency's servant lies ill in bed," added Father Salví meekly. "After having the pleasure of saluting you and of inquiring about the health of Your Excellency, as befits all the good servants of the King and all persons of good education, we also come in the name of the respectful servant of Your Excellency who has the misfortune...."

"Oh," interrupted the Governor General, as he turned a chair around on one leg and smiled nervously. "If all the servants of My Excellency were like His Reverence Father Dámaso, I would prefer to serve My Excellency myself."

The Reverences did not know how to respond to this interruption.

"Take a seat, Your Reverences!" he added after a short pause, softening his tone a little.

Captain Tiago came in dressed in a frock coat and walking on tip-toes. He was leading Maria Clara by the hand. The young maiden was trembling when she entered, but notwithstanding she made a graceful and ceremonious bow.

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"Is this your daughter?" asked the Governor General, somewhat surprised.

"And Your Excellency's, my General," replied Captain Tiago seriously.¹

The *Alcalde* and the adjutants opened wide their eyes, but His Excellency did not lose his gravity. He extended his hand to the young maiden and said to her affably: "Happy are the fathers who have daughters like you, señorita. They have spoken to me about you with respect and consideration.... I have desired to see you and to thank you for your pretty deed of to-day. I am informed of all, and when I write to His Majesty's Government I will not forget your generous conduct. In the meantime, señorita, allow me in the name of His Majesty the King whom I represent here and who loves to see peace and tranquillity among his subjects, and in my own name, that of a father who also has daughters of your age, allow me to extend to you most sincere thanks and propose your name for some mark of recognition."

"Señor ..." replied Maria Clara, trembling.

His Excellency guessed what she wanted to say, and replied: "It is well enough, señorita, that you are satisfied in your own conscience with the mere esteem of your own people. The testimony of one's people is the highest reward and we ought not to ask more. But, however, I will not let pass this excellent opportunity to show you that, if justice knows how to punish, she also knows how to reward and is not always blind."

"Señor Don Juan Crisostomo awaits Your Excellency's orders," announced the adjutant in a loud voice.

Maria Clara trembled.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Governor General. "Permit me, señorita, to express the desire to see you again before I leave town. I still have some very important things to say to you. Señor *Alcalde*, Your Lordship will accompany me for a walk after the conference which I will hold alone with Señor Ibarra."

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"Your Excellency will permit us," said Father Salví meekly, "to inform you that Señor Ibarra is excommunicated ..."

His Excellency interrupted him saying: "I am glad that I have nothing more to deplore than the condition of Father Dámaso, for whom I sincerely wish a complete recovery, because at his age a voyage to Spain for his health would not be pleasant. But this depends on him ... and in the meantime, may God preserve the health of Your Reverences."

They retired one after the other.

"We will see who will make the journey first," said a Franciscan.

"I am going off now right away!" said Father Sibyla, with indignation.

"And we are going back to our provinces, too," said the Augustins.

They could not endure that through the fault of a Franciscan His Excellency had received them coldly.

In the entrance hall they met Ibarra, their host only a few hours ago. They exchanged no salutations, but their looks were eloquent.

The *Alcalde*, on the contrary, when the friars had disappeared, greeted the young man and extended his hand to him in a familiar way. But the arrival of the adjutant, who was looking for Ibarra, did not give them an opportunity to converse.

Ibarra was dressed in deep mourning. He presented himself in a calm manner, and bowed profoundly, despite the fact that the sight of the friars had not seemed a good omen for him.

The Governor General advanced a few steps. "It gives me great satisfaction to shake your hand. Grant me your entire confidence."

"Señor ... such kindness...!"

"Your surprise offends me. It indicates that you did not expect a good reception from me. That is doubting my justice!"

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"A friendly reception, señor, for an insignificant subject like myself, is not justice, it is a favor."

"Well, well!" said His Excellency, sitting down and pointing out a seat for Ibarra. "Let us speak frankly. I am very much pleased with your action and I have already proposed to His Majesty's Government that they grant you an insignia for your philanthropic intention of erecting a school.... If you had asked me, I would have attended the ceremony with a great deal of pleasure and perhaps the unpleasantness would have been avoided."

"My idea of erecting a school seems to me so insignificant," replied the young man, "that I did not think it an occasion worthy of taking the attention of Your Excellency from your many duties and cares. Then, too, it was my duty to first address the highest authority of the province."

His Excellency made a bow of satisfaction and adopting a still more intimate manner, continued:

"In regard to the unpleasantness which you have had with Father Dámaso, have no fear nor regret. I will not touch a hair of your head while I govern these Islands. And in regard to the excommunication, I will speak to the Archbishop, for it is necessary for us to adapt ourselves to circumstances. Here, we cannot laugh about these things in public as we do in Spain or in cultured Europe. Nevertheless, be more prudent in the future. You have put yourself in opposition to the religious corporations, which, on account of your position and wealth, need to be respected. But I will protect you, because I like good sons, I like to see a person respect the honor of his father. I, too, love my father, and as sure as there is a God, I know what I would have done had I been in your place...."

And quickly turning the conversation, he asked: "You have told me that you come from Europe; were you in Madrid?"

"Yes, señor; for some months."

"You have perhaps heard of my family?"

"Your Excellency had just left when I had the honor to be presented to it."

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"And why, then, did you come here without bringing some letter of introduction?"

"Señor," replied Ibarra bowing, "because I do not come directly from Spain, and because, having heard of Your Excellency's character, I thought that a letter of introduction would not only be useless, but even offensive. All Filipinos are recommended to you."

A smile appeared on the lips of the old officer and he replied slowly, as if weighing and measuring his words:

"It flatters me to learn that you think so ... and ... so it ought to be. However, young man, you ought to know what loads we bear upon our shoulders here in the Philippines. Here, we, old army officers, have to do and be everything: King, Secretary of State, of War, of Agriculture, of Internal Affairs and of Justice. The worst part of it is the fact that in regard to everything we have to consult our distant Mother Country, which approves or rejects our propositions, according to circumstances, sometimes blindly. And you know how we Spaniards say: 'Grasp much, get little.' Then, too, we come here ignorant of the country and we leave it as soon as we begin to know it. With you I can be frank, for it would be useless to appear otherwise. In Spain, where each branch of the Government has its own Minister, born and brought up in the country, where they have the press and public opinion, the opposition is open and before the eyes of the Government, and shows up its faults; yet, even there, all is imperfect and defective. And when you consider the conditions here, it is a wonder that all is not upset, with all those advantages lacking, and with the opposition working in the dark. Good intentions and wishes are not wanting in us governing officials, but we find ourselves obliged to make use of eyes and arms which frequently we do not know, and which, perhaps, instead of serving the country, serve only their own interests. That is not our fault; it is the fault of circumstances. You arouse my interest and I do not want our present system of government to prejudice you in any way. I cannot watch everything, nor can I attend to all. Can I be useful to you in any way? Have you anything to request?"

Ibarra meditated.

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"Señor," he replied, "my greatest desire is the happiness of my country, a

happiness due to the efforts of our Mother Country and to the efforts of my fellow countrymen, united with the eternal bonds of a common interest and common object. What I ask the Government can only give after many years of continuous work and proper reforms."

His Excellency looked at him for several seconds with a look which Ibarra met naturally, without timidity and without boldness.

"You are the first *man* with whom I have spoken in this country," he exclaimed grasping his hand.

"Your Excellency has only seen those who lead a grovelling existence in the city. You have not seen the calumniated hovels of our towns. If you had, you would have seen true men, if generous hearts and simple manners make true men."

The Governor General arose and paced the *sala* from one side to the other.

"Señor Ibarra," he exclaimed, stopping a moment. The young man arose. "I will probably leave here within a month. Your education and your mode of thinking are not for this country. Sell what you possess, get your trunk ready and come with me to Europe. That climate will be better for you."

"I shall cherish all my life the memory of Your Excellency's kindness," replied Ibarra, moved by what the Governor General had said. "But I ought to live in the country where my fathers have lived...."

"Where they have died, you should say, to speak more exactly. Believe me! I possibly know your country better than you do yourself... Ah! Now I remember," he exclaimed changing the tone of his voice. "You are going to marry a lovely girl and I am keeping you here! Go, go to her side, and that you may have greater liberty send her father to me," he added, smiling. "Do not forget, however, that I want you to accompany me for a walk."

Ibarra bowed and departed.

His Excellency called his adjutant.

"I am happy," said he, giving him a light slap on the shoulder. "To-day I have seen for the first time how one can be a good Spaniard without ceasing to be a good Filipino and to love his country. To-day, at last, I have shown the *Reverences* that we are not all their playthings. This young man has afforded me the opportunity, and, in a short time, I will have settled all of my accounts with the friar. It's a pity that this young man, some day or other ... but call the *Alcalde* to me."

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The latter presented himself at once.

"Señor Alcalde," he said to him, as he entered the room, "in order to avoid a repetition of scenes such as Your Honor witnessed this afternoon, scenes which I deplore because they take away the prestige of the Government and all Spaniards, I want to commend to you warmly Señor Ibarra, that you may not only aid him in carrying out his patriotic ends, but also prevent in the future any person of whatever class or under whatever pretext, from molesting him."

The *Alcalde* understood the reprimand and bowed to conceal his confusion.

"Have the *alferez*, who is in command here, informed to the same effect. And you will find out if it is true that this officer has methods of procedure that are not in accordance with the regulations. I have heard more than one complaint on this score."

Captain Tiago, all starched and ironed, presented himself.

"Don Santiago," said His Excellency, in a cordial tone of voice, "a little while ago I was congratulating you on having a daughter like the Señorita de los Santos. Now I want to congratulate you on your future son-in-law. The most virtuous of daughters is certainly worthy of the best citizen of the Philippines. Is the date of the wedding known?"

"Señor!" stammered the Captain, wiping away the perspiration which was running down his face.

"O, come! I see that there is nothing definite. If you need godfathers, I will be one of them with the greatest pleasure. I would do it to take away the bad taste which so many of the weddings which I have attended here have left in my mouth," he added, turning to the *Alcalde*.

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"Yes, señor!" replied Captain Tiago, with a smile which inspired compassion.

Ibarra had gone in search of Maria Clara, almost on a run. He had so many things to tell her. He heard some gentle voices in one of the rooms and knocked at the door.

"Who knocks?" asked Maria Clara.

The voices were silenced and the door ... was not opened.

"It is I. May I come in?" asked the young man, his heart beating violently.

The silence was not broken. A few seconds afterward gentle steps approached the door and Sinang's cheerful voice murmured through the key-hole: "Crisostomo, we are going to the theatre to-night. Write what you have to say to Maria Clara."

Then the footsteps were heard retreating, as quickly as they had come.

"What does that mean!" murmured Ibarra to himself, as he went slowly away from the door.

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¹ A reply which accords with the Spanish idea of politeness but rather ludicrously used in this instance.

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Chapter XX.

The Procession.

In the evening, by the light of lanterns hung from windows, to the ringing of bells and bursting of bombs, the procession started for the fourth time.

The Governor General left the house on foot, in company with his two adjutants, Captain Tiago, the *Alcalde*, the *alferez*, and Ibarra. The Civil Guards and the officials of the town preceded them and cleared the way. His Excellency had been invited to witness the procession from the house of the *gobernadorcillo*, in front of which a platform had been erected for the recitation of a *loa*, or religious poem, in honor of the Patron Saint. Ibarra had previously declined with pleasure an invitation to hear this poetical composition, as he had preferred to witness the procession from the house of Captain Tiago with Maria Clara and her friends. But, as His Excellency wished to hear the *loa*, there was no other remedy for Ibarra but to console himself with the hope of seeing her at the theatre.

The procession was headed by three sacristans carrying silver candlesticks. The children of the school, accompanied by their teacher, followed. Then came the small boys, with colored paper lanterns fastened to the ends of pieces of bamboo, each more or less adorned according to the caprices of the boy, for this part of the illumination was paid for entirely by themselves. However, they fulfilled this duty with a great deal of pleasure.

In the midst of it all, men serving as police, passed to and fro to see that the files of the procession were not broken or the people jammed together in a crowd. For this purpose they used their wands and inflicted some hard blows, thus managing to add to the brilliancy of the procession, to the edification of souls and to the glory of religious pomp.

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At the same time that the officers inflicted these sanctified floggings with their wands free of charge, others, to console those who had been punished, distributed wax and tallow candles, also free of charge.

"Señor Alcalde," said Ibarra, in a low voice, "do they inflict those blows to punish the sinners or merely for pleasure?"

"You are right, Señor Ibarra," replied the Governor General, who had overheard his question. "This spectacle ... barbarous ... astonishing to those who come from other countries, ought to be prohibited."

Although it cannot be explained, the first saint who appeared was San Juan el Baptisto. On seeing him, you would say that the cousin of Our Saviour did not enjoy any great renown among these people. He had slender feet and legs and the face of a hermit, and was carried along on an old wooden litter. In marked contrast to the representation of San Juan, was that of San Francisco, the founder of the great order. The latter was drawn in a car, and, as Tasio said: "What a car! How many lights and glass lanterns! Why, I have never seen you surrounded by so

many illuminations, Giovanni Bernardone! And what music!"

Behind the music came a standard representing the same saint, but with seven wings. It was carried by the brothers of the Third Order, dressed in *guingon* and praying in a loud and mournful voice. The next in the procession was Santa Maria Magdalena, a most beautiful image with an abundant growth of hair, a handkerchief of embroidered *piña* cloth between her ring-covered fingers, and wearing a dress of silk adorned with gold-leaf. Lights and incense surrounded her. The glass tears from her eyes reflected the colors of the colored fire which was burned here and there, giving a fantastic aspect to the procession. Consequently, the sinful saint appeared to be weeping now green, now red and now blue tears. The people did not begin to burn these colored lights till San Francisco was passing; San Juan el Baptisto did not enjoy this honor, passing by quickly, ashamed perhaps to go dressed in skins among so many saints covered with gold and precious jewels.

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"There goes our saint!" cried the daughter of the *gobernadorcillo* to her visitors. "I loaned her my rings, but I did it to get to Heaven."

Those carrying the illuminations stopped near the platform to hear the *loa*. The saints did the same. They and their carriers wanted to hear the verses. Those who carried San Juan, tired of waiting, squatted down in the characteristic Filipino manner, and found it convenient to leave their burden on the ground.

"You'll get into trouble," objected one.

"*Jesús!* In the sacristy, they leave him in a corner among spider-webs...."

After Magdalena came the women. They differed from the men in arrangement. Instead of the children, the old women came first and finally the unmarried women. Behind these came the car of the Virgin, and behind that, the curate under his canopy. Father Dámaso gave the following reason for putting the young women next to the Virgin's car: "The Virgin likes young women, but not old ones." Of course, this explanation caused many of the older women to make wry faces, but that did not change the taste of the Virgin.

San Diego followed Magdalena, but he did not seem to rejoice over the fact, for he was as precise in his behavior as on the morning when he followed along behind San Francisco. Six brothers of the Third Order drew the car. San Diego stopped before the platform and awaited for the people to salute him.

But it was necessary to await the car which contained the image of the Virgin. Preceding this car were some people dressed in a fantastic manner which made children cry and babies scream. In the midst of that dark mass of habits, hoods and girdles, to the sound of that monotonous and nasal prayer, one could see, like white jessamine, like fresh pansies among old rags, twelve young lassies dressed in white, crowned with flowers, with hair curled and eyes bright as the necklaces they wore. Seizing hold of two wide blue bands which were tied to the car of the Virgin, they drew it along, reminding one of doves drawing the car of Spring.

And now when the images were all attentive, when this child and that had been slapped sufficiently to make him listen to the verses, when everybody had his eyes fixed on the half open curtain, at last, an *aaaah!* of admiration escaped from the lips of all.

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And the sight merited it. A young child appeared with wings, riding boots, a cordon over its shoulder, a belt and a plumed hat.

"The Señor Alcalde!" cried some one, but the young prodigy recited a poem in such a manner that the *Alcalde* was not offended at the comparison.

The procession then continued. San Juan followed out his bitter career.

As the Virgin passed before the house of Captain Tiago, a heavenly song greeted her like the words of an archangel. It was a sweet, melodious, supplicating voice, weeping the *Ave Maria* of Gounod. The music of the procession was silenced, the praying ceased, and Father Salví himself stopped. The voice trembled and brought tears to the cheeks of those who heard it. That voice expressed more than a salutation, a prayer, or a plaint.

From the window, where he was viewing the procession, Ibarra heard the voice, and melancholy took possession of his heart. He understood what that soul was suffering and what was expressed in that song. He was afraid to think of the cause of that grief.

The Governor General found him pensive and sad.

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Chapter XXI.

Doña Consolacion.

Why were the windows in the *alferez's* house closed? Where was the masculine face and the flannel shirt of the Medusa or Muse of the Civil Guard while the procession was passing? Could she have understood how unpleasant was the sight of the swelling veins of her forehead, filled, it seemed, not with blood but with vinegar and bile; of her large cigar, that worthy ornament of her red lips; and of her envious look; could she have understood all of that, and, giving way to a generous impulse, have refrained from disturbing the gayety of the crowd by her sinister apparition?

Alas! Her generous impulses lived only in the golden age.

Her house was sad because other people were merry, as Sinang put it. There neither lanterns nor flags could be seen. In fact, if the sentry were not walking up and down in front of the gate, you would have said that the house was unoccupied.

A feeble light illumined the disarranged *sala*, and made transparent the oyster-shell windows filled with spider-webs and covered with dust. The Señora, according to her custom, her hands folded, sat in a wide arm-chair. She was dressed the same as every day, that is to say, outrageously out of taste. In detail, she had a handkerchief tied around her head, while short, slender locks of tangled hair hung down on either side; a blue flannel shirt over another shirt which should have been white; and a faded-out skirt which moulded itself to her slender thighs as she sat with her legs crossed and nervously wiggled her foot. From her mouth, came big puffs of smoke, which she fastidiously blew up in the space toward which she looked when her eyes were open.

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That morning the Señora had not heard mass, not because she had not cared to hear it, for on the contrary she wanted to show herself to the multitude and to hear the sermon, but because her husband had not permitted her to do so. As was usually the case, his prohibition was accompanied by two or three insults, oaths and threats of kicking. The *alferez* understood that his "female" dressed herself in a ridiculous manner, and that it was not fitting to expose her to the eyes of the people from the capital nor even the country districts.

But she did not understand it that way. She knew that she was beautiful, attractive, that she had the manners of a queen and that she dressed much better and more gorgeously than Maria Clara herself, though to be sure the latter wore a *tapis* over her skirt while she wore only the skirt. The *alferez* had to say to her: "Oh, shut your mouth or I'll kick you till you do!"

Doña Consolacion did not care to be kicked, but she planned revenge.

The dark face of the Señora never had inspired confidence in anybody, not even when she painted it. That morning she was exceptionally uneasy, and as she walked from one end of the *sala* to the other, in silence and as if meditating something terrible, her eyes shone like those of a serpent about to be crushed. Her look was cold, luminous, and penetrating and had something vicious, loathsome and cruel in it.

The slightest defect in anything, the most insignificant or unusual noise brought forth an obscene and infamous expression; but no one responded. To offer an excuse was a crime.

So the day passed. Encountering no obstacle in her way—her husband had been invited out—she became saturated with bile.

Everything around bent itself before her. She met no resistance, there was nothing upon which she could discharge the vials of her wrath. Soldiers and servants crawled before her.

That she might not hear the rejoicing going on outside, she ordered the windows to be closed, and charged the sentry not to permit any one to enter. She tied a handkerchief around her head to prevent it from bursting; and, in spite of the fact that the sun was still shining brightly, she ordered the lamps lighted.

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A madwoman who had been detained for disturbing the public peace was taken to the barracks. The *alferez* was not there at the time and the unhappy woman had to

pass the night seated on a bench. The following day the *alferez* returned. Fearing lest the unhappy woman should become the butt of the crowd during the *fiesta*, he ordered the soldiers who were guarding her to treat her with pity and give her something to eat. Thus the demented woman passed two days.

Whether the proximity to Captain Tiago's house made it possible for the sad song of Maria Clara to reach her ears, whether other strains of music awoke in her memories of old songs, or whether there was some other cause for it, at any rate, the madwoman began that night to sing with a sweet and melancholy voice the songs of her youth. The soldiers heard her and kept silent. Those songs brought back memories of the old times.

Doña Consolacion also heard it in her sorrow, and became interested in the person who was singing.

"Tell her to come upstairs at once!" she ordered, after some seconds of meditation. Something like a smile passed over her dry lips.

They brought the woman and she presented herself without any discomposure, and without manifesting either fear or surprise.

"Orderly, tell this woman in Tagalog to sing!" said the *alfereza*. "She don't understand me; she does not know Spanish."

The demented woman understood the orderly and sang the song "Night."

Doña Consolacion listened to the beginning with a mocking smile which disappeared gradually from her lips. She became attentive, then more serious and pensive. The woman's voice, the sentiment of the verses and the song itself impressed her. That dry and burning heart was perhaps softened. She understood the song well: "Sadness, cold, and dampness, wrapped in the mantle of Night descend from the sky," as the folk song puts it. It seemed that they were also descending upon her heart. "The withered flower which during the day has paraded its dress, desirous of applause and full of vanity, at nightfall repenting, makes an effort to raise its faded petals to the sky, and begs for a little shade in which to hide itself, so as to die without the mockery of the light which saw it in its pomp, to die without the vanity of its pride being seen, and begging for a drop of dew, to weep over it. The night bird, leaving its solitary retreat in the hollow of the old tree, disturbs the melancholy of the forests...."

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"No, no! Do not sing!" exclaimed the *alfereza* in perfect Tagalog and raising to her feet somewhat agitated. "Don't sing! Those verses hurt me!"

The demented woman stopped. The orderly muttered "Bah!" and exclaimed "She knows how to *patá* Tagalog!" and stood looking at the señora full of surprise.

The Muse understood that she had been caught, and was ashamed. As her nature was not that of a woman, her shame took the form of rage and hatred. She pointed out the door to the impudent orderly and with a kick closed it behind him. She took several turns about the room, twisting a whip between her nervous hands, and then, stopping suddenly in front of the demented woman, said in Spanish: "Dance!"

The demented one did not move.

"Dance! Dance!" she repeated in a threatening voice.

The poor woman looked at the Señora, her eyes devoid of expression. The *alfereza* raised one arm and then the other, shaking them in a menacing way.

She then leaped up in the air, and jumped around urging the other woman to imitate her. The band in the procession could be heard playing a slow, majestic march, but the Señora, leaping about furiously was keeping time to different music than that the band was playing, that music which resounded within her. A curious look appeared in the madwoman's eyes, and a weak smile moved her pale lips. She liked the Señora's dancing.

The *alfereza* stopped dancing as if ashamed. She raised the whip, that terrible whip made in Ulango and improved by the *alferez* by winding wire around it, that same terrible whip which the *ladrones* and soldiers knew so well.

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"Now it is your turn to dance ... dance!"

And she began to whip lightly the demented woman's bare feet.

The pale face contracted with pain, and she was obliged to defend herself from the blows by her hands.

"Come! Go ahead!" she exclaimed with savage delight, and she passed from *lento* to *allegro-vivace* in the use of her whip.

The unhappy woman screamed and quickly raised her feet.

"You have got to dance, you d——d Indian!" exclaimed the Señora and the whip whizzed and whistled.

The woman let herself sink to the floor and tried to cover her legs with her hands, at the same time looking with wild eyes at her tormentor. Two heavy lashes on her back made her rise again. Now it was no longer a scream; it was a howl which escaped from the unfortunate woman. The thin shirt was torn, the skin broke open and the blood oozed out.

The sight of blood excites a tiger; so, too, the sight of the blood of her victim infuriated Doña Consolacion.

"Dance! dance! Curse you! D——n you! Dance! Cursed be the mother who bore you!" she cried. "Dance, or I'll kill you by whipping you to death!"

Then the *alfereza*, taking the woman with one hand and whipping her with another, began to jump and dance.

The insane woman understood her at last and went on moving her arms regardless of time or tune. A smile of satisfaction contracted the lips of the teacher. It was like the smile of a female Mephistopheles who had succeeded in developing a good pupil; it was full of hatred, contempt, mockery and cruelty; a coarse laugh could not have expressed more.

Absorbed in the enjoyment which the spectacle afforded her, she did not hear her husband coming, until he opened the door with a kick.

The *alferez* appeared, pale and gloomy. He saw what was going on there and looked daggers at his wife. She did not move from her tracks and stood smiling in a cynical way.

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In the gentlest manner possible, he put his hand on the shoulder of the dancing woman and made her stop. The demented woman sighed and slowly sat down on the blood-covered floor.

The silence continued. The *alferez* was breathing heavily. His wife was observing him with her questioning eyes. She seized the whip and in a calm and measured tone asked him: "What's the matter with you? You have not said 'good evening' to me."

The *alferez*, without replying, called the orderly.

"Take this woman," he said, "and have Marta give her another shirt and take care of her. Find her good food, and a good bed.... Let him look out who treats her badly!"

After carefully closing the door, he turned the key in the lock and approached his señora.

"You want me to smash you?" he said, clenching his fists.

"What's the matter with you?" asked she, retreating a step or two.

"What's the matter with me?" he shouted, in a thundering voice, and, giving vent to an oath, showed her a paper covered with scribbling. He continued:

"Didn't you write this letter to the *Alcalde*, saying that I am paid for permitting the gambling, d——n you? I don't know how I can keep from smashing you."

"Go ahead! Try it if you dare!" said she, with a mocking smile. "He who smashes me has got to be more of a man than you!"

He heard the insult, but he saw the whip. He seized one of the plates which were on the table and threw it at her head. The woman, accustomed to these fights, ducked quickly and the plate was shattered to pieces against the wall. A glass, a cup, and a knife shared the same fortune.

"Coward!" she cried. "You dare not come near me!"

And then she spat at him to exasperate him more. The man, blind and howling with rage, threw himself on her, but she, with wonderful rapidity, struck him a few blows across the face with the whip, and quickly escaped. Closing the door of her room with a slam, she locked herself in. Roaring with rage and pain the *alferez*

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followed her, but, coming up against the door, he could do nothing but belch forth a string of blasphemies.

“Cursed be your ancestors, you swine! Open, d——n you! Open that door or I’ll break your skull!” he howled, pounding and kicking the panels.

Doña Consolacion did not reply. A moving of chairs and trunks could be heard, as though some one was trying to raise a barricade of household furniture. The house fairly shook with the oaths and kicks of the husband.

“Don’t you come in! Don’t you come in!” she said, in a bitter voice. “If you show yourself, I’ll shoot you!”

The husband calmed down, little by little, and contented himself with pacing from one end of the *sala* to the other like a wild animal in its cage.

“Go and cool your head!” continued the woman in mockery. She seemed to have concluded her preparations for defense.

“I swear that when I catch you, no one—not even God—will see you again! I’ll smash you so fine.”

“Yes! Now you can say what you wish. You would not let me go to mass. You would not let me fulfill my duty to God!” she said with such sarcasm as she alone knew how to use.

The *alferez* took his helmet, straightened out his clothes, and walked away several paces. But, at the end of several minutes, he returned without making the slightest noise, for he had taken off his boots. The servants, accustomed to these spectacles, paid no attention to them, but the novelty of this move with the boots attracted their notice and they gave each other the wink.

The *alferez* sat down on a chair next to the door and had the patience to wait more than half an hour.

“Have you really gone out or are you there, you he-goat?” asked a voice from time to time, changing the epithets but raising the tone.

Finally, she commenced to take away the furniture from her barricade. He heard the noise and smiled.

“Orderly! Has the señor gone out?” cried Doña Consolacion.

The orderly at a signal from the *alferez*, replied: “Yes, señora, he has gone out!”

He could hear her laugh triumphantly. She drew back the bolt. The husband arose to his feet slowly; the door was opened.

A cry, the noise of a body falling, oaths, howling, swearing, blows, hoarse voices. Who can describe what took place in the darkness of the bedroom?

The orderly, going out to the kitchen, made a very expressive gesture to the cook.

“And now you’ll catch it!” said the latter.

“I? No, sir. The town will, not I. She asked me if he had gone out, not if he had returned.”

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Chapter XXII.

Might and Right.

It was about ten o’clock at night. The last rockets lazily soared into the dark sky, where paper balloons shone like new stars. Some of the fireworks had set fire to houses and were threatening them with destruction; for this reason men could be seen on the ridges of the roofs carrying buckets of water and long bamboo poles with cloths tied on the ends. Their dark shadows seemed descended from ethereal space to be present at the rejoicings of human beings. An enormous number of wheels had been burned, also castles, bulls, *caraboas* and other pieces of fireworks, and finally a great volcano, which surpassed in beauty and grandeur anything that the inhabitants of San Diego had ever seen.

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Now the people turned in one great crowd toward the plaza to attend the last theatrical performance. Here and there could be seen the colored Bengal lights, fantastically illuminating groups of merry people. The small boys were making use of their torches to search for unexploded firecrackers in the grass, or, in fact, for anything else that might be of use to them. But the music was the signal and all abandoned the lawn for the theatre.

The large platform was splendidly illuminated. Thousands of lights surrounded the pillars and hung from the roof, while a number, in pyramid-shaped groups, were arranged on the floor of the stage. An employee attended to these and whenever he would come forward to regulate them, the public would whistle at him and shout: "There he is! There he is now!"

In front of the stage, the orchestra tuned its instruments, and behind the musicians sat the principal people of the town. Spaniards and rich visitors were occupying the reserved chairs. The public, the mass of people without titles or rank, filled the rest of the plaza. Some carried with them benches, not so much for seats as to remedy their lack of stature. When they stood upon them, rude protests were made on the part of those without benches or things to stand on. Then they would get down immediately, but soon mount up on their pedestals again as if nothing had happened.

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Comings and goings, cries, exclamations, laughter, squibs that had been slow in going off, and firecrackers increased the tumult. Here, a foot broke through a bench, and some one fell to the floor, while the crowd laughed and made a show of him who had come so far to see a show. There, they fought and disputed over positions, and, a little farther on, the noise of breaking bottles and glasses could be heard: it was Andeng. She was carrying drinks and refreshments on a tray which she was balancing with both hands, but she had met her lover and he tried to take advantage of her helplessness by tickling....

The *teniente mayor* presided at the production since the *gobernadorcillo* was fonder of *monte*.

Maria Clara and her friends had arrived, and Don Filipo received them, and accompanied them to their seats. Behind came the curate with another Franciscan and some Spaniards. With the curate were some other people who make it their business to escort the friars.

"May God reward them in another life," said the old man, referring to them as he walked away from Maria Clara's party.

The performance began with Chananay and Marianito in *Crispinoé la Comare*. Everybody had eyes and ears intent upon the stage, except one, Father Salví. He seemed to have come to the theatre for no other purpose than to watch Maria Clara, whose sadness gave to her beauty an air so ideal and interesting that everybody looked upon her with rapture. But the Franciscan's eyes, deeply hidden in their hollow orbits, spoke no words of rapture. In that sombre look one could read something desperately sad. With such eyes Cain might have contemplated from afar the Paradise whose delights his mother had pictured to him.

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The act was just ending when Ibarra arrived. His presence occasioned a buzz of conversation. The attention of everybody was fixed on him and on the curate.

But the young man did not seem to be aware of it, for he greeted Maria Clara and her friends with naturalness and sat down at their side. The only one who spoke was Sinang.

"Did you see the volcano when they touched it off?" she asked.

"No, my little friend. I had to accompany the Governor General."

"Well, that is too bad! The curate came with us and he was telling us stories about condemned people. What do you think? Doesn't he do it to make us afraid so that we cannot enjoy ourselves? How does it appear to you?"

The curate arose and approached Don Filipo, with whom he seemed to be having a lively discussion. He was speaking with animation and Don Filipo replying with moderation and in a low voice.

"I am sorry that I cannot please Your Reverence," said the latter. "Señor Ibarra is one of the heaviest tax-payers and has a right to sit here as long as he does not disturb the public order."

"But is not scandalizing good Christians disturbing the public order? You let a wolf into the flock. You will be held responsible for this before God and before the authorities of the town."

"I always hold myself responsible for acts which emanate from my own will, Father," replied Don Filipo, slightly inclining his head. "But my little authority does not give me power to meddle in religious affairs. Those who wish to avoid contact with him do not have to speak to him. Señor Ibarra does not force himself on any one."

"But he affords danger. He who loves danger perishes in it."

"I don't see any danger, Father. The *Alcalde* and the Governor General, my superiors, have been talking with him all the afternoon, and it is not for me to give them a lesson."

"If you don't put him out of here, we will leave."

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"I am very, very sorry, but I cannot put any one out of here."

The curate repented having said what he did, but now there was no alternative. He made a signal to his companion, who laboriously rose to his feet and both went out. The persons attached to the friars imitated the priests, not, however, without first glancing with hatred at Ibarra.

Murmurs and whispers increased. Then various persons approached and saluted the young man and said:

"We are with you. Take no notice of them."

"Who are *'them?'*" he asked with surprise.

"Those who have gone out in order to avoid contact with you."

"To avoid contact with me? Contact with me?"

"Yes, they say that you are excommunicated."

Ibarra, surprised, did not know what to say and looked around him. He saw Maria Clara, who was hiding her face behind her fan.

"But is it possible?" he exclaimed at last. "Are we still in the darkness of the Middle Ages? So that—"

And turning to the young women and changing his tone, he said:

"Excuse me; I have forgotten an appointment. I will return to accompany you home."

"Stay!" said Sinang. "Yeyeng is going to dance in the 'La Calandria.' She dances divinely."

"I cannot, my little friend, but I will certainly return."

The murmurs increased.

While Yeyeng, dressed in the style of the lower class of Madrid, was coming on the stage with the remark: "*Da Usté su permiso?*" (Do you give your permission?) and as Carvajal was replying to her "*Pase usté adelante*" (Pass forward), two soldiers of the Civil Guard approached Don Filipo, asking him to suspend the performance.

"And what for?" asked he, surprised at the request.

"Because the *alferez* and his Señora have been fighting and they cannot sleep."

"You tell the *alferez* that we have permission from the *Alcalde*, and that no one in the town has any authority over him, not even the *gobernadorcillo*, who is my *on-ly su-per-ior*."

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"Well, you will have to suspend the performance," repeated the soldiers.

Don Filipo turned his back to them. The guards marched off.

In order not to disturb the general tranquillity, Don Filipo said not a word about the matter to any one.

After a piece of light opera, which was heartily applauded, the Prince Villardo presented himself on the stage, and challenged all the Moros, who had imprisoned his father, to a fight. The hero threatened to cut off all their heads at a single blow and to send them all to the moon. Fortunately for the Moros, who were making ready to fight to the tune of the "Riego Hymn,"¹ a tumult intervened. All of a sudden, the orchestra stopped playing and the musicians made a rush for the stage, throwing their instruments in all directions. The brave Villardo was not

expecting such a move, and, taking them for allies of the Moros he also threw down his sword and shield and began to run. The Moros, seeing this terrible giant fleeing, found it convenient to imitate him. Cries, sighs, imprecations and blasphemies filled the air. The people ran, trampled over each other, the lights were put out, and the glass lamps with their cocoanut oil and little wicks were flying through the air. "*Tulisanes! Tulisanes!*" cried some. "Fire! Fire! *Ladrones!*" cried others. Women and children wept, chairs and spectators were rolled over on the floor in the midst of the confusion, rush and tumult.

"What has happened?"

Two Civil Guards with sticks in hand had gone after the musicians in order to put an end to the spectacle. The *teniente mayor*, with the *cuaderilleros*,² armed with their old sabers, had managed to arrest the two Civil Guards in spite of their resistance.

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"Take them to the tribunal!" shouted Don Filipino. "Be careful not to let them get away!"

Ibarra had returned and had sought out Maria Clara. The terrified young maidens, trembling and pale, were clinging closely to him. Aunt Isabel was reciting the litanies in Latin.

The crowd having recovered a little from the fright and some one having explained what had caused the rush and tumult, indignation arose in everyone's breast. Stones rained upon the Civil Guards who were being conducted to the tribunal by the *cuaderilleros*. Some one proposed that they burn the barracks of the Civil Guards and that they roast Doña Consolacion and the *alferez* alive.

"That is all that they are good for," cried a woman, rolling up her sleeves and stretching out her arms. "They can disturb the people but they persecute none but honorable men. They do nothing with the *tulisanes* and the gamblers. Look at them! Let us burn the *cuartel*."

Somebody had been wounded in the arm and was asking for confession. A plaintive voice was heard coming from under an upset bench. It was a poor musician. The stage was filled with the players and people of the town and they were all talking at the same time. There was Chananay, dressed in the costume of Leonor in the "*Trovador*," talking in corrupted Spanish with Ratia, who was in a school teacher's costume. There too, was Yeyeng, dressed in a silk wrapper, talking with the Prince Villardo. There too, Balbino and the Moros, trying to console the musicians who were more or less sorry sights. Some Spaniards were walking from one place to another, arguing with every one they met.

But a nucleus for a mob already formed. Don Filipino knew what was their intention and tried to stop them.

"Do not break the peace!" he shouted. "To-morrow we will demand satisfaction: we will have justice. I will take the responsibility for our getting justice."

"No!" some replied. "They did the same thing in Calamba. The same thing was promised, but the *Alcalde* did nothing. We want justice done by our own hands. To the *cuartel!*"

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In vain the *teniente mayor* argued with them. The group that had gathered showed no signs of changing its attitude or purpose. Don Filipino looked about him, in search of help. He saw Ibarra.

"Señor Ibarra, for my sake, as a favor, hold them while I seek some *cuaderilleros*."

"What can I do?" asked the young man, perplexed. But the *teniente mayor* was already in the distance.

Ibarra in turn looked about him, for he knew not whom. Fortunately, he thought he discerned Elias, in the crowd, but not taking an active part in it. Ibarra ran up to him, seized his arm and said to him in Spanish:

"For heaven's sake! Do something, if you can! I cannot do anything."

The pilot must have understood, for he lost himself in the mob.

Lively discussions were heard mingled with strong interjections. Soon the mob began to disperse, each one of the participants becoming less hostile. And it was time for them to do so, for the *cuaderilleros* were coming to the scene with fixed bayonets.

In the meantime, what was the curate doing?

Father Salví had not gone to bed. Standing on foot, immovable and leaning his face against the shutter, he was looking toward the plaza and, from time to time, a suppressed sigh escaped his breast. If the light of his lamp had not been so dim, perhaps one might have seen that his eyes were filling with tears. Thus he stood for almost an hour.

The tumult in the plaza roused him from this state. Full of surprise, he followed with his eyes the people as they rushed to and fro in confusion. Their voices and cries he could vaguely hear even at that distance. One of the servants came running in breathlessly and informed him what was going on.

A thought entered his mind. Amid confusion and tumult libertines take advantage of the fright and the weakness of woman. All flee to save themselves; nobody thinks of anyone else; the women faint and their cries are not heard; they fall; are trampled over; fear and fright overcome modesty, and under cover of darkness.... He fancied he could see Ibarra carrying Maria Clara fainting in his arms, and then disappearing in the darkness.

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With leaps and bounds, he went down the stairs without hat, or cane, and, almost like a crazy person, turned toward the plaza.

There he found some Spaniards reproving the soldiers. He looked toward the seats which Maria Clara and her friends had been occupying, and saw that they were vacant.

"Father curate! Father curate!" shouted the Spaniards to him, but he took no notice and ran on in the direction of the house of Captain Tiago. There he recovered his breath. He saw through the transparent shade, a shadow—that adorable shadow, so graceful and delicate in its contour—that of Maria Clara. He could also see another shadow, that of her aunt carrying cups and glasses.

"Well!" he muttered to himself. "It seems that she has only fallen ill."

Aunt Isabel afterward closed the shell windows and the graceful shadow could no longer be seen.

The curate walked away from there without seeing the crowd. He was looking at the bust of a beautiful maiden which he had before his eyes, a maiden sleeping and breathing sweetly. Her eyelids were shaded by long lashes, which formed graceful curves like those on Rafael's virgins. Her small mouth was smiling, and her whole countenance seemed to breathe virginity, purity and innocence. That sweet face of hers on the background of the white draperies of the bed was a vision like the head of a cherubim among the clouds. His impassioned imagination went on and pictured to him.... Who can describe all that a burning brain can conceive?

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1 A popular Spanish song handed down from the time of Riego's uprising in Spain.

2 Volunteer police.

Chapter XXIII.

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Two Visitors.

Ibarra found his mind in such a state that it was impossible for him to sleep. So, in order to divert himself and to drive away the gloomy idea which distracted his mind, he began work in his solitary laboratory. Morning came upon him, still at work making mixtures and compounds to the action of which he submitted pieces of cane and other substances, and afterward enclosed them in numbered and sealed flasks.

A servant entered, announcing the arrival of a peasant.

"Let him enter!" said he, without even turning to look.

Elias entered and remained standing in silence.

"Ah! is it you?" Ibarra exclaimed in Tagalog on recognizing him. "Excuse me if I have kept you waiting. I was not aware of your presence. I was making an important experiment."

"I do not wish to disturb you!" replied the young pilot. "I have come in the first place, to ask you if you want anything from the province of Batangas, whither I am

going now; and, in the second place, to give you some bad news.”

Ibarra looked inquiringly at the pilot.

“The daughter of Captain Tiago is ill,” added Elias quietly, “but the illness is not serious.”

“I had already feared it,” responded Ibarra. “Do you know what the illness is?”

“A fever. Now, if you have nothing to order——”

“Thanks, my friend. I wish you a good journey, but before you go, permit me to ask you a question. If it is indiscreet, do not answer me.”

Elias bowed.

“How were you able to quiet the mob last night?” asked Ibarra, fixing his eyes on him.

“In a very simple way,” replied Elias, with entire frankness. “At the head of it were two brothers whose father died from the effects of a whipping at the hands of the Civil Guard. One day I had the fortune to save them from the same hands into which their father fell, and for this both are under obligations to me. Last night I went to them, and requested them to dissuade the others from their purpose.”

“And those two brothers whose father died by being whipped to death?”

“They will end their lives in the same way,” replied Elias in a low voice. “When adversity has marked itself once on a family, all the members have to perish. When the lightning strikes a tree, it reduces it all to ashes.”

And Elias, seeing that Ibarra was silent, took his leave.

The latter on finding himself alone, lost the serenity of countenance which he had preserved in the presence of the pilot, and grief manifested itself in his face.

“I—I have made her suffer,” he muttered.

He quickly dressed himself and descended the stairs.

A little man, dressed in mourning, with a large scar on his left cheek, meekly saluted him, stopping him on his way.

“What do you wish?” Ibarra asked him.

“Señor, my name is Lucas. I am the brother of the man who was killed yesterday during the ceremony when the stone was being laid.”

“Ah! You have my sympathy—and, well?”

“Señor, I wish to know how much you are going to pay my brother’s family.”

“How much I am going to pay?” repeated the young man without being able to conceal a bored expression. “We will talk that over. Come back this afternoon, for I am busy to-day.”

“Only tell me how much you are going to pay,” insisted Lucas.

“I have told you that we would talk about that some other time. I’m too busy to-day,” said Ibarra, impatiently.

“You haven’t time now, señor?” asked Lucas with bitterness and putting himself in front of the young man. “You do not have time to occupy yourself about the dead?”

“Come this afternoon, my good fellow!” repeated Ibarra, restraining himself. “To-day I have to go and see a sick person.”

“Ah! and you forget the dead for a sick person? Do you think that because we are poor——”

Ibarra looked at him and cut off what he was saying.

“Don’t try my patience!” said he, and went on his way. Lucas stood looking at him, with a smile on his face, full of hatred.

“You do not know that you are a grandson of the man who exposed my father to the sun!” he muttered between his teeth. “You have the very same blood in your veins!”

And, changing his tone he added:

“But if you pay well, we are friends.”

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Chapter XXIV.

Episode in Espadaña's Life.

The festival was over. The citizens found, just as every year, that their treasury was poorer, that they had worked, perspired, and stayed up nights without enjoying themselves, without acquiring new friends, and in a word, had paid dearly for the noise and their headaches. But it did not matter. The next year they would do the same thing, and the same for the coming century, just as had always been the custom to the present time.

Enough sadness reigned in Captain Tiago's house. All the windows were closed; the people scarcely made a noise, and no one dared to speak except in the kitchen. Maria Clara, the soul of the house, lay sick in her bed.

“What do you think, Isabel? Shall I make a donation to the cross of Tunasan or to the cross of Matahong?” asked the solicitous father in a low voice. “The cross of Tunasan grows, but that of Matahong sweats. Which do you think is the most miraculous?”

Isabel thought for a moment, moved her head and murmured: “To grow—to grow is more miraculous than to sweat. We all sweat, but we do not all grow.”

“That is true, yes, Isabel, but bear in mind that for wood to sweat when it is made into the leg of a chair is no small miracle. Well, the best thing to do is to give alms to both crosses, so that neither will feel resentful, and Maria Clara will recover more quickly. Are the rooms in good order? You know that a new señor comes with the doctors, a relative of Father Dámaso by marriage. It is necessary that nothing be lacking.”

The two cousins, Sinang and Victoria, were at the other end of the dining-room. They had come to keep company with the sick Maria. Andeng was helping them clean up a tea service in order to serve tea.

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“Do you know Doctor Espadaña?” asked Maria Clara's foster sister, directing her question to Victoria.

“No!” replied the latter. “The only thing that I know about him is that he charges very dearly, according to Captain Tiago.”

“Then he ought to be very good,” said Andeng. “The one who performed the operation on the stomach of Doña Marta charged a big price, but he was very wise.”

“You goose!” exclaimed Sinang. “Not all who charge high prices are wise. Look at Doctor Guevara. He did not know how to aid a woman in childbirth, but after cutting off the child's head, he collected one hundred *pesos* from the widower. What he did know was how to charge.”

“What do you know about it?” her cousin asked, giving her a jab with her elbow.

“Why shouldn't I know about it? The husband, who is a wood-sawyer, after losing his wife, had to lose his house also, for the *Alcalde* was a friend of the doctor's and made him pay. Why shouldn't I know? My father loaned him money so that he could make a trip to Santa Cruz.”

A coach stopped before the house and cut off all the conversation.

Captain Tiago, followed by Aunt Isabel, ran downstairs to receive the new arrivals. They were the doctor, Don Tiburcio de Espadaña, his wife, Doctora Doña Victorina de los Reyes *de* de Espadaña; and a young Spaniard. The latter had a sympathetic face and a pleasing appearance.

The *doctora* wore a silk gown, embroidered with flowers, and on her hat, a large parrot half crushed among trimmings of red and blue ribbons. The dust of the road had mingled with the rice powder on her cheeks, strongly accentuating her wrinkles. She was leaning on the arm of her lame husband.

"I have the pleasure to present to you our cousin, Don Alfonso Linares de Espadaña," said Doña Victorina, pointing toward the young man. "The gentleman is a god-son of a relative of Father Dámaso, and is private secretary to all the ministers."

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The young man bowed gracefully. Captain Tiago almost kissed his hand.

Doña Victorina was a woman of about forty-five summers, which, according to her arithmetical calculations, was equivalent to thirty-two springs. She had been pretty in her youth, but, raging over her own beauty, she had looked with disdain on many Filipino adorers, for her aspirations were for the other race. She had not cared to entrust her little white hand to anybody, but this not on account of lack of confidence on her part, for she had entrusted rings and jewels of inestimable value to various foreign adventurers.

Six months before the time of the happenings of which we are writing, she saw her beautiful dream realized, that dream of her whole life, on account of which she had disdained all manner of flattery and even the promises of love, which had been cooed into her ears, or sung in serenades by Captain Tiago. Late, it is true, she had realized her dream; but she knew well the proverb—"Better late than never," and consoled herself by repeating it again and again. "There is no complete happiness on this earth," was her other favorite proverb, but neither of these ever passed her lips in the presence of other people.

Doña Victorina, after passing her first, second, third and fourth youth in fishing in the sea of men for the object of her dreams, had at last to content herself with what fortune cared to give her. The poor little woman, if she, instead of having passed thirty-two springs, had not passed more than thirty-one—the difference according to her arithmetic was very great—would have thrown back the prize which Destiny offered her, and preferred to wait for another more in conformity with her tastes. But, as the man proposed and necessity disposed it so, for she needed a husband very badly, she was compelled to content herself with a poor man, who had been driven by necessity to leave the Province of Estremadura in Spain. He, after wandering about the world for six or seven months, a modern Ulysses, found at last in the island of Luzon, hospitality, money, and a faded Calypso, his better half—but alas! a bitter half. He was known as the unhappy Tiburcio Espadaña, and, although he was thirty-five years old and seemed even older, he was, however, younger than Doña Victorina, who was only thirty-two.

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He had come to the Philippines in the capacity of clerk in the custom house, but after all the sea-sickness of the voyage and after fracturing a leg on the way, he had the bad luck to receive his discharge fifteen days after his arrival. He was left without a single *cuarto*.

Distrusting the sea, he did not wish to return to Spain without having made a fortune. So he decided to devote himself to something. Spanish pride did not permit him to do any manual labor. The poor man would have worked with pleasure to have earned an honorable living, but the prestige of the Spaniard did not permit this, nor did that prestige provide him with the necessities of life.

At first he lived at the expense of some of his countrymen, but, as Tiburcio had some self-respect, the bread was sour to him, and instead of getting fat he grew thin. As he had neither knowledge of any science, money nor recommendations, his countrymen, in order to get rid of him, advised him to go to some of the provinces and pass himself off as a Doctor of Medicine. At first, he did not like the idea, and opposed the plan, for although he had been a servant in the San Carlos Hospital, he had not learned anything about the science of healing, his duty having been to dust off the benches and light the fires, and, even in this work, he had served only a short time. But as necessity was pressing him hard, and as his friends pointed out the vanity of his scruples, he took their advice, went into the provinces and began to visit the sick, charging as much for his services as his conscience permitted. Later on he began to charge dearly and to put a high price on his visits. On this account, he was at once taken to be a great doctor and would probably have made his fortune, had not the attention of the Protective Medical Society of Manila, been called to his exorbitant charges and to his harmful competition.

Private citizens and professors interceded in his behalf. "Man!" said the zealous Doctor C. in speaking of him. "Let him make his little money. Let him make his little six or seven thousand *pesos*. He will be able to return to his native land then and live in peace. What does it matter to you? Let him deceive the unwary natives. Then they may become smarter. He is a poor, unhappy fellow. Do not take the bread from his mouth. Be a good Spaniard!"

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Doctor C. was a good Spaniard and he winked at the matter. But when the facts reached the ears of the people, they began to lose confidence in him, and little by

little Don Tiburcio Espadaña lost his clientage, and found himself almost obliged to beg for bread day by day. Then it was that he learned from a friend of his, who was also a friend of Doña Victorina about the position of that woman, and about her patriotism and good heart. Don Tiburcio saw in her a bit of blue sky and asked to be presented.

Doña Victorina and Don Tiburcio met. *Tarde venientibus ossa*, he would have exclaimed if he had known Latin. She was no longer passable, she was past. Her abundant hair had been reduced to a wad about the size of an onion top, as the servants were wont to describe it. Her face was full of wrinkles and her teeth had begun to loosen. Her eyes had also suffered, and considerably, too. She had to squint frequently when she cared to look off at a certain distance. Her character was the only thing that had remained unchanged.

At the end of half an hour's conversation, they came to an understanding and accepted each other. She would have preferred a Spaniard less lame, less of a stammerer, less bald, one with more teeth, one of more rank and social standing, or *categoría*, as she called it. But this class of Spaniards never came to ask her hand. She had heard, too, more than once that "opportunity is bald," and she honestly believed that Don Tiburcio was that very opportunity, for on account of his dark days he had prematurely lost his hair. What woman is not prudent at thirty-two?

Don Tiburcio, for his part, felt a vague melancholy when he thought of his honeymoon. He smiled with resignation especially when he called the phantom of hunger to his aid. He had never had ambition or pretensions. His tastes were simple, his thoughts limited; but his heart, untouched till then, had dreamed of a very different divinity. In his youth when, tired by his day's labor, after a frugal meal, he lay down on a poor bed, he dreamed of a smiling, affectionate image. Afterward, when his sorrows and privations increased, the years passed and his poetical dreams were not fulfilled, he thought merely of a good woman, a willing hand, a worker, who might afford him a small dowry, console him when tired from labor, and quarrel with him from time to time. Yes, he was thinking of the quarrels as a happiness! But when, obliged to wander from country to country, in search no longer of a fortune, but of some commodity to sustain his life for the remainder of his days; when, deluded by the accounts of his countrymen who came from beyond the seas, he embarked for the Philippines—then the vision of a housekeeper gave way to an image of an arrogant *mestiza*, a beautiful native with large black eyes, draped in silks and transparent garments, loaded with diamonds and gold, offering him her love and her carriages.

He arrived in the Philippines and believed that he was about to realize his dream, for the young women who, in silver-plated carriages, frequented the Luneta and the Malecon, Manila's popular and fashionable drives, looked at him with a certain curiosity. Later, when this curiosity on their part had ceased, the *mestiza* disappeared from his dreams, and with great labor he formed in his mind a picture of a widow, but an agreeable widow. So it was that when he saw only part of his dream taking on real form, he became sad. But he was somewhat of a philosopher and said to himself: "That was a dream, but in the world one does not live in dreams." Thus he settled all his doubts; she wasted a lot of rice powder on her cheeks. Pshaw! When they were once married he would make her stop that easily enough; she had many wrinkles in her face, but his coat had more bare spots and patches; she was old, pretentious, and imperious, but hunger was more imperious, and still more pretentious; and then, too, he had a sweet disposition, and, who could tell?—love modifies character; she spoke Spanish very badly, but he himself did not speak it well; at least, the head of the Customs department had so notified him in his discharge from his position, and besides, what did it matter? What if she was old and ridiculous? He was lame, toothless and bald. When some friend jested with him, he would respond: "Give me bread and call me a fool."

Don Tiburcio was what is vulgarly called a man who would not harm a fly. He was modest and incapable of conceiving an evil thought. He would have made a good missionary had he lived in olden times. His stay in the country had not given him that conviction of his own superiority, of his own worth, and of his high importance, which the larger part of his countrymen acquire in a few weeks in the Philippines. His heart had never been able to conceive hatred for anybody or anything. He had not yet been able to find a revolutionist. He only looked upon the people as unhappy beings whom it was fitting for him to deprive of a little of their wealth in order to prevent himself becoming even more unhappy than they. When they tried to make a case against him for passing as a doctor without a proper license, he did not resent it, he did not complain. He saw the justice of the case, and only replied: "But it is necessary to live!"

So they were married and went to Santa Aña to pass their honeymoon. But on the night of the wedding Doña Victorina had a bad attack of indigestion. Don Tiburcio gave thanks to God and showed solicitude and care. On the second night, however,

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he conducted himself like an honorable man, but on the day following, when he looked in the mirror at his bare gums, he smiled with melancholy: he had grown ten years older at least.

Doña Victorina, charmed with her husband, had a good set of front teeth made for him, and had the best tailors in the city dress and equip him. She ordered carriages and *calesas*, sent to Batangas and Albay provinces for the finest spans of horses, and even obliged him to make two entries in the coming horse races.

In the meantime, while she was transforming her husband, she did not forget her own person. She laid aside the silk *saya* or Filipino skirt and *piña* cloth bodice, for a dress of European style. She substituted false curls in front for the simple hair dress of the Filipinos. Her dresses, which fitted her "divinely bad," disturbed the peace and tranquillity of the entire neighborhood.

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The husband never went out of the house afoot—she did not want people to see that he was lame. He always took her for drives through the places most deserted, much to her pain, for she wanted to display her husband on the drives most frequented by the public. But out of respect for their honeymoon, she kept silent.

The last quarter of the honeymoon had just begun when he wanted to stop her from using rice powder on her cheeks, saying to her that it was false and not natural. Doña Victorina frowned and looked squarely at his front set of teeth. He at once became silent, and she learned his weakness.

She soon got the idea that she was to become a mother and made the following announcement to all her friends: "Next month, we, I and de Espadaña are going to the *Peñinsula*.¹ I don't want to have my son born here and have them call him a revolutionist."

She added a *de* to her husband's name. The *de* did not cost anything and gave *categoría* to the name. When she signed herself, she wrote Victorina de los Reyes de de Espadaña. That *de* de Espadaña was her mania. Neither the lithographer who printed her cards, nor her husband, could get the idea out of her head.

"If I do not put more than one *de* in the name people will think that I haven't it, fool!" said she to her husband.

She was talking continually about her preparations for the voyage to Spain. She learned by memory the names of the points where the steamers called, and it was a pleasure to hear her talk—"I am going to see the *sismus* of the Suez Canal. De Espadaña thinks that it is the most beautiful, and De Espadaña has seen the whole world."—"I will probably never return to this land of savages."—"I was not born to live here. Aden or Port Said would be more suitable for me. I have always thought so since I was a child." Doña Victorina, in her geography, divided the world into two parts, the Philippines and Spain. In this she differed from the lower class of people in Madrid for they divide it into Spain and America, or Spain and China, America and China being merely different names for the same country.

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The husband knew that some of these things were barbarisms, but he kept silent so that she would not mock him and twit him with his stammering. She feigned to be whimsical in order to increase her illusion that she was a mother, and she began to dress herself in colors, adorn herself with flowers and ribbons, and to walk through the Escolta in a wrapper. But oh! what an illusion! Three months passed and the dream vanished. By this time, having no fear that her son would be a revolutionist, she gave up the voyage. She consulted doctors, mid-wives and old women, but all in vain. To the great displeasure of Captain Tiago she made fun of San Pascual Bailon, as she did not care to run to any saint. On account of this a friend of her husband told her:

"Believe me, Señora, you are the only *espíritu fuerte* (strong-minded person) in this country."

She smiled without understanding what *espíritu fuerte* meant, but, at night, when it was time to be sleeping, she asked her husband about it.

"Daughter," replied he, "the e—espir—espíritu most fu-fuerte that I know—know about is a—a—ammonia. My fr-fr-friend must have be-been us-using a figure of rhetoric."

From that time on, she was always saying, whenever she could, "I am the only ammonia in this country, speaking rhetorically, as Señor N. de N. who is from the *Peñinsula* and who has much *categoría*, puts it."

Whatever she said had to be done. She had come to dominate her husband completely. On his part, he offered no great resistance, and was converted into a little lap dog for her. If he incommoded her she would not let him go out for a

drive, and when she became really infuriated, she would snatch out his false teeth and leave him a horrible-looking man for one or more days, according to the offense.

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It occurred to her that her husband ought to be a Doctor of Medicine and Surgery, and so she expressed herself to him.

"Daughter! Do you want them to arrest me?" he said, frightened.

"Don't be a fool. Let me arrange it!" she replied. "You are not going to attend any one, but I want them to call you a doctor and me a *doctora*, eh?"

And on the following day Rodoreda, a prominent marble dealer in Manila, received an order for the following engraving on black marble: DR. DE ESPADAÑA, SPECIALIST IN ALL KINDS OF DISEASES.

All of the servants had to give them their new titles, and, in consequence of it all, she increased the number of her curls in front, the layer of rice powder, the ribbons and laces, and looked with more disdain than ever on the poor and less fortunate women of her country, who had less *categoría* than she. Each day she felt herself more dignified and elevated, and, following along this road, in less than a year she would think herself of divine origin.

These sublime thoughts, however, did not prevent her from growing more ridiculous and older each day. Every time that Captain Tiago met her in the street and remembered that he had once made love to her in vain, he would go at once to the church and give a *peso* for a mass as a thank offering for his good luck in not marrying her. In spite of this, Captain Tiago highly respected her husband, on account of his title of "specialist in all kinds of diseases," and he listened with close attention to the few phrases that he managed to stutter out. In fact, it was on account of this title and the fact that the doctor did not attend everybody, that the Captain chose him to attend his daughter.

As to the young man Linares, it is a different story. When she was making ready for her voyage to Spain, Doña Victorina thought of having an administrator from the *Peñínsula* to look after her affairs, for she did not trust Filipinos. Her husband remembered a nephew in Madrid who was studying to become a lawyer, and who was considered the smartest one in his family. They wrote to him, then, sending him in advance money for the passage, and, when the dream was dispelled, the young man was already on his way.

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These are the three persons who had just arrived.

While they were eating their breakfast, Father Salví arrived, and, as the husband and wife had already met the friar, they presented him to the young Linares, with all his titles. The young man blushed.

As was natural they spoke of Maria Clara. The young maiden was resting and sleeping. They talked over the voyage. Doña Victorina showed her verbosity by criticising the customs of the provinces, the *nipa* houses, the bamboo bridges, without forgetting to tell the curate about her friendship with the Commander of the Army, the *Alcalde* so and so, Judge so and so of the Supreme Court, and with the governor of the province, all persons of *categoría*, who had much consideration for her.

"If you had come two days before, Dona Victorina," replied Captain Tiago during a short pause, "you would have met His Excellency, the Governor General. He sat right there."

"What? How's that? Was His Excellency here? And in your house? A lie!"

"I tell you he sat right there. If you had come two days before——"

"Ah! What a shame that little Clara did not fall sick before!" exclaimed she, in real sorrow. And directing herself to Linares: "Do you hear, cousin? His Excellency was here! You see De Espadaña was right when he told you that we were not going to the house of a miserable native. For you should know, Don Santiago, that our cousin was a friend of all the Ministers in Madrid and all the Dukes, and he dined in the house of Count del Campanario (belfry)."

"Duke de la Torre (tower), Victorina," said her husband, correcting her.

"It amounts to the same thing. Do you think you can tell me that——"

"Would I find Father Dámaso in town to-day?" interrupted Linares, turning to Father Salví. "They have told me that he is near here."

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"He is, precisely, and will come here in a little while," replied the curate.

"How glad I am! I have a letter for him," exclaimed the young man. "And if it had not been for this happy chance which brought me here, I would have come expressly to visit him."

"The happy chance—that is, Maria Clara—had, in the meantime awakened."

"De Espadaña!" said Doña Victorina, finishing her breakfast. "Are we going to see little Clara?" And turning to Captain Tiago, "For you only, Don Santiago; for you alone! My husband does not treat anybody except people of *categoría*, and he even refuses some of them! My husband is not like those about here—in Madrid he only visited people of *categoría*."

They passed into the sick room.

The room was almost dark. The windows were shut for fear of a draught, and the little light which illuminated the room came from the two wax candles which were burning in front of an image of the Virgin of Antipolo.

Her head wrapped up in a handkerchief, saturated in cologne water, her body wrapped in wide folds of white sheets which outlined her virginal form, the sick maiden lay on her bed of *kamakon*² among *jusi* and *piña* curtains. Her hair, forming a frame around her oval face, increased her transparent paleness, which was animated only by her large eyes full of sadness. At her side were her two friends and Andeng.

De Espadaña felt of her pulse, examined her tongue, asked some questions, and shaking his head seriously, said:

"Sh-sh-she is si-sick. But we-we-we can cu-cu-cure her."

Doña Victorina looked with pride at those around her.

"A li-lichen in mil-milk in the-the morning; syrup of marsh marsh-mal-mallow, tw-o—two hounds'—hounds' tongue pi-pills," ordered De Espadaña.

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"Take courage, little Clara," said Doña Victorina, approaching her. "We have come to cure you. I am going to present our cousin to you."

Linares was absorbed, contemplating those eloquent eyes which seemed to be seeking some one, and he did not hear Doña Victorina call him.

"Señor Linares," said the curate, calling him out of his ecstasy. "Here comes Father Dámaso."

In fact, Father Dámaso was coming, pale and somewhat sad. On leaving his bed, his first visit was to Maria Clara. He was no longer the Father Dámaso that he had been, so robust and talkative. He now walked along in silence and with unsteady footsteps.

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1 A wrong pronunciation of the Spanish Peninsula meaning Spain.

2 A costly and rich wood like ebony.

Chapter XXV.

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Schemes.

Without paying attention to anybody, Father Dámaso went straight to the sick room and took hold of Maria's hand.

"Maria!" said he, with indescribable tenderness, as tears dropped from his eyes. "Maria, my child, you are not going to die!"

Maria opened her eyes and looked at him with surprise.

None who knew the Franciscan suspected that he ever had such tender thoughts. No one ever supposed that a heart existed under that gross and rude aspect.

Father Dámaso could say no more and left the maiden, weeping like a child. He went out through the room at the head of the stairs, to give free vent to his grief,

on Maria Clara's balcony under her favorite vines.

"How he loves his god-daughter!" thought they all.

Father Salví witnessed the scene, immovable and silent, lightly biting his lips.

When his grief was somewhat soothed, Father Dámaso was introduced by Doña Victorina to the young Linares, who approached the friar with respect.

Father Dámaso gazed at him in silence from head to foot. He took the letter which the young man handed to him and read it apparently without understanding it, for he asked him:

"And who are you?"

"Alfonso Linares, the god-son of your brother-in-law," stammered the young man.

Father Dámaso leaned back and examined the young man again. His face brightened up and he rose to his feet.

"And so you are the god-son of little Charles!" he exclaimed. "Come here and let me embrace you. It was some days ago that I received your letter. So it is you! I did not know you—but that is easily explained, for you were not yet born when I left the country. I never knew you."

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And Father Dámaso stretched out his robust arms to the young man who blushed, either from shame or suffocation. Father Dámaso seemed to have completely forgotten his grief.

After the first moments of effusion had passed, and questions had been asked about Carlicos, as he called little Charles, Father Dámaso asked:

"Well. What does Carlicos want me to do for you?"

"I believe he says something in the letter," stammered Linares again.

"In the letter? Let us see. 'Tis so! And he wants me to get you a job and a wife! Hm! Employment—employment: that is easy. Do you know how to read and write?"

"I have graduated in law from the Central University."

"*Carambas!* So you are a pettifogger? Well, you don't look it—you look more like a young gentleman. But so much the better! But to find you a wife—hm! hm! a wife."

"Father, I am not in a hurry about it," said Linares, confused.

But Father Dámaso began to walk from one end of the room to the other, muttering: "A wife! A wife!"

His face by this time was no longer sad, nor was it cheerful. It expressed the greatest seriousness and he seemed to be meditating. Father Salví surveyed the scene from a distance.

"I did not believe that it could give me such pain," murmured Father Dámaso in a mournful voice. "But of two evils the lesser."

And raising his voice and approaching Linares, he said:

"Come here, my boy! We will speak with Santiago."

Linares turned pale and allowed himself to be led along by the priest, who was deep in thought.

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Then it was Father Salví's turn to walk up and down the room and he did so, meditating, as was his custom.

A voice bidding him good morning stopped his monotonous tread. He raised his head and his eyes met Lucas, who saluted him humbly.

"What do you want?" asked the eyes of the curate.

"Father, I am the brother of the man who was killed on the day of the *fiesta*," replied Lucas, in a tearful tone.

Father Salví stepped back.

"And what of it?" he muttered, in an unintelligible voice.

Lucas made an effort to weep, and dried his eyes with his handkerchief.

"Father," said he, crying, "I have been to Crisostomo's house to ask him for indemnity. At first, he received me with kicks, saying that he would not pay anything, since he had run the risk of being killed through the fault of my dear, unfortunate brother. Yesterday, I went to talk with him again, but he had already left for Manila, leaving me for charity's sake five hundred *pesos* for my poor brother—five hundred *pesos*—ah! Father."

The curate listened to the first part of his story with surprise and attention, but slowly there appeared on his lips a smile—a smile of such contempt and sarcasm at the comedy that was being played, that if Lucas had seen it he would have fled in all haste.

"And what do you want now?" he asked, turning his back to him.

"Alas! Father, for love of God tell me what I ought to do. Father, you have always given good advice."

"Who has told you that? You do not live here."

"But the whole province knows you, Father!"

Father Salví went up to him with his eyes full of anger and, motioning to the street, said to the frightened Lucas:

"Go to your house and give thanks to Don Crisostomo that he has not sent you to jail. Get away from here."

Forgetting his rôle, Lucas muttered:

"Well, I thought——"

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"Out of here!" cried Father Salví, in a nervous tone.

"I want to see Father Dámaso."

"Father Dámaso is busy. Out of here!" ordered the curate, in an imperative tone, again.

Lucas went down the stairs murmuring: "He is another. How poorly he pays! He who pays better..."

The voice of the curate had reached the ears of all in the house, even Father Dámaso, Captain Tiago and Linares.

"An insolent beggar who came to ask alms and doesn't want to work," said Father Salví, taking his hat and cane and starting toward the convent.

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Chapter XXVI.

The Persecuted.

By the dim light which the moon diffused through the thick branches of the trees, a man wandered along the forest trails slowly and cautiously. From time to time, as if to find out where he was, he whistled a particular melody, to which another in the distance responded with the same air. The man listened attentively, and afterward proceeded in the direction of the distant sound.

Finally, passing through the thousand difficulties which a virgin forest offers in the night time, he came to a small clearing. High rocks, crowned with trees, surrounded the place, forming a sort of ruined amphitheatre. Recently cut trees, with their charred trunks and enormous rocks, which Nature had covered with her mantle of green foliage, filled the middle of the open space.

Scarcely had the unknown man arrived, when another figure quickly appeared from behind one of the large rocks, advanced and drew a revolver.

"Who are you?" he asked in Tagalog and, in an imperious voice, as he cocked the hammer of his weapon.

"Is old Pablo among you?" asked the first calmly, without replying to the question or becoming intimidated.

"Do you refer to the Captain? Yes, he is."

"Tell him, then, that Elias is looking for him here," said the man.

"Are you Elias?" asked the other with a certain respect, and approaching him without lowering his revolver. "Then come."

Elias followed him.

They penetrated into a kind of cavern, which was hollowed out in the depths of the earth. The guide, who knew the way, told the pilot when he ought to get down, stoop or crawl. However, it was not long before they came to a *sala* or room in the cave, miserably illuminated by pitch torches, and occupied by twelve or fifteen armed men. The faces of the men were dirty and their clothes ragged; some were sitting down, others lying down, conversing among themselves in a low tone. Leaning his elbows on a stone which served as a table and contemplating thoughtfully the lamp, which was shedding very little light for the amount of smoke it made, sat an old man. His countenance was sad, and his head wrapped in a bloody rag. If we had not known that the place was a cave of *tulisanes*, we would have said, on reading the desperation on the face of the old man, that it was the Tower of Hunger on the eve when Ugolino devoured his sons.

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At the arrival of Elias and the guide, the men were about to arise, but, at a signal from the guide, they were quieted and contented themselves with examining the pilot, who was entirely unarmed.

The old man turned his head slowly and his eyes met the sturdy figure of Elias. The latter, in turn, with his head uncovered, full of sadness and interest, gazed upon the old man.

"Is it you?" asked the old man, his face brightening a little as he recognized the youth.

"How badly off you are!" murmured Elias, in an half-intelligible tone of voice.

The old man bowed in silence, made a sign to the men, who then arose and left, not, however, without first directing glances at the pilot, measuring his stature and muscles.

"Yes!" said the old man to Elias as soon as they found themselves alone. "Six months ago, I gave you refuge in my house. Then, it was I who sympathized with you; now, fortune has changed and it is you who pity me. But sit down, and tell me how you came here."

"Some fifteen days ago they told me of your misfortune," replied the young man slowly, and in a low voice, looking toward the light. "I at once set out on the road and I have been searching for you from mountain to mountain. I have travelled over the greater part of two provinces.

"Rather than spill innocent blood," said Pablo, "I have had to flee. My enemies are afraid to show themselves and shield themselves behind some unhappy fellows who have never done me the slightest injury."

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Then, after a short pause, of which Elias took advantage to read the thoughts in that melancholy countenance, he replied:

"I have come to make a proposition. Having searched in vain for some member of the family which has caused me my misfortunes, I have decided to leave the province where I am living and to emigrate to the north and live there among the heathen and independent tribes. Do you want to leave this life and go with me? I will be your son, since you have lost those whom you had, and I, who have no family, will take you as my father."

The old man shook his head and said:

"At my age, when a person makes a desperate resolution it is because there is no other course open. A man who, like me has passed his youth and the best years of his life working for his own future and for the future of his sons, a man who has been submissive to all the wishes of his superiors, who has discharged conscientiously all his duties, suffered everything in order to live in peace and in tranquillity; when such a man, whose blood has been chilled by Time, renounces all his past and all his future, on the very edge of his grave—when a man does this, it is because he has decided with mature judgment that peace does not exist, and that there is no Supreme Good. What use is there in living a few miserable days in a foreign land? I had two sons, a daughter, a fireside, a fortune. I enjoyed consideration and esteem. Now I am like a tree that has been stripped of its branches; a wandering fugitive, hunted like a wild beast in the forest, and all—

why? Because a man dishonored my daughter, because her brothers wanted to make that man account for his infamous deed, and because that man is placed above all others with a title of Minister of God. But despite it all, I, a father, I, dishonored in my old age, pardoned the injury, for I was indulgent with the passions of youth and the weakness of the flesh, and, as the evil was irreparable, I wanted to save what still remained to me. But the criminal, afraid that vengeance was near at hand, sought the destruction of my sons. What did he do? You do not know? Do you know how they feigned that there had been a robbery in the convent and how one of my sons figured among the accused? The other son they could not include because he was away. Do you know the tortures to which they were submitted? You know them because they are like those in other towns. I saw my son hung by the hair, I heard his cries, I heard him call me, and, coward that I was, and, accustomed to peace, I was not brave enough to kill or be killed. Do you know that the robbery was not proved, that it was seen that it was a calumny, that the curate was transferred to another town and that my son died from the result of his tortures? The other boy, who was still left for me, was not a coward like his father. The executioner was afraid that this son would take revenge for the death of his brother and so, under pretense of his not having a *cedula*,¹ which for the moment had been forgotten, he was imprisoned by the Civil Guard, maltreated, irritated and provoked by force and injuries until he was driven to suicide. And I have survived after such a disgrace. But, if I had not the courage of a father to defend his sons, I have left a heart to take vengeance and I shall be revenged! The discontented are uniting under my command, my enemies increase my camp, and on that day when I consider myself strong enough I will go down into the plain and extinguish in fire both my vengeance and my own existence. And that day will come or there is no God!"

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The old man rose to his feet deeply agitated. With his eyes sparkling like fire and, in a hollow voice, he added, tearing his long hair:

"Curses upon me, curses upon me for having restrained the avenging hand of my sons. I have assassinated them! Had I allowed them to kill the criminal; had I had less faith in the justice of God and of men, I would now have my sons; perhaps they would have been fugitives, but I would have them and they would not have died in torture. I was not born to be a father! For that reason, I haven't them with me now! Curses upon me for not having learned, with all my years, in what age we live! But in blood and fire, and in my own death, I will know how to take vengeance for them!"

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The unfortunate father, in the paroxysm of his grief, had taken off the bandage from his head, opening up a wound which he had on the forehead and from which the blood oozed out.

"I respect your grief," replied Elias, "and I understand your desire for vengeance. I, too, am like you, but, for fear of harming an innocent one, I prefer to forget my misfortunes."

"You can forget them because you are young, and because you have not lost your son, have not lost your last hope! But, I assure you, I will not harm an innocent person. Do you see that wound? I allowed myself to receive that in order not to kill a poor *cuaderillero* who was fulfilling his duty."

"But see!" said Elias, after a moment's silence. "See what frightful destruction you will bring upon our unfortunate country. If you seek revenge by your own hand your enemies will retaliate, not against you, not against those who are armed, but against the people, who are always accused, and then how many more injustices!"

"Let the people learn to defend themselves. Let each learn to defend himself."

"You know that that is impossible. Señor, I have known you in other times when you were happy, then you gave me wise advice. Will you permit me...?"

The old man crossed his arms and seemed to meditate upon what he was going to say.

"Señor," continued Elias, measuring his words well, "I have had the fortune to be of service to a young man, rich, of good heart, noble, and a lover of his country's welfare. They say that this young man has friends in Madrid. I do not know it, but I can positively assure you that he is a friend of the Governor General. What do you say if we make him the bearer of the people's complaints, if we can interest him in the cause of the unhappy?"

The old man shook his head.

"Do you say that he is a rich man? The rich think of nothing but to increase their riches. Pride and pomp blind them, and, since they are generally well off,

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especially if they have powerful friends, none of them ever troubles himself about the unfortunates. I know it all, for I was once rich myself.”

“But the man of whom I am speaking does not seem to be like the others. He is a son who would not allow the memory of his father to be dishonored. He is a young man who thinks about the future—thinks of a good future for his sons, for he may in a short time have a family of his own.”

“Then he is a man who is going to be happy. Our cause is not a cause for happy men.”

“But it is a cause for men of good hearts.”

“That may be,” replied the old man sitting down. “Suppose that he consented to carry our complaints to the Governor General. Suppose that he finds in the court those who will argue for us. Do you think we will get justice?”

“Let us try it before resorting to bloody measures,” replied Elias. “It must seem strange to you that I, another unfortunate, young, robust—that I should propose to you old and weak—peaceful measures. But it is because I have seen so many miseries caused by us similar to those caused by tyrants. The unarmed is the one who suffers.”

“And if we do not accomplish anything?”

“Something will be accomplished, believe me! Not all who govern are unjust. And if we do not accomplish anything, if our voice is not listened to, if the man turns a deaf ear to the grief of his fellow men, then we will put ourselves under your orders.”

The old man, full of enthusiasm, embraced the young man.

“I accept your proposition, Elias. I know that you will keep your word. You come to me and I will help you take vengeance for your father. You will help me to take vengeance for my sons—my sons who were like you!”

“In the meantime, Señor, avoid all violent measures.”

“You can expound the complaints of the people. You certainly know them. When will we know the answer?”

“Within four days send a man to meet me on the beach at San Diego and I will tell him what the person in whom I have hope says. If he accepts, we will get justice, and if he does not accept, I will be the first to fall in the fight which we will begin.”

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“Elias will not die. Elias will be chief, when Captain Pablo falls, satisfied in his revenge,” said the old man.

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¹ Certificate of identification required of all Filipinos under Spanish domination.

Chapter XXVII.

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The Cock Fight.

In order to keep the Sabbath holy in the Philippines the people generally go to the cock fight, just as in Spain they go to the bull fight. Cock fighting, a passion introduced into the country and exploited for a century, is one of the vices of the people, more deeply rooted than the opium vice among the Chinese. The poor go there to risk what little they have, desirous of making money without working; the rich go there to amuse themselves, using the money which they have left over from their feasts and thanksgiving masses. The cock is educated with great care, with more care, perhaps, than the son who is to succeed his father in the cock-pit. The Government permits it and almost recommends it, for it decrees that the fight shall only be held in the public plazas and on holidays from after high mass till dark—eight hours.

The San Diego cock-pit does not differ from others which are found in all the towns. It consists of three parts: The first, or entrance, is a large rectangle, some twenty meters in length and fourteen in breadth. On one side is the door, generally guarded by a woman who collects the entrance fee. From the contribution which each one makes the Government receives a part, some hundred thousands of

pesos each year. They say that with this money, which gives license to the vice, magnificent schools are raised, bridges and roadways constructed, and rewards offered for the encouragement of agriculture and commerce. Blessed be the vice which produces such good results! In this first precinct are the vendors of betel nut, cigars and tobacco, delicacies and refreshments. There the small boys, who accompany their fathers or uncles, are carefully initiated into the secrets of life.

This precinct communicates with another of slightly larger dimensions, a sort of vestibule, where the people gather before the fight. There, one sees most of the cocks, tied by a cord to a bone driven into the ground like a nail; there, are the bettors, the lovers of the sport, the man skilled in fastening the gaffs or spurs to the cock's legs; there, bargains are made, the situation discussed, money borrowed, and people curse, swear and laugh boisterously. In one place, some one is caressing his game cock, passing his hand over his brilliant plumage; in another, a man examines and counts the number of scales on the rooster's legs, for that, they say, is a sign of valor. The battles of the heroes are related. There, too, you will see many a disappointed owner, with a sour face carrying out by the legs, a dead rooster, stripped of its plumage—the animal which was a favorite for months, petted, cared for day and night, and on which flattering hopes had been founded: now, nothing more than a dead fowl, to be sold for a *peseta*, stewed in ginger and eaten that very night. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* The loser returns to his fire-side, where an anxious wife and ragged children await him, without his little capital, without his rooster. From all that gilded dream, from all the care of months, from daybreak to sunset, from all those labors and fatigue, from all that, results a *peseta*, the ashes left from so much smoke.

In this *foyer*, or vestibule, the most ignorant discuss the coming contests; the most trifling, examine conscientiously the bird, weigh it, contemplate it, extend its wings, feel of its muscles. Some of the people are very well dressed, and are followed and surrounded by the backers of their game cocks. Others, dirty, with the seal of vice imprinted on their squalid faces, anxiously follow the movements of the rich and watch their betting, for the pocketbook can be emptied and the passion still be unsatisfied. There you see no face that is not animated, no indolent Filipino; none apathetic, none silent. All is movement, passion, eagerness.

From this place, one passes into the arena or *rueda*, as it is called. The floor, inclosed by bamboos, is generally elevated higher than the floor of the other two parts of the cock-pit. Running up from the floor and almost touching the roof, are rows of seats for the spectators or gamblers—they come to be the same. During the combat these seats are filled with men and children who cry, shout, perspire, quarrel, and blaspheme. Fortunately, scarcely any women visit the cock-pit. In the *rueda* are the prominent men, the rich class, the bettors, the bookmaker, and the referee. The cocks fight on the ground, which is beaten down perfectly smooth, and there Destiny distributes to families laughter or tears, feasts or hunger.

As we enter, we can see the *gobernadorcillo*, Captain Pablo, Captain Basilio, and Lucas, the man with the scar on his face who was so disconsolate over the death of his brother.

Captain Basilio approaches one of those present and asks him:

"Do you know what cock Captain Tiago is going to bring?"

"I do not know, Señor. This morning two arrived, one of them the *lásak* (black sprinkled with white) which whipped the Consul's *talisain* (red, sprinkled with black)."

"Do you think that my *bulik* (black, red and white), can beat him?"

"Yes, I surely do. I'll stake my house and shirt on him!"

At that moment Captain Tiago arrived. He was dressed, like the big gamblers, in a *camisa* of Canton linen, woolen pantaloons, and a panama-straw hat. Behind him came two servants, carrying the *lásak* and a white cock of colossal proportions.

"Sinang tells me that Maria Clara is improving steadily," said Captain Basilio.

"She no longer has any fever, but she is still weak."

"Did you lose last night?"

"A little. I heard that you won.... I am going to see if I can win back my money."

"Do you want to fight your *lásak*?" asked Captain Basilio, looking at the rooster.

"That depends on whether there is any money up."

"How much will you stake?"

"I don't play less than two thousand."

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"Have you seen my *bulik*?" asked Captain Basilio, and then called a man to bring a small rooster.

Captain Tiago examined it, and after weighing it in his hand, and examining its scales, he handed it back.

"What do you put up?" he asked.

"Whatever you say."

"Two thousand five hundred?"

"Make it three?"

"Three."

"Let her go!"

The circle of curious people and gamblers learn that the two celebrated cocks are to be fought. Both the roosters have made a history for themselves; both have a reputation. All want to see and examine the two celebrities. Opinions are expressed, and prophecies made.

In the meantime the voices grow louder, the confusion is augmented, the *rueda* fills up and a rush is made for the seats. The *soldadores* bring two cocks to the ring for a preliminary contest. One of the roosters is *blanco* (white), the other *rojo* (red). They are already spurred, but the gaffs are not yet unsheathed. Cries of "*Al blanco! al blanco!*" are heard. Some one else shouts, "*Al rojo!*" The *blanco* is the favorite.

Civil Guards circulate among the crowd. They are not wearing the uniform of their body, nor do they wear the costume of the native. Pantaloon of *guingon* with a red fringe, a blue-spotted blouse shirt, and the *cuartel* cap—you have here their disguise, in harmony with their department; watching and betting, making disturbance and talking of maintaining the peace.

While the shouting is going on and men are jingling money in their hands; while the people are going down in their pockets for the last *cuarto*, or, if that is wanting, pledging their word, promising to sell their *carabao*, or their next harvest, two young men, apparently brothers, follow the gamblers with envious eyes. They approach, timidly murmur words which nobody catches, and each time become more and more melancholy, and look at each other with disgust and indignation. Lucas observes them, smiles malignantly, rattles some silver *pesos*, passes near to the two brothers, and looks toward the *rueda*, shouting:

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"I am betting fifty, fifty against twenty on the white!"

The two brothers exchanged looks.

"I told you," murmured the older, "not to bet all your money. If you had obeyed me, we would have it now to put on the red."

The younger one approached Lucas timidly and touched him on the arm.

"Is it you?" exclaimed the latter turning around and feigning surprise. "Does your brother accept my proposition or did you come to bet?"

"How can we bet when we have lost all?"

"Then you accept?"

"He does not want to! If you could lend us something: you have already said that you knew us...."

Lucas scratched his head, pulled down his *camisa* and replied:

"Yes, I know you. You are Tarsilo and Bruno, both young and strong. I know that your brave father died from the result of the hundred lashes which the soldiers gave him. I know that you do not think of avenging him."

"You need not meddle in our history," interrupted Tarsilo, the older. "That is a disgrace. If we did not have a sister, we would have been hanged long ago."

"Hanged? They only hang cowards, or some one who has no money or protection. Certainly the mountains are near."

"A hundred against twenty on the *blanco*," cried one as he passed the group.

"Loan us four *pesos* ... three ... two," begged the younger brother. "Presently I will return it to you doubled. The fight is going to begin."

Lucas scratched his head again.

"Tst! This money is not mine. Don Crisostomo has given it to me for those who want to serve him. But I see that you are not like your father. He was really courageous."

And, saying this, he went away from them, although not far.

"Let us accept. What does it matter?" said Bruno to his brother. "It amounts to the same thing whether you are hanged or shot down. We poor serve for nothing else."

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"You are right, but think of our sister."

In the meantime, the circle around the ring had been dispersed; the fight was going to commence. The voices began to die away, and the two *soldadores* and the skilled gaff fitter, were alone in the middle of the *rueda*. At a signal from the referee, the sheaths were removed from the razor-like knives on the cocks' legs, and the fine blades glistened in a menacing way.

The two brothers, gloomy and silent, approached the ring and, resting their faces against the bamboo railing, watched the preparations. A man approached them and said in their ears: "Hundred to ten on the *blanco*!"

Tarsilo looked at him stupidly. Bruno elbowed his brother, who responded with a grunt.

The *soldadores* handle the roosters with masterly skill, taking great care not to wound them. A deep silence reigns throughout the pit. You would think that those present, with the exception of the two *soldadores*, were horrible wax figures. The two roosters are brought close together and allowed to pick at each other and thus become irritated. Then they allow them to look at each other, so that the poor little birds may know who has plucked out their feathers, and with whom they should fight. The feathers around the neck stand up; they look at each other fixedly; flashes of wrath escape from their little, round eyes. The moment has come. The birds are placed on the ground in the ring at a certain distance from each other.

The cocks advance slowly. Their little steps are heard upon the hard floor. Nobody speaks; nobody breathes. Lowering and raising their heads, as if measuring each other with a look, the two roosters mutter sounds, perhaps of threat or contempt. They have perceived the shining blades. Danger animates them, and they turn toward each other decided, but they stop at a short distance, and, as they look at each other, they bow their heads and again raise their feathers on end. With their natural valor, they rush at each other impetuously; they strike beak against beak; breast against breast, blade against blade, and wing against wing. The blows have been stopped with dexterity and skill, and only a few feathers have fallen. They again measure each other! Suddenly the *blanco* turns and, raising himself in the air, flashes his death-dealing knife, but the *rojo* has already doubled up his legs, ducked his head and the *blanco* has only cut the air. Then, on touching the ground, to avoid being wounded from behind, he turns quickly and faces the other. The red attacks him with fury, but he defends himself with coolness. Not without reason was he the favorite of the crowd. All, trembling and anxious, follow the movements of the battle, now this one and now that one giving an involuntary shout. The ground is being covered with red and white feathers, tinged with blood. But the duel does not go to the one who draws first blood. The Filipino here follows the laws laid down by the Government, which say that the cock which is killed or flees loses the fight. The blood now wets the ground; the blows are repeated, but the victory is still undecided. Finally, making a supreme effort, the *blanco* throws himself forward to give a last blow; he drives his knife into the wing of the *rojo* and buries it among the bones. But the *blanco* has been wounded in the breast, and both, weak from loss of blood, and panting, fastened together, remain immovable until the *blanco* falls, bleeds through his neck, kicks violently and is in the agony of death. The *rojo*, pinned by his wing, is held to the other's side; and little by little he doubles up his legs and slowly closes his eyes.

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Then the referee, in accordance with the regulations prescribed by the Government, declares the *rojo* the winner. A wild and prolonged outcry greets the decision, an outcry which is heard throughout the town. He, who, from afar, hears the cry, understands that the *dejado* has beaten the favorite, for otherwise the outcry would not have lasted so long. So it happens among nations: when a small nation succeeds in gaining a victory over a greater one, the song and story of it last through centuries.

"Do you see?" said Bruno, with indignation, to his brother, "if you had taken my advice to-day, we would have had one hundred *pesos*. On your account we are without a *cuarto*."

Tarsilo did not reply, but, with wide-open eyes, looked around him as if in search of some one.

"There he is talking with Pedro," added Bruno. "He is giving him money—what a lot of money!"

Tarsilo remained silent and thoughtful. With the arm of his *camisa*, he wiped away the sweat which formed in drops on his forehead.

"Brother," said Bruno, "I am decided, even if you are not. The *lásak* ought to win and we ought not to lose the opportunity. I want to bet on the next fight. What does it matter? Thus, we will avenge our father."

"Wait!" said Tarsilo to him, and looked him in the eyes. Both were pale. "I am with you. You are right. We will avenge our father."

He stopped, however, and again wiped away the perspiration.

"Why do you stop?" asked Bruno impatiently.

"Do you know what fight is the next one? Is it worth the trouble?"

"What! Haven't you heard? Captain Tiago's *lásak* against Captain Basilio's *bulik*. According to the run of luck, the *lásak* ought to win."

"Ah! The *lásak*. I would bet ... but let us make sure first."

Bruno made a gesture of impatience, but followed his brother. The latter looked the rooster over carefully, thought about it, debated with himself and asked a few questions. The unfortunate fellow was in doubt. Bruno was nervous and looked at him angrily.

"Why, don't you see that wide scale which he has there near the spur? Do you see those feet? What more do you want? Look at those legs. Stretch out his wings. And that broken scale on top of that wide one, and that double one?"

Tarsilo did not hear him, he kept on examining the cock. The rattle of silver coins reached his ears.

"Let us see the *bulik* now," said he, in a choking voice.

Bruno stamped the ground with his feet, grated his teeth, but obeyed his brother.

They approached the other group. There they were arming the cock, they were selecting gaffs for him, and the expert, in fitting them to the rooster's legs, was preparing a piece of red silk. He waxed it and rubbed it over his knee a number of times.

Tarsilo gazed at the bird with a sombre air. It seemed that he was not looking at the cock, but at something in the future. He passed his hand over his forehead.

"Are you ready?" he asked his brother, his voice scarcely perceptible.

"I? Long ago. Without having to see them."

"It is our poor sister——"

"Bah! Didn't they tell you that the leader is Don Crisostomo? Have you not seen him walking with the Governor General? What danger will we run?"

"And if we are killed?"

"What does it matter? Our father died from being whipped to death."

"You are right."

Both brothers sought Lucas in the crowd.

As soon as they caught sight of him, Tarsilo stopped.

"No! Let us go away from here! We are going to lose," he exclaimed.

"Go if you wish. I am going to accept."

"Bruno!"

Unfortunately, a man approached them and said:

“Are you betting? I am backing the *bulik*.”

The two brothers did not reply.

“I’ll give you odds.”

“How much?” asked Bruno.

The man counted out four *peso* pieces. Bruno looked at him, breathless.

“I have two hundred. Fifty to forty.”

“No,” said Bruno promptly. “Make it ...”

“All right! fifty to thirty.”

“Double it if you wish!”

“Well! The *bulik* is my winning color and I have just won. Hundred against sixty!”

“That’s a go! Wait till I go and get my money.”

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“But I will be the stake-holder,” said the other, in whom the manner of Bruno inspired little confidence.

“It’s all the same to me!” responded the latter, trusting in the strength of his fists.

And, turning to his brother, he said:

“Go away, if you wish; I’m going to stay.”

Then Tarsilo reflected. He loved his brother and the game. He could not leave him alone, and he murmured. “Let it be so!”

They approached Lucas. The latter saw them coming and smiled.

“Eh! there!” said Tarsilo.

“What is it?”

“How much do you give?” asked the two brothers.

“I have already told you. If you want to find some others to help us surprise the *cuartel*, I will give you thirty *pesos* apiece, and ten *pesos* for each companion you get. If all comes out well, each will receive one hundred *pesos* and you two, double that amount. Don Crisostomo is rich.”

“Accepted,” exclaimed Bruno. “Hand over the money.”

“I knew well that you were brave, like your father. Come! Don’t let them hear us or they will kill us,” said Lucas, pointing to the Civil Guards.

And taking them into a corner, he told them, as he counted out the money to them:

“To-morrow Don Crisostomo will arrive and bring arms. Day after to-morrow, about eight o’clock at night, come to the cemetery. I will tell you about the final arrangements. You have time to find some other companions.”

They took leave of each other. Now the two brothers seemed to have changed their rôles. Tarsilo was calm; Bruno, pale.

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Chapter XXVIII.

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The Two Señoras.

While Captain Tiago was fighting his *lâsak* against the *bulik*, Doña Victorina took a walk through the town, with the intention of seeing the condition of the indolent natives, and of their houses and fields. She had dressed as elegantly as she could, putting all her ribbons and flowers on her silk gown, in order to impress the provincials, and make them see how great a distance was between them and her sacred person. Giving her arm to her lame husband, she fluttered through the

streets of the town, among the stupefied and wondering inhabitants. Cousin Linares had remained in the house.

"What ugly houses these natives have," began Doña Victorina, making a grimace. "I don't know how they can live there: one must be a native to do it. They meet us and don't uncover their heads! Hit them over the head as the curates and *tenientes* of the *Guardia Civil* do when they don't take off their hats. Teach them manners."

"And if they hit me?" asked Dr. de Espadaña.

"Aren't you a man?"

"Bu—bu—but, I am la—la—lame."

Doña Victorina was becoming bad-humored. The streets were not paved, and the train of her gown was covered with dust. Besides, they met many young women, who, on passing her, cast down their eyes and did not admire her lavish dress as they should have done. Sinang's coachman, who was driving her and her cousin in an elegant carriage, had the impudence to call out *tabí*¹ to them in such a warning voice that she had to get out of the way, and was only able to exclaim, "Look at that brute of a coachman! I am going to tell his master that he should educate his servants better!"

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"Let us go back to the house," she ordered her husband.

He, fearing that there was going to be a storm, turned on his heels and obeyed the command.

They met the *alferez* on the way back and greeted him. He increased the discontent of Doña Victorina, for he not only failed to compliment her on her dress, but surveyed it almost with a mocking manner.

"You ought not to extend your hand to a simple *alferez*," said she to her husband as soon as they were some distance away. "He scarcely touches his helmet, and you take off your hat. You don't know how to maintain your rank."

"He is ch—ch—chief here!"

"And what does that matter to us? Are we, perchance, natives?"

"You are right," replied he, not wishing to quarrel.

They passed by the officer's house. Doña Consolacion was in the window, as usual, dressed in her flannel outfit and smoking her cigar. As the house was rather low, they could see each other as they passed, and Doña Victorina could distinguish her very well. The Muse of the *Guardia Civil* examined her with tranquillity from head to foot, and, afterward, sticking out her lower lip, spit, turning her face to the other side. That put an end to Doña Victorina's patience, and, leaving her husband without any support, she squared herself in front of the *alfereza*, trembling with rage, and unable to speak. Doña Consolacion turned her head slowly, looked her over again, and then spit again, but with still greater disdain.

"What is the matter with you, Doña?" said the *alfereza*.

"Can you tell me, Señora, why you look at me so? Are you envious?" Doña Victorina finally succeeded in saying.

"I envious of you?" said the Medusa with scorn. "O, yes! I envy those curls."

"Come, wife!" said the doctor. "Do—don't take no—no—notice of her!"

"Let me give this shameless common person a lesson!" replied the woman, giving her husband a push. He nearly fell to the ground. Turning to Doña Consolacion, she continued:

"Look how you treat me! Don't think that I am a provincial, or a soldiers' *querida*! In my house in Manila *alferezas* never are allowed to come in. They wait at the door."

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"Oh-oh! Most Excellent Señora! *Alferezas* don't enter, but invalids like that out there. Ha, ha, ha!"

If it hadn't been for all the paint on her face, one could have seen Doña Victorina blush. She wanted to throw herself upon her enemy, but the sentry stopped her. In the meantime, the street was filling up with curious people.

"Listen! I lower myself talking with you. People of *categoría* ... Do you want my

clothes to wash? I will pay you well. Do you think that I don't know that you are a washerwoman?"

Doña Consolacion became furious. The reference to her being a washerwoman wounded her.

"Do you think that we do not know what you are? Get out! My husband has already told me. Señora, I, at least, have not belonged to more than one man, but you? One must be pretty hard up to take the leavings."

This shot struck Doña Victorina square in the breast. She rolled up her sleeves, clenched her fists, and, gnashing her teeth, began:

"Come down here, you nasty old thing, that I may smash your filthy mouth."

The Medusa disappeared quickly from the window, but was soon seen coming down the stairs on a run, swinging her husband's whip.

Don Tiburcio interposed, pleading with them, but they would have come to blows if the *alferez* had not arrived.

"But, señoras!... Don Tiburcio!"

"Teach your woman better; buy her better clothes. If you haven't the money, rob the people. You have your soldiers for that!" shouted Doña Victorina.

"Señora," said the *alferez* furiously. "Thank yourself that I don't forget that you are a woman; for if you were not, I would kick you to pieces, with all your curls and ribbons."

"Se—se—señor *al—alferez!*" said Don Tiburcio.

"Go ahead! Kill us! You don't wear big enough trousers, you quack."

And so the battle waged: words, gestures, cries, insults, and injuries. They brought out all the nasty things they could think of, all four speaking at the same time, and, saying so many things and bringing to light so many truths, that we will not relate here all that was said. The people who had gathered around to satisfy their curiosity, if they understood all the remarks, must have enjoyed themselves not a little. They were all waiting to see them come to blows. Unfortunately for the spectators, the curate came along and pacified them.

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"Señoras! señoras! What a shame. Señor *alferez.*"

"What are you meddling in these matters for, you hypocrite, you Carlist?"

"Don Tiburcio, take away your wife! Señora, hold your tongue!"

"Tell that to those robbers of the poor!"

Finally, the dictionary of epithets was exhausted. The review of the disgraces of each couple was ended, and little by little they were separated, threatening and insulting each other. Father Salví kept going from one side to the other, adding life to the scene.

"This very day we will go to Manila and we will present ourselves to the Governor General," said Doña Victorina, in fury to her husband. "You are not a man. It is a shame that you spend money for trousers."

"B—b—but, wife, and the *Guardia Civi!*? I—I—am lame."

"You must challenge him to a duel with pistol or sword or, or—"

And Doña Victorina looked at his false teeth.

"Daughter, I never have used—"

Doña Victorina did not let him finish. With a sublime movement she jerked out his false teeth in the middle of the street, and throwing them to the ground stepped on them. He, half crying, and she sputtering away, arrived at the house. At that time, Linares was talking with Maria Clara, Sinang, and Victoria, and, as he knew nothing about the quarrel, the sudden arrival of his cousins gave him a shock. Maria Clara was lying on a sofa among pillows and blankets, and was not a little surprised at the doctor's new physiognomy.

"Cousin," said Doña Victorina, "you have got to challenge the *alferez* immediately to a duel, or—"

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"And why? what for?" asked Linares, surprised.

"You challenge him right off, or I will tell them all who you are."

"But, Doña Victorina!"

The three young women looked at one another.

"The *alferez* has insulted us. The old witch came down with her whip, and that thing there allowed it all. A man!"

"Pshaw!" said Sinang. "They have been fighting and we haven't seen it."

"The *alferez* has broken the doctor's teeth," added Victoria.

"This very day we are going to Manila. You stay here to challenge him to a duel, and, if you don't, I'll tell Don Santiago that all that you have told him is a lie. I will tell him——"

"But, Doña Victorina! Doña Victorina!" interrupted Linares, pale and going closer to her. "You keep quiet. Don't make me call to mind"——and he added in a low voice—"Don't be imprudent, especially just now."

Just at that time, when this was going on, Captain Tiago arrived home from the cock-pit. He was downhearted. He had lost his *lásak*.

But Doña Victorina did not give him much time to sigh. In a few words, and with many insults, she related to him what had passed, she, of course, trying to put herself in a good light.

"Linares is going to challenge him. Do you hear? If he don't, I won't let him marry your daughter. Don't you permit it. If he has no courage, he does not merit Clarita."

"Then you are going to marry this gentleman?" asked Sinang, with her jolly eyes full of tears. "I knew that you were discreet, but I did not think you so fickle."

Maria Clara, pale as wax, raising herself half up, looked at her father with frightened eyes, and then at Doña Victorina and Linares. The latter turned red in the face, Captain Tiago looked down, and the señora added:

"Clarita, bear it in mind, and never marry a man who does not wear trousers. You expose yourself to insults like a dog, if you do."

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But the young maiden did not reply and said to her friends:

"Take me to my room, for I cannot go alone."

They helped her to her feet, and, leaning her marble-like head on pretty Sinang's shoulder, and, with the arms of her friend around her waist, she went to her bedroom.

That night the doctor and his wife collected their things together, submitted their account to Captain Tiago—which amounted to several thousand *pesos*—and very early on the following day, left for Manila in the Captain's carriage. To timid Linares they intrusted the rôle of the avenger.

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¹ Warning cry of a coachman, meaning "turn."

Chapter XXIX.

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The Enigma.

As Lucas had announced, Ibarra arrived the next day. His first visit was to the family of Captain Tiago, with the object of seeing Maria Clara and telling her that His Most Illustrious Greatness had already reconciled him with the Church. He brought a letter of recommendation to the curate, written by the hand of the Archbishop himself. Aunt Isabel was not a little delighted over it, for she liked the young man and did not look favorably upon the marriage of her niece with Linares. Captain Tiago was not at home.

"Come in," said the aunt in her half-Castellano language. "Maria, Don Crisostomo is again in the grace of God. The Archbishop has dis-excommunicated him."

But the young man could not advance. His smile froze on his lips, and words fled from his mind. Linares was standing next to Maria Clara on the balcony, interweaving nosegays with the flowers and leaves on the climbing plants. On the floor, were scattered roses and *sampagas*. Maria Clara was leaning back on a sofa, pale, pensive, her look sad, playing with her ivory fan. But the fan was not as white as her poor fingers.

At the presence of Ibarra, Linares turned pale and Maria Clara's cheeks were tinged with carmine. She tried to rise, but her strength failing her, she cast her eyes upon the floor, and let fall her fan.

An embarrassing silence reigned for several seconds. Finally, Ibarra was able to advance, and tremblingly murmured:

"I have just arrived and have hastened to see you.... I find that you are better than I thought."

Maria Clara seemed to have turned dumb. She could not pronounce a single word, and continued to keep her eyes on the floor. [189]

Ibarra surveyed Linares with a look which the modest young man bore with considerable haughtiness.

"Well, I see that my arrival was not expected," he said slowly. "Maria, pardon me for not having announced my coming. Some other day I will be able to explain to you my conduct."

These words were accompanied with a look at Linares. The maiden raised her eyes to Ibarra, those beautiful eyes, full of purity and melancholy, so supplicating and sweet that Ibarra stopped confused.

"May I come to-morrow?"

"You know that on my part you are always welcome," replied she, scarcely able to pronounce the words.

Ibarra walked away, apparently tranquil; but a tempest raged in his mind, and his heart was chilled. What he had just seen and felt was incomprehensible. What was it? Doubt, apathy or treason?

"Oh, woman!" he murmured.

He arrived, without noticing it, at the place where the school house was being constructed. The work was well along. Ñor Juan, with his yard stick and plumb-line, was going to and fro among the numerous workmen. On seeing the young man approach, he ran to meet him.

"Don Crisostomo," said he, "you have arrived at last. We were all expecting you. Just see how the walls are rising. They are already a meter and ten centimeters high. Within two days, they will be as high as a man. I have not allowed them to use anything but the best of wood. Do you want to look at the cellar?"

The workmen saluted him respectfully.

"Here is the system of drainage which I have taken the liberty to add," said Ñor Juan. "These underground canals lead to a cesspool about thirty feet off. It will serve to fertilize the garden. This was not in the plans. Do you object to it?"

"Quite on the contrary, I approve of it and I congratulate you on your idea. You are a true architect. From whom did you learn the profession?"

"From myself, señor," replied the modest old man. [190]

"O, yes! Before I forget it: let the scrupulous people know (for some may fear to speak to me) that I am no longer excommunicated. The Archbishop invited me to dine with him."

"Pshaw! señor! We don't take any notice of excommunications. We are all excommunicated. Dather Dámaso is himself; however, he goes on, as fat as ever."

"How's that?"

"I feel sure about it. A year ago he gave the coadjutor a blow with his cane, and the coadjutor is as much a priest as he. Who takes any notice of excommunications, señor?"

Ibarra caught sight of Elias among the workmen. He saluted him like the others, but with a look that gave Ibarra to understand that he wanted to speak with him.

"Ñor Juan," said Ibarra, "will you bring me a list of the workmen?"

Ñor Juan disappeared and Ibarra approached Elias, who was alone, raising a large stone and loading it in a cart.

"If you are able, señor, to grant me some hours of conversation, come this afternoon to the shore of the lake and embark in my *banca*, for I want to talk with you about some serious matters," said Elias. Ibarra gave a nod of assent and went away.

Ñor Juan brought the list, but Ibarra read it in vain. The name of Elias was not on it.

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Chapter XXX.

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The Voice of the Persecuted.

Before the sun went down, Ibarra put his foot into Elias's *banca* on the shore of the lake. He seemed displeased about something, as though he had been opposed or contradicted.

"Pardon me, señor," said Elias on seeing him. "Pardon me for having ventured to make this appointment with you. I would like to speak with you freely, and here we have no witnesses. We can return within an hour."

"You are mistaken, friend Elias," replied Ibarra, trying to smile. "You will have to take me to that town over there, where you see that belfry. Fate obliges me to go there."

"Fate?"

"Yes; on my way here, I met the *alferez*. He insisted upon accompanying me. I thought about you, and knew that he would recognize you, and, in order to get rid of him, I told him that I was going to that town. Now I will have to remain there all day to-morrow, for the man whom I am going to see will not look for me till to-morrow afternoon."

"I am obliged to you for your thoughtfulness, but you might have simply told him to accompany you," replied Elias with naturalness.

"How's that? And what about you?"

"He would never have recognized me. The only time that he ever saw me, I don't believe that he thought to take down a description of me."

"I am in hard luck!" sighed Ibarra, thinking of Maria Clara. "What have you to say to me?"

Elias looked around him. They were far from the shore. The sun had already sunk below the horizon, and, as the twilight in these latitudes is very short, the darkness was falling over the earth, and the disk of the full moon was already shining.

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"Señor," replied Elias, in a grave voice, "I am the spokesman of many unfortunate people."

"Unfortunate people. What do you mean?"

In a few words, Elias referred to the conversation which he had had with the chief of the *tulisanes*, but omitted saying anything about the doubts which the chief entertained, or the threats. Ibarra listened attentively, and, when Elias concluded his story, a long silence reigned. Ibarra was the first to break the spell.

"So that they desire——?"

"Radical reforms in the armed forces, in the religious matters, and in the administration of justice. That is to say, they ask for paternal care on the part of the Government."

"Reforms? In what sense?"

"For example: more respect for human dignity; more security for the individual;

less power in the hands of the forces already armed; fewer privileges for that body which easily abuses them."

"Elias," replied the young man, "I don't know who you are, but I believe that you are not an ordinary man. You think and work differently from the others. You will understand me if I say to you that, even if it is true that the present state of affairs is defective, there will be a worse state if there is a change. I could arrange to get the assistance of my friends in Madrid, by *paying them*. I could speak to the Governor General, but all of that would accomplish nothing. He has not enough power to introduce reforms, nor would I ever take a step in that direction, for I know very well that, if it is true that these religious corporations have their defects, they are now necessities. They are what you might call a necessary evil."

Elias raised his head and looked astonished.

"Do you believe, señor, in necessary evils?" he asked, his voice slightly trembling. "Do you believe that in order to do good it is necessary to do evil?"

"No. I look upon it as a violent remedy which we have to make use of to cure an illness. To illustrate further, the country is an organism which is suffering from a chronic illness, and, in order to cure it, the Government finds itself compelled to use medicines, hard and violent, if you wish, but useful and necessary."

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"He is a bad doctor, señor, who seeks to cure the symptoms and suppress them without trying to find the origin of the illness, or knowing it, fears to attack it. The *Guardia Civil* has no other end than this: the suppression of crime by terror and force. This end it neither fulfills nor carries out except in chance instances. And you have to take into account that society can be severe with individuals only after she has furnished all means necessary for their perfect morality. In our country, since there is no society, since the people and the Government do not form a unity, the latter ought to be indulgent, not only because indulgence is necessary, but because the individual, neglected and abandoned by Government, has less self responsibility than if he had been enlightened. Besides, following out your comparison, the medicine applied to the evils of the country is so much of a destroyer that its effect is only felt on the sane parts of the organism. These it weakens and injures. Would it not be more reasonable to fortify and strengthen the infirm organism and minimize a little the violence of the medicine?"

"To weaken the *Guardia Civil* would be to put the security of the towns in danger."

"The security of the towns!" exclaimed Elias with bitterness. "The towns have had the *Guardia Civil* for nearly fifteen years and what is the result? We still have *tulisanes*, we still hear of them sacking towns, and they still make their attacks on people on the roads. Robberies continue and the robbers are not punished. Crime exists and the real criminal goes free, but not so with the peaceful inhabitants of the town. Ask any honorable citizen if he looks upon this institution as a good, as a protection by the Government, or as an imposition, a despotism whose excesses do more harm than the violence of the criminals. Communication between people is paralyzed, for they fear to be maltreated for trifling causes. More importance is attached to the formality of the law than to the basal principle of it,—the first symptom of incapacity in government. The heads of the organization consider it their first duty to make people salute them, either of their own will or by force, even in the darkness of night. In this, their inferior officers imitate them and maltreat and fleece the poor countrymen. There is no such thing as sacredness of the fireside. There is no security for the individual. What have the people accomplished by overcoming their wrath and by waiting for justice at the hands of others? Ah! señor, if you call that preserving the order—"

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"I agree with you that there are evils," replied Ibarra. "But we have to accept those evils for the good which accompanies them. This institution may be imperfect, but believe me, by the terror which it inspires, it prevents the number of criminals from increasing."

"You might better say that by that terror it increases the number of criminals," said Elias, correcting him. "Before this body was created, almost all the evildoers, with the exception of a very few, were criminals because of their hunger. They pillaged and robbed in order to live. That famine once passed over and hunger once satisfied, the roads were again free from criminals. It was sufficient to have the poor but valiant *cuaderilleros* chase them, with their imperfect arms—that body of men so often calumniated by those who have written upon our country, those men who have three legal rights, to do their duty, to fight and to die. And for all that, a jest as recompense. Now there are *tulisanes* who will be *tulisanes* all their lives. A crime inhumanly punished, resistance against the excesses of the power which inflicts such punishment, and fear that other atrocities may be inflicted—these make them forever members of that society who are bound by oath to kill and die¹. The terrorism of the *Guardia Civil* impressed upon them closes

forever the doors to repentance. And as a *tulisan* fights and defends himself in the mountains better than a soldier, whom he scorns, the result is that we are incapable of abating the evil which we have created. Call to mind what the prudent Governor General de la Torre did. The amnesty which he granted to these unhappy people has proved that in these mountains the hearts of men still beat, and only await pardon. Terrorism is useful only when the people are enslaved, when the mountains have no caverns, when the governing power can station a sentry behind every tree, and when the slave has in his body nothing but a stomach. But when the desperado who fights for his life feels the strong arm of that power, then his heart beats and his being fills with passion. Can terrorism put out the fire which —”

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“It confuses me, Elias, to hear you talk so. I would believe that you were right if I did not have my own convictions. But note this point—and do not be offended, for I do not include you—I look upon you as an exception—consider who those are who ask for this reform. Almost all are criminals or people who are in the way of becoming such.”

“Criminals or future criminals; but why are they so? Because their peace has been disturbed, their happiness taken away from them, their dearest affections wounded, and, after asking protection from Justice, they have been convinced that they can secure it only by their own hands, by their own efforts. But you are mistaken, señor, if you believe that only criminals ask for it. Go from town to town, from house to house. Listen to the secret sighings of the family and you will be convinced that the evils which the *Guardia Civil* causes are equal to if not greater than those which it corrects. Would you conclude then that all the citizens are criminals? Then, why defend them from the others? Why not destroy them?”

“There is some flaw in your reasoning which escapes me now. In Spain, the Mother Country, this body lends and has lent very useful services.”

“I do not doubt it. Perhaps there it is better organized; the personnel more select. Perhaps, too, Spain needs such a body, but the Philippines do not. Our customs, our mode of living, which are always cited when any one wants to deny us a right, are totally forgotten when some one wants to impose something on us. And tell me, señor, why have not other nations adopted this institution, other nations which resemble Spain more than do the Philippines? Is it due to the efforts of such an institution that other nations have fewer robberies of the railways, fewer riots, fewer assassinations, and less hand-to-hand fighting in their great capitals?”

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Ibarra bowed his head in meditation. Afterward he raised it and replied:

“That question, my friend, needs serious study. If my investigations tell me that these complaints are well founded, I will write to my friends in Madrid, since we have no deputies to represent us. In the meantime, believe me, the Government needs a body like the *Guardia Civil*, which has unlimited power, in order to make the people respect its authority and the laws imposed.”

“That would be all right, señor, if the Government were at war with the country; but, for the good of the Government, we ought not to make the people believe that they are in opposition to the law. Furthermore, if that were the case, if we preferred force to prestige, we ought to look well to whom we give this unlimited force or power, this authority. Such great power in the hands of men, and ignorant men at that, men full of passion, without moral education, without tested honor—such a thing is a weapon in the hands of a maniac in a multitude of unarmed people. I grant and I will agree with you that the Government needs this weapon, but let it choose that weapon well; let it choose the most worthy men to bear it.”

Elias was speaking with enthusiasm and with fervor. His eyes glistened and his voice vibrated. Then followed a solemn pause. The *banca*, no longer propelled by the paddle, floated tranquilly on the waves. The moon was shining majestically from a sapphire sky. Some lights were glimmering on the shore.

“And what more do they ask?” said Ibarra.

“Reforms in the priesthood,” responded Elias, in a discouraged and sad tone of voice. “The unfortunates ask more protection against——”

“Against the religious orders?”

“Against their oppressors, señor.”

“Have the Filipinos forgotten what they owe to these orders? Have they forgotten the immense debt of gratitude they owe to them for having saved them from error and given them the Faith? What they owe to them for protection against the civil power? Here is one of the evils which result from not teaching the history of the country in our schools.”

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Elias, surprised, could scarcely give credit to what he heard.

"Señor," he replied in a grave voice. "You accuse the people of ingratitude: permit me, one of those who suffer, to defend the people. Favors, in order to be recognized as such, must be done by persons with disinterested motives. Let us consider in a general way the mission of the orders, of Christian charity, that threadbare subject. Let us lay history aside. Let us not ask what Spain did with the Jews, who gave all Europe a Book, a religion and a God! Let us not ask what Spain has done with the Arabic people who gave her culture, who were tolerant in religion and who reawakened in her a pure national love, fallen into lethargy and almost destroyed by the domination of Romans and Goths. Let us omit all that. Do you say that these orders have given us the Faith and have saved us from error? Do you call those outward ceremonies, faith? Do you call that commerce in straps and scapularies religion? Do you call those miracles and stories which we hear every day truth? Is that the law of Jesus Christ? To teach such a faith as this it was not at all necessary that a God should allow himself to be crucified. Superstition existed long before the friars came here; it was only necessary to perfect it and to raise the price of the traffic. Will you tell me that although our religion of to-day is imperfect, it is better than that which we had before? I will agree with you in that and grant it; but we have purchased it at too high a price if we have had to renounce our nationality and independence for it; when for it, we have given to the priests our best towns, our fields, and still give them our little savings in order to buy religious objects. A foreign industry has been introduced among us; we pay well for it, and are in peace. If you speak of the protection they have afforded us against the civil governors of the provinces, I would reply that through them we fall under the power of these governors. However, I recognize that a true Faith, and a true love for humanity guided the first missionaries who came to our shores. I recognize the debt of gratitude which is due those noble hearts. I know that in those days Spain abounded in heroes of all kinds, as well in religion as in politics, as well in civil life as in military. But because the forefathers were virtuous, should we consent to the abuses practiced by their degenerate descendants? Because a great good has been done for us, are we guilty if we prevent ourselves from being harmed? The country does not ask for abolition of the priesthood; it only asks for reforms which new circumstances and new needs require."

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"I love our country as you love it, Elias. I understand to some extent what you desire. I have heard with attention what you have said; yet, despite all of that, my friend, I believe we are looking upon it with a little prejudice. Here, less than in other things, I see the necessity of reforms."

"Can it be possible, señor," said Elias, discouraged and stretching out his hands. "Do you not see the necessity of reforms, you whose family—"

"Ah! I forget myself and I forget my own injuries for the sake of the security of the Philippines, for the sake of the interests of Spain," interrupted Ibarra eagerly. "To preserve the Philippines it is necessary that the friars continue as they are, and in union with Spain lies the welfare of our country."

Ibarra had ceased speaking, but Elias continued to listen. His face was sad, his eyes had lost their brilliancy.

"The missionaries conquered the country, it is true," he said. "Do you think that Spain will be able to keep the Philippines through the instrumentality of the friars?"

"Yes, only through the friars. This is the belief held by all who have written on the Philippines."

"Oh!" exclaimed Elias, discouraged and throwing his paddle into the bottom of the *banca*. "I did not think that you had so poor a conception of the Government and of the country."

Ibarra replied: "I love our country, not only because it is the duty of all men to love the country to which they owe their being, not only because my father taught me so; but also because my mother was a native, an Indian, and because all my most beautiful memories live in these islands. I love it too, because I owe it my happiness and will continue to do so."

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"And I, I love it because I owe to it my misfortunes," said Elias.

"Yes, my friend, I know that you are suffering, that you are unfortunate, and that this makes you see a dark future and influences your way of thinking. For this reason, I make allowance for your complaints. If I were able to appreciate the motives, if I had known part of that past—"

"My misfortunes have another source. If I had known that they would have been of

usefulness, I would have related them, for aside from that, I make no secret of them. They are well enough known by many.”

“Perhaps knowing them would rectify my opinions. You know I do not rely much upon theories; facts are better guides.”

Elias remained pensive for some moments.

“If that is the case, señor,” he replied, “I will relate briefly the history of my misfortunes.”

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¹ Author here shows difficulty in establishing American sovereignty over islands by military forces.

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Chapter XXXI.

Elias's Family.

“Some sixty years ago my grandfather lived in Manila and kept books for a Spanish merchant. My grandfather was then very young, but was married and had a son. One night, without any one knowing the cause, the store-house was burned. The fire spread to the store and from the store to many others. The losses were very heavy. Search was made for the incendiary, and the merchant accused my grandfather. In vain he protested and, as he was poor and could not pay celebrated lawyers, he was condemned to be whipped publicly and to be led through the streets of Manila. It was not a great while ago that this infamous punishment was still in use here. It was a thousand times worse than death itself. My grandfather, abandoned by everybody except his wife, was tied to a horse and, followed by a cruel multitude, was whipped on every corner, in the sight of men, his brothers, and in the vicinity of the numerous temples of the God of Peace. When the unfortunate man, disgraced forever, had satisfied the punishment by his blood, his tortures and his cries, they untied him from the horse, for he had become unconscious. Would to God he had died! As a refined cruelty, they gave him liberty. His wife, embarrassed with a child at the time, begged in vain from door to door for work or alms that she might care for her sick husband and the poor son. But who would have confidence in the wife of an infamous man guilty of arson? The wife, then, had to give herself up to prostitution.”

Ibarra started from his seat.

“Oh! do not be disturbed! Prostitution was not the only dishonor which she and her husband suffered. Honor and shame no longer existed for them. The husband cured his wounds, and, with his wife and son, hid in the mountains of this province. Here the woman brought forth a still-born child, deformed and full of disease. In the mountains, they lived for several months, miserable, isolated, hated and fleeing from all. Unable to endure the misery, less valorous than his wife, and growing desperate at seeing her ill and deprived of all aid and comfort, my grandfather hanged himself. The body rotted in the sight of the son, who was now scarcely able to take care of his sick mother. The bad odor of the rotting corpse disclosed it to Justice. My grandmother was accused and condemned for not having given notice. The death of her husband was attributed to her and people believed it. For, what is a wife of a wretch not capable of doing after having prostituted herself? If she took oath, they said she perjured herself; if she wept, they said that it was false; and if she invoked God, they said she blasphemed. However, they had some consideration for her and waited for her to give birth to a child before whipping her. You know that the friars spread the belief that the only way to deal with the natives is with the whip. Read what Father Gaspar de San Augustin says.

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“Thus condemned, the woman cursed the day when she would give birth to the child, and this not only prolonged her punishment, but violated her maternal sentiments. The woman delivered the child, and unfortunately the child was born robust. Two months later the sentence of whipping which had been imposed upon her was carried out, to the great satisfaction of the people, who thought that in this way they were fulfilling their duty. No longer able to be at peace in these mountains she fled with her two sons to a neighboring province and there they lived like wild beasts: hating and hated. The older boy, remembering his happy infancy and its contrast with such great misery, became a *tulisan* as soon as he had sufficient strength. Before long the bloody name of *Bálat* extended from province to province; it was the terror of the towns and the people, for he took his revenge with fire and blood. The younger boy, who had received from Nature a

good heart, resigned himself to his lot at his mother's side. They lived on what the forests afforded them; they dressed in the rags that travellers threw away. The mother had lost her good name, she was now known only by such titles as the 'criminal,' the 'prostitute,' and the 'horse-whipped woman.' The younger brother was known only as the son of his mother, because he had such a pleasant disposition that they did not believe him to be the son of the incendiary. Finally the famous Bálata fell one day into the hands of Justice. Society had taught him no good, but he was asked to account for his crimes. One morning as the younger boy was looking for his mother, who had gone to gather mushrooms from the forest, and had not yet returned, he found her lying on the ground by the roadside, under a cotton-tree. Her face was turned toward the sky, her eyes were torn from their sockets, and her rigid fingers were buried in the blood-stained earth. It occurred to the young man to raise his eyes and follow the direction in which his mother had been looking, and there from a limb of a tree he saw a basket, and in that basket the bloody head of his brother."

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"My God!" exclaimed Ibarra.

"That is what my father must have exclaimed," continued Elias, coldly. "The men had cut the highwayman into quarters and buried him in a trunk of a tree. But the limbs were saved, and were hung up in different towns. If you go some time from Calamba to Santo Tomás you will still find the rotting leg of my uncle hanging from a *lomboy* tree. Nature has cursed the tree and it neither grows nor gives fruit. They did the same thing with the other members of his body, but the head, the head, as the best part of the man and that part which can be most easily recognized, they hung before the mother's cabin."

Ibarra bowed his head.

"The young man fled like one that is accursed," continued Elias. "He fled from town to town, through mountains and valleys, and when at last he thought he was not recognized by any one, he began to work in the store of a rich man in the province of Tayabas. His activity, his agreeable disposition, won for him the esteem of those who did not know his past life. By working and saving he managed to make a little capital, and, as the misery had passed away, and, as he was young, he thought that he would be happy. His good appearance, his youth, and his quite unencumbered position won for him the love of a girl in the town, but he did not dare to ask for her hand, for fear that she might learn of his past. But love became too strong and both erred. The man, in order to save the honor of the woman, risked all; he asked her to marry him, the papers were looked up and all was disclosed. The girl's father was rich and began to prosecute the man. The latter, however, did not try to defend himself, admitted it all and was sent to jail. The young woman gave birth to a boy and a girl. They were brought up in seclusion and made to believe that their father was dead. This was not difficult, for while the children were still young they saw their mother die, and they thought little about investigating their genealogy. As our grandfather was very rich, our youth was happy. My sister and I were educated together, we loved each other as only twins can when they know no other love. While very young, I went to study in the Jesuit College, and my sister, in order that we might not be entirely separated, went to the Concordia boarding school. Our short education having been ended, for we only wished to be farmers, we returned to the town to take possession of the inheritance which was left us by our grandfather. We lived happily for some time; the future smiled on us; we had many servants; our fields bore good crops; and my sister was on the eve of being married to a young man who loved her and to whom she was well suited. On account of some pecuniary questions, and, because my character was then haughty, I lost the good will of a distant relative, and he threw in my face one day my dark birth and my infamous ancestry. I thought it a calumny and demanded satisfaction. The tomb in which so much grief was sleeping was opened again and the truth came out. I was confounded. To make the misfortune greater, we had had for some years an old servant who had always suffered all my caprices without ever leaving us. He contented himself by weeping and crying while the other servants jested with him. I do not know how my relative found it out; the fact is that he summoned this old man before the court and made him tell the truth. The old servant was my father, who had stuck fast to his dear children and whom I had maltreated many times. Our happiness disappeared: I renounced our fortune; my sister lost her lover; and with our father we abandoned the town to go to some other point. The thought of having contributed to our disgrace and misfortune, cut short the life of the old man, from whose lips was learned all the sorrowful past. My sister and I were left alone."

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"She wept a great deal, but, amid such grief as they piled upon us, she could not forget her love. Without complaining, without saying a word, she saw her old lover marry another girl, and I saw her a little later gradually become ill, without being able to console her. One day she disappeared. In vain I searched for her everywhere; in vain I asked for her for six months. Afterward I learned that during

the time while I was searching for her, one day when the water had risen in the lake, there had been found on the beach at Calamba the body of a girl, either drowned or assassinated. She had, they say, a knife piercing her breast. The authorities of Calamba published the fact in the neighboring towns. Nobody presented himself to claim the body; no young woman had disappeared. From the description which they gave me afterward, from the dress, the rings, the beauty of her face and her very abundant hair, I recognized her as my poor sister. From that time, I have been wandering from province to province. My fame and history are in the mouths of many people; they attribute all sorts of deeds to me; at times they calumniate me; but I take no notice of men and continue on my way. I have here briefly related my history, and that of a judgment at the hands of mankind."

Elias became silent and continued rowing.

"I believe that you are not wrong," murmured Ibarra, in a low voice, "when you say that justice ought to procure the welfare of the people by lifting up the criminals and by raising the standard of their morality. Only ... that is impossible—a Utopia. And then, where is the money for so many new employees to come from?"

"And what are the priests for, the priests who proclaim peace and charity as their mission? Is it more meritorious for a priest to wet the head of a child, to give it salt to eat, than to awaken in the darkened conscience of a criminal that spark, given by God to every man, that he may seek to do good? Is it more human to accompany a criminal to the gallows than to accompany him through the difficult path which leads from vice to virtue? Are not spies, executioners and *Guardias Civiles* paid? The latter institution, besides being an evil, also costs money."

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"My friend, neither you nor I, although we wish it, can accomplish it."

"Alone we are nothing, it is true. Take up the cause of the people, unite them, listen to their voices, give others an example to follow, give them the idea of what is called a fatherland, a *patria!*"

"What the people ask for is impossible. We must wait."

"To wait, to wait, is equivalent to suffering!"

"If I should ask it, they would laugh at me."

"And if the people should sustain you?"

"Never! I would never be the one to lead the multitude and accomplish by force what the Government does not believe is opportune. No! If I ever saw the multitude armed for such a purpose, I would put myself on the side of the Government. And I would fight it, for in such a mob I would not see my country. I wish for its welfare: that is the reason that I am erecting the school-house. I look for it through means of instruction, education and progress. Without light there is no road."

"Nor without fighting is there liberty," replied Elias.

"I do not care for that kind of liberty."

"Without liberty there is no light," replied the pilot with enthusiasm. "You say that you know very little about our country. I believe it. You do not see the fight that is impending. You do not see the cloud on the horizon. The combat begins in the sphere of ideas, and then descends to the arena to tinge it with blood. I hear the voice of God. Woe to them who resist it. History has not been written for them."

Elias was transformed. As he stood up, his head uncovered, his manly face illumined by the moonlight, there was something extraordinary about him. He shook his long hair and continued:

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"Do you not see how all is awakening? Sleep has lasted for centuries, but one day a thunderbolt will fall and new life will be called forth. New tendencies are animating the spirits, and these tendencies to-day separated, will be united some day, and will be guided by God. God has not failed other peoples, nor will he fail ours. Their cause is liberty."

A solemn silence followed these words. In the meantime, the *banca* carried along imperceptibly by the waves, neared the shore. Elias was the first to break the silence.

"What have I to say to those who have sent me?" he asked, changing the tone of his voice.

"I have already told you that I greatly deplore their condition, but for them to wait, since evils are not cured by other evils. In our misfortune, we are all at fault."

Elias did not insist further. He bowed his head, continued rowing and, bringing the *banca* up to the shore, took leave of Ibarra saying:

"I thank you, Señor, for your condescension. For your own interests I ask you in the future to forget me, and never to recognize me in whatever place you may meet me."

And saying this, he turned his *banca* and rowed in the direction of a dense thicket on the beach. He seemed to observe only the millions of diamonds which his paddle lifted and which fell back into the lake, where they soon disappeared in the mystery of the blue waves.

Finally, he arrived at the place toward which he had been rowing. A man came out of the thicket and approached him:

"What shall I tell the captain?" he asked.

"Tell him that Elias, if he does not die before, will fulfill his word," he replied gloomily.

"Then when will you meet us?"

"When your captain thinks that the hour of danger has come."

"All right. Good-bye!"

"If I do not die before," murmured Elias.

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Chapter XXXII.

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Changes.

The modest Linares was serious and very uneasy. He had just received a letter from Doña Victorina which, translated from the most illiterate Spanish, and omitting its many errors in spelling and punctuation, was as follows:

"ESTEEMED COUSIN:—Within three days I want to know from you if you have killed the *alferez* or he you. I don't want another day to pass without this animal being punished. If this length of time passes and still you have not challenged him, I will tell Don Santiago that you never were secretary and that you never joked with Canovas or with General Martinez. I will tell Clarita that it is all a lie and I will not give you another *cuarto*. If you challenge him, I promise you all that you wish. If you do not challenge him, I will accept no excuses or reasons.

"Your cousin who loves you in her heart.

"VICTORINA DE LOS REYES DE DE ESPADAÑA.

"Sampalog, Monday Eve, 7 o'clock."

It was a serious matter. Linares knew Doña Victorina's character and knew what she was capable of doing. To reason with her was out of the question; to beg was useless; to deceive her worse. There was no other remedy than to challenge.

"But what can I do?" he said to himself, as he was walking alone. "If he receives me harshly? If I meet his wife? Who would want to be my second? The curate? Captain Tiago? Cursed be the hour in which I gave ear to her advice! What will this señorita say about me? Now I am sorry to have been secretary to all the ministers."

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The good Linares was in this sad soliloquy when Father Salví arrived. The Franciscan was certainly thinner and paler than usual, but his eyes shone with a peculiar light and a strange smile was seen on his lips.

"Señor Linares, all alone?" saluted the priest and directed his steps to the *sala*, through the half open door of which notes of the piano were heard.

Linares restrained a smile.

"And Don Santiago?" added the curate.

Captain Tiago presented himself at that moment, kissed the curate's hand, took the Father's hat and cane and smiled like one who had been blessed.

"Well, well!" said the curate, going into the *sala*, followed by Linares and Captain Tiago. "I have good news from Manila which you will all enjoy. I have received letters from Manila which confirm the one which Señor Ibarra brought me yesterday—so that, Don Santiago, the impediment is removed."

Maria Clara was seated at the piano between her two girl friends. She half rose to her feet at this remark, but her strength failed her and she sat down again. Linares turned pale and looked at Captain Tiago, who turned his eyes to the floor.

"This young man really seems to me a very nice fellow," continued the curate. "At first, I judged him bad—he is a little quick-tempered. But he knows so well how to atone for his faults afterward, that one cannot hold any grudge against him. If it were not for Father Dámaso...." And the curate directed a quick glance at Maria Clara. She was listening to all that was going on but without taking her eyes off the music—in spite of the concealed pinches which Sinang gave her to express her joy. Had she been alone, she would have danced.

"Father Dámaso?" asked Linares without finishing the sentence.

"Yes," continued the curate. "Father Dámaso has said that as ... godfather he could not permit ... but I believe that if finally, Señor Ibarra asks pardon, which I do not doubt he will do, all will be arranged."

Maria Clara arose, made an excuse and retired to her room, accompanied by Victoria.

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"And if Father Dámaso does not pardon him?" asked Captain Tiago, in a low voice.

"Then Maria Clara will see that Father Dámaso is her spiritual father. But I believe that they will come to an understanding."

At that moment, steps were heard and Ibarra appeared, followed by Aunt Isabel. His presence on the scene produced a varied effect. He saluted Captain Tiago affably, the latter not knowing whether to smile or to weep; to Linares he bowed profoundly. Father Salví arose and extended his hand to him so affectionately that Ibarra could not suppress a look of surprise.

"Do not think it strange," said Father Salví. "I was just paying you a compliment."

Ibarra thanked him and approached Sinang.

"Where have you been all day?" she asked, with a childish laugh. "We have been asking each other, 'Where could this soul redeemed from purgatory have gone?' Each one of us gave a different answer."

"And will you not tell what you said?"

"No, that is a secret; but I will surely tell you in private. Now tell us where you have been so that we can see who has been able to guess it."

"No, that also is a secret; but I will tell you alone, if the señores will permit."

"Certainly, certainly!" said Father Salví.

Sinang took Crisostomo to one end of the hall. She was very happy with the idea of knowing a secret.

"Tell me, my little friend," said Ibarra, "Is Maria angry with me?"

"I do not know, but she says that it is better that you should forget her and then begins to cry. Captain Tiago wants her to marry that gentleman; Father Dámaso also wishes it; but she says neither yes nor no. This morning when we were asking for you, I said: 'What if he has gone to make love to some one else?' She replied to me: 'Would to God that he had!' and then began to cry."

Ibarra was serious.

"Tell Maria that I want to speak with her alone."

"Alone?" asked Sinang, knitting her eyebrows and looking at him.

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"Entirely alone, no. But so that we may not be seen by that other señor."

"It is difficult, but don't worry. I will tell her."

"And when will I know the answer?"

"To-morrow come to the house early. Maria never wants to be alone. We keep her company. Victoria sleeps by her side one night, and I the next. To-morrow night it is my turn. But listen: What is the secret? You are going without telling me the principal thing."

"That is true. I was in the town of Los Baños. I went up there to do some business in cocoanut trees, since I am thinking of building a factory. Your father will be my partner."

"Nothing more than that? Give us the secret!" exclaimed Sinang in a loud voice and in the tone of a defrauded usurer. "I thought——"

"Take care. I don't want you to tell it."

"I have no desire to!" replied Sinang, sticking up her nose. "If it were something more important, I would tell it to my friends. But to buy cocoanuts! cocoanuts! Who is interested in cocoanuts?"

And she went away in haste to find her girl friends.

A few moments afterward, Ibarra seeing that the conversation was lagging, took leave of the gathering. Captain Tiago's expression was between sweet and sour; Linares was silent and observing; and the curate, feigning to be joyful, was telling stories. None of the girls had returned.

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Chapter XXXIII.

Playing Cards with the Shades.

A cloudy sky hides the moon, and a cold wind, the omen of approaching December, whirls the dry leaves and dust in the narrow path leading to the cemetery.

Under the gate, three forms are conversing in a low tone.

"Have you spoken to Elias?" asked a voice.

"No; you know he is very odd and discreet. But he ought to be with us. Don Crisostomo saved his life."

"I accepted the offer for the same reason," said the first voice. "Don Crisostomo is having my wife treated at a doctor's house in Manila. I have agreed to take charge of the convent in the attack, so that I can settle my accounts with the curate."

"And we, we will have charge of the attack on the *cuartel*, so that we can say to the members of the *Guardia Civil* that our father had sons."

"How many will there be of you?"

"Five! Five will be enough. Don Crisostomo's servant says that there will be twenty in all."

"And if things don't turn out well?"

"St!" said one, and they all became silent.

In the semi-darkness, a form could be seen crawling along the fence. From time to time it stopped, as if to look behind.

And it did so not without reason. Behind, at some twenty paces, came another form. This one was taller and seemed to be darker than the first. Each time that the first stopped this second one would disappear as if the earth had swallowed it.

"They are following me," murmured the one ahead. "Is it a *Guardia Civil*? Has the sacristan lied?"

"It appears that the appointment is here," said the second, in a low voice. "They are up to something bad, when the two brothers hide it from me."

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The first form finally arrived at the gate of the cemetery. The three who were already there advanced.

"Is it you?"

"Is it you?"

"Let us separate. Some one is following me. To-morrow we will have the arms and to-morrow night will be our time. The cry is 'Viva Don Crisostomo!' Begone!"

The three persons disappeared behind the wall. The recent arrival hid himself in the hollow of the gate and waited silently.

"Let's see who is following me!" he murmured.

The second person came along very cautiously, and stopped to look around.

"I have arrived late!" said he in a half intelligible voice. "But perhaps they will return."

And, as a fine rain began to fall and threatened to continue, he took refuge under the gate. Naturally, he met the other.

"Ah! who are you?" asked the one who had just come up, in a manly voice.

"And who are you?" replied the other tranquilly.

There was a moment's pause. Each tried to recognize the other by the tone of his voice and to distinguish the other's features.

"What are you waiting here for?" asked the one with the heavy voice.

"Till the clock strikes eight, so as to have a game of cards with the dead. I want to win some money to-night," replied the other, in an ordinary tone. "And you: what do you come here for?"

"A—a—for the same thing."

"Well! I am glad. So I will not be without a companion. I have brought some cards. At the first stroke of the bell, I put down the *albur* (the first two cards put on the board in monte). At the second stroke, I put down the *gallo* (the second pair). The cards which move after I have put them down, are those which the dead choose for themselves. Did you also bring some cards?"

"No."

"Then?"

"It is simple. Just as you act as 'banker' for them, so I hope that they will 'bank' for me." (In monte the banker deals the cards and bets that one of the cards in either the *albur* or *gallo* is turned up by dealing off the pack, before the card chosen by the other person is turned up. A banker can play against two others.)

"And if the shades do not care to 'bank'?"

"What can be done? The game is not obligatory upon the dead."

There was a moment's silence.

"Did you come armed? What if you have to fight with the shades of the dead?"

"I'll use my fists," replied the taller of the two.

"Ah! The devil! Now, I remember! The dead do not bet when there is more than one live person around. There are two of us."

"Is that true? Well, I don't want to go away."

"Nor I. I need some money," replied the smaller one. "But let us do this: We will decide by the cards which one shall go away."

"All right!" replied the other, showing a certain amount of displeasure.

"Then let us go in. Have you any matches?"

They entered the cemetery and in the obscurity they searched for a place where they might decide the question with the cards. They soon found a niche upon which they sat down. The shorter one took from his hat some playing cards and the other lighted a match.

Each one looked at the other in the light which the match made, but, judging from the expression on their faces, they did not recognize each other. However, we can

recognize in the taller one, the one with the manly voice, Elias; and in the smaller one, Lucas, with the scar on his cheek.

"Cut the cards!" said the latter, without ceasing to look at the other.

He pushed aside some bones which were found on the niche and turned up an ace and a jack for the *albur*. Elias lighted one match after another.

"On the jack!" said he and, in order to show which of the cards he was betting on, he placed upon it a piece of vertebræ. [214]

"I deal!" said Lucas and, after turning up four or five cards, an ace came up.

"You have lost," he added. "Now leave me alone so that I may win some money."

Elias, without saying a word, disappeared in the darkness.

Some minutes afterward, the clock in the church struck eight and the bell announced the hour of prayer. But Lucas did not invite anybody to play with him. He did not call out the shades, as superstition demanded. Instead, he uncovered his head, murmured some prayers and crossed himself with the same fervor as the chief of the Brotherhood of the Most Sacred Rosary would have done at that moment.

The drizzling rain continued all night. At nine o'clock the streets were dark and lonely. The little cocoanut oil lanterns, which each citizen had to hang out in front of his house gave light scarcely a meter around. It seemed as though they had been lighted so one might see the darkness.

Two Civil Guards were walking from one side of the street to the other near the church.

"It is cold," said one in Tagalog with a Visayan accent. "We aren't catching any sacristans. There is nobody to clean out the *alferez's* hen yard and we ought to catch some sacristan and make him do it. Since that one was killed, they have taken warning. I am getting tired of this."

"So am I," replied the other. "Nobody commits any robbery; no one disturbs the peace; but, thank God, they say that Elias is in town. The *alferez* says that the one who catches him will be free from whippings for three months."

"Ah! Do you know his identification marks?" asked the Visayan.

"I certainly do! Stature, tall, according to the *alferez's* description; ordinary, according to the description of Father Dámaso; color, brunette; eyes, black; nose, regular; mouth, regular; beard, none; hair, black."

"Ah! And particular marks?" [215]

"*Camisa*, black; pantaloons, black; a wood-cutter——"

"Ah! He will not escape. I think I see him already."

"I don't confuse him with anybody else, although you might think so."

Both soldiers continued their beats.

By the light of the lantern two forms could again be seen, one following the other cautiously. A forcible "*Quien vive?*" stops them both. The first one replied "*España,*" in a trembling voice.

The two soldiers drag him along and bring him up to the light, to recognize him. It was Lucas, but the soldiers were in doubt and questioned each other with a glance.

"The *alferez* said nothing about his having a scar," said the Visayan in a low voice. "Where are you going?"

"To order a mass for to-morrow."

"Have you not seen Elias?"

"I do not know him, señor," replied Lucas.

"You dunce! I am not asking if you know him. Nor do we know him. I am asking you if you have seen him."

"No, señor."

"Listen closely. I will give you his description. Stature, at times tall, at times regular; skin and eyes, black; all the others are regular," said the Visayan. "Do you know him now?"

"No, señor," replied Lucas, frightened.

"Then, *sulong!* (Go along). You brute! You ass!" And they gave him a shove.

"Do you know why Elias is tall, according to the *alferez*, and why he is short, according to the curate?" asked the Tagalog of the other.

"No."

"Because the *alferez* was stuck in a mud hole when he observed him, and the curate was on foot when he saw him."

"That's right!" exclaimed the Visayan. "You are bright. Why are you a *Guardia Civil?*"

"I haven't been always. I was a smuggler at one time," replied the Tagalog boastfully.

But another form attracted their attention. They called out "*Quien Vive?*" and brought him up to the light. This time it was Elias himself.

"Where are you going?"

"I am pursuing, señor, a man who has whipped and threatened my brother. He has a scar on his face and his name is Elias——"

"Ha?" exclaimed the two, and looked at each other frightened.

And at once they started on a run toward the church, where a few minutes before Lucas had disappeared.

Chapter XXXIV.

The Discovery.

The bell announces the hour of evening prayer. On hearing the religious sound, all stop, leave their work and uncover their heads; the laborer, coming from the fields on the *carabao's* back, suspends the song to which the animal keeps step, and prays; the women in the middle of the street make the sign of the cross, and move their lips with affectation so that no one may doubt their devotion: the man stops fondling his game-cock and recites the Angelus so that he may have good luck; in the houses, they pray in a loud voice ... every sound which is not a part of the *Ave Maria* is dissipated, silenced.

However, the curate, without his hat, hastily crosses the street, scandalizing many old women. And still more scandalous, he directs his steps towards the *alferez's* house. The devout women think that it is time for them to stop the movement of their lips and to kiss the curate's hand, but Father Salví takes no notice of them. To-day he finds no pleasure in placing his bony hand under a Christian's nose. Some important business must be occupying him that he should so forget his own interests and those of the Church!

He goes up the stairs and knocks impatiently at the *alferez's* door. The latter appears, his eyebrows knit and followed by his better half, who smiles malignantly.

"Ah, Father Curate! I was just going to see you. Your he-goat...."

"I have a most important matter...."

"I can't allow your goat to go on breaking down my fence.... I'll shoot him if he gets in there again."

"That is if you are alive to-morrow," said the curate, breathless, and directing himself toward the *sala*.

"What! do you think that that seven-months-old puppy will kill me? I'll kick him to pieces."

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Father Salví stepped back and looked instinctively at the feet of the *alferez*.

"Whom are you talking about?" asked he, trembling.

"Of whom could I be talking but that big blockhead who proposes to challenge me to a duel with revolvers at one hundred paces?"

"Ah!" sighed the curate, and added: "I have come to speak about a most urgent matter which seriously concerns the life of all of us."

"Seriously!" repeated the *alferez*, turning pale in turn. "Does this young fellow shoot well...?"

"I am not speaking about him."

"Then?"

The friar pointed to the door which the *alferez* shut in his customary manner, by a kick. The *alferez* usually found his hands superfluous. An imprecation and a groan from without were heard.

"You brute. You have cut open my head!" cried his wife.

"Now unbosom yourself," said he to the curate in a quiet manner. The latter looked at him for some time. Afterward he asked, in that nasal and monotonous priest's voice:

"Did you see how I came running?"

"Umph! I thought something was the matter with you."

"When I leave my duties in this manner there are grave motives."

"And what is it?" asked the other, stamping his foot on the floor.

"Calm yourself!"

"Then, why did you come in such a hurry?"

The curate approached him and asked in a mysterious way:

"Don't—you—know—anything—new?"

The *alferez* shrugged his shoulders.

"You confess that you know absolutely nothing?"

"What! do you mean to tell me about Elias, whom your sacristan mayor hid last night?" he asked.

"No, no! I don't speak of such matters now," replied the curate, in a bad humor. "I am talking about a great danger."

"Then d——n it! Let it out."

"Now then," said the friar slowly and with a certain disdain, "you will see again how important we priests are. The lowest layman is worth a regiment, so that a curate...."

And then lowering his voice in a very mysterious manner:

"I have discovered a great conspiracy."

The *alferez* started and looked at the friar astonished.

"A terrible and well-laid conspiracy, which is to break out this very night."

"This very night!" exclaimed the *alferez*, moving at first toward Father Salví, and then running after his revolver and saber, which were hanging on the wall: "Whom shall I arrest? Whom shall I arrest?" he cried.

"Be calm. It is not yet time, thanks to my great haste. At eight o'clock."

"I'll shoot them all!"

"Listen! This afternoon a woman, whose name I must not mention (it is a secret of the confessional) came to me and disclosed it all. At eight o'clock they will take the *cuartel* by surprise, sack the convent, seize the Government's steamboat and assassinate all the Spaniards."

The *alferez* was stupified.

"The woman has not told more than that," added the curate.

"Has not told you more? Then I'll arrest her!"

"No; I cannot consent to it. The tribunal of penitence is the throne of God of forgiveness."

"Neither God nor forgiveness count in this matter. I'll arrest her."

"You are losing your head. What you ought to do is to prepare yourself. Arm your soldiers quietly and put them in ambush. Send me four Guards for the convent and notify the people on the Government steamboat."

"The boat is not here. I'll send to other sections for aid."

"They would notice that and would not go on with their plans. No, don't do that. What is important is that we catch them alive and make them talk; I say, you will make them disclose the conspiracy. I, in the capacity of a priest, ought not to mix myself in these matters. Now's your chance! Here you can win crosses and stars. I ask only that you make it evident that I am the one who warned you."

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"It will be made evident, Father, it will be made evident! And perhaps a mitre will fall to you!" replied the radiant *alferez*.

"Be sure and send me four un-uniformed Civil Guards, eh? Be discreet! To-night at eight o'clock, it will rain stars and crosses."

While this was going on, a man came running down the road which led to Ibarra's house, and quickly went up the stairs.

"Is the Señor at home?" asked Elias of the servant.

"He is in his laboratory at work."

Ibarra, in order to pass the time while he impatiently waited for the hour when he could make explanations to Maria Clara, had gone to work in his cabinet.

"Ah, is it you, Elias?" he exclaimed. "I was thinking about you. Yesterday, I forgot to ask you for the name of that Spaniard in whose house your grandfather lived."

"Don't bother yourself, Señor, about me...."

"Look!" continued Ibarra, without noting the agitation of the young man, and putting a piece of bamboo to a flame. "I have made a great discovery. This bamboo is incombustible...."

"Don't talk about bamboo now, Señor. Talk about collecting your papers and fleeing in a minute."

Ibarra looked at him surprised, and, on seeing the seriousness in Elias's countenance, he dropped the object which he had in his hands.

"Burn everything that can possibly implicate you in any way and put yourself in a more secure place within an hour."

"And what for?" he asked at last.

"Put all that you have of value in a secure place...."

"And what for?"

"Burn all papers written by you or to you. The most innocent can be interpreted in a bad sense."

"But what for?"

"What for? Because I have just discovered a conspiracy which will be attributed to you in order to ruin you."

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"A conspiracy? And who has planned it?"

"I have been unable to learn the author of it. Only a moment ago I was talking with one of the unfortunate men who have been paid for it. I could not dissuade him."

"And didn't that fellow say who paid him?"

"Yes. Asking me to keep the secret, he told me that it was you."

"My God!" exclaimed Ibarra. He stood stupefied.

"Señor, don't hesitate, don't doubt, don't lose time, for undoubtedly the conspiracy will break out this very night."

Ibarra, with staring eyes, and hands holding his head, seemed not to hear him.

"The blow cannot be thwarted," continued Elias. "I have arrived too late. I do not know their leaders ... save yourself, Señor, save yourself for the sake of your country."

"Where shall I flee? They are expecting me this evening," exclaimed Ibarra, thinking of Maria Clara.

"To any other town, to Manila, to the house of some official; only flee somewhere so that they will not say that you are directing the movement."

"And if I myself denounce the conspiracy?"

"You denounce it?" exclaimed Elias, looking at him, and stepping back. "You would pass for a traitor and a coward in the eyes of the conspirators, and for a pusillanimous person in the eyes of others. They would say that you had played a trick to win some praise, they would say...."

"But what can be done?"

"Already I have told you. Destroy all the papers you have which relate to you; flee and await developments."

"And Maria Clara?" exclaimed the young man. "No; death first!"

Elias wrung his hands and said:

"Well, then, at least avoid the blow. Prepare yourself against their accusations."

Ibarra looked around him in a stupefied manner.

"Then, help me! There in those bags I have my family letters. Sort out those from my father, which are, perhaps, the ones that would incriminate me. Read the signatures."

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Ibarra, stunned and overwhelmed, opened and closed drawers, collected papers, hastily read letters, tore up some, kept others, took down books and thumbed through some of them. Elias did the same, if indeed with less confusion, with equal zeal. But he stopped, with eyes wide open, turned over a paper which he had in his hand and asked in a trembling voice:

"Did your family know Don Pedro Eibarramendia?"

"Certainly!" replied Ibarra, opening a drawer and taking out a pile of papers. "He was my great-grandfather."

"Your great grandfather? Don Pedro Eibarramendia?" he again asked, with livid features and a changed appearance.

"Yes," replied Ibarra, distracted. "We cut short the name, for it was too long."

"He was a Basque?" said Elias approaching him.

"Yes; but what's the matter?" he asked, surprised.

Elias closed his fist, shook it in Ibarra's face and looked at him. Crisostomo stepped back as soon as he read the expression on that face.

"Do you know who Don Pedro Eibarramendia was?" he asked between his teeth. "Don Pedro Eibarramendia was that wretch who accused my grandfather and caused all our misery.... I was looking for one of his name. God has given you into my hands.... Account to me for our misfortunes."

Ibarra looked at him terrified. Elias shook him by the arm and, in a bitter voice, filled with hate, said:

"Look at me well; see if I have suffered, and you, you live, you love, you have fortune, home, consideration. You live ... you live!"

And, beside himself, he ran toward a small collection of arms, but he had scarcely grasped two swords when he let them fall, and, like a madman, looked at Ibarra, who remained immovable.

Chapter XXXV.

The Catastrophe.

There in the dining-room Captain Tiago, Linares, and Aunt Isabel were eating supper. In the *sala* the rattling of plate and tableware was heard. Maria Clara had said that she did not care to eat and had seated herself at the piano. By her side was jolly Sinang, who murmured little secrets in Maria's ear, while Father Salví uneasily paced the *sala*.

It was not because the convalescent had no appetite that she was not eating. It was because she was awaiting the arrival of a certain person and had taken advantage of the moment in which her Argus could not be present, the hour when Linares ate.

"You will see how that ghost will stay till eight o'clock," murmured Sinang, pointing to the curate. "At eight o'clock *he* ought to come. This priest is as much in love as Linares."

Maria Clara looked at her friend, frightened. The latter, without noticing her expression, continued her terrible gossip:

"Ah! Now I know why he doesn't go, in spite of all my hints. He doesn't want to burn the lamps in the convent. Don't you see? Ever since you fell ill, he has had the two lights which he used to burn, put out. But look at his eyes and his face!"

Just at that moment the clock in the house struck eight. The curate trembled and went and sat down in a corner of the room.

"He is coming," said Sinang, pinching Maria Clara. "Do you hear?"

The bell in the church tolled eight and all arose to pray. Father Salví, with a weak and trembling voice, led, but, as each one had his own thoughts, nobody paid any attention to him.

The prayer had scarcely ended, when Ibarra presented himself. The young man was wearing mourning, not only in his dress, but in his face. In fact, it was so evident that Maria Clara, on seeing him, arose and took a step toward him as if to ask what ailed him, but at the same instant a discharge of musketry was heard. Ibarra stopped, his eyes rolled and he was unable to speak. The curate hid himself behind a pillar. More shooting and more noise was heard in the direction of the convent, followed by cries and the sound of people running. Captain Tiago, Aunt Isabel and Linares entered the room, hurriedly crying "*tulisan! tulisan!*" Andeng followed them, brandishing a spit and ran toward her foster sister.

Aunt Isabel fell on her knees and prayed the *Kyrie eleison*. Captain Tiago, pale and trembling, carried a chicken's liver on his fork, and, in tears, offered it to the Virgin of Antipolo. Linares had his mouth full and was armed with a spoon. Sinang and Maria Clara embraced each other. The only person who did not move was Ibarra. He stood as if petrified, his face indescribably pale.

The cries and blows continued, the windows were shut with a bang, a whistle was heard, and occasionally a shot.

"*Christe eleison!* Santiago, fasten the windows," groaned Aunt Isabel.

"Fifty great bombs and a thanksgiving mass," replied Captain Tiago. "*Ora pro nobis!*"

After a time, things quieted down and there was a terrible silence. The voice of the *alferez* was distinguished, as he came running in, and crying: "Father curate! Father Salví! Come!"

"*Misere!* The *alferez* is asking for confession!" cried Aunt Isabel.

"Is he wounded?" asked Linares at last. "Ah!"

"Come, Father Salví! There is nothing to fear now," continued the *alferez*, shouting.

Father Salví, pale, and decided at last, came out of his hiding-place and went downstairs.

"The *tulisanes* have killed the *alferez!*" said Aunt Isabel.

"Maria Clara, Sinang, go to your room! Fasten the door! *Kyrie eleison!*"

Ibarra also went toward the stairs, in spite of Aunt Isabel, who was saying: "Don't go out! You haven't confessed yet. Don't go out!"

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The good old woman had been a great friend of Ibarra's mother.

But Ibarra left the house. It seemed to him that all about him was revolving through the air, that even the ground was gone from under his feet. His ears buzzed. His legs moved heavily and irregularly. Waves of blood, light and darkness, succeeded one another on the retina of his eye.

Despite the fact that the moon was shining brightly in the heavens, the young man stumbled on every stone in the solitary and deserted street.

Near the *cuartel* he saw some soldiers with their bayonets fixed, talking excitedly. He passed by unseen.

In the tribunal, blows, cries, wails, and curses were heard. The *alferez's* voice drowned all the others.

"Put him in the stocks! Put handcuffs on that fellow! Two shots for whoever moves! Sergeant, you will mount your guard! Let no one pass, not even God! Corporal, let no one sleep!"

Ibarra hastened his steps toward his house. His servants were uneasily awaiting him.

"Saddle the best horse and go to bed!" said he to them.

He entered his laboratory and hurriedly began to get his travelling bag ready. He opened an iron box, took out all the money which he found there and put it in a bag. He gathered his jewels together, took down a picture of Maria Clara which was hanging upon the wall, and, arming himself with a dirk and two revolvers, he turned to the cupboard where he had some tools.

At that instant, three blows, loud and strong, sounded on the door.

"Who's there?" asked Ibarra, in a doleful voice.

"Open in the name of the King! Open the door at once, or we will knock it down!" replied an imperious Spanish voice.

Ibarra looked toward the window. His eyes flashed and he cocked his revolver. But changing his mind, he left the arms and went to open the door at the same moment that the servants came up.

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Three Guards seized him instantly.

"You are made a prisoner in the name of the King!" said the sergeant.

"What for?"

"They will tell you later. We are prohibited from saying a word."

The young man reflected a moment and not wishing, perhaps, the soldiers to discover his preparations for flight, he took his hat and said:

"I am at your disposal. I suppose it will be only for a short time."

"If you promise not to escape, we will not handcuff you. The *alferez* grants this favor, but if you flee——"

Ibarra followed, leaving the servants in consternation.

In the meantime, what had become of Elias?

On leaving Crisostomo's house, like a madman, he ran about without knowing where. He crossed fields, and in violent agitation arrived at a forest. He was fleeing from people, and from light. The moon troubled him and he entered the mysterious shade of the forest. Sometimes stopping, sometimes following unbroken paths, leaning upon century-old trunks, entangled in the briars, he looked toward the town, which lay at his feet bathed in the light of the moon, stretching itself out on the plain, lying on the shore of the lake. Birds, disturbed in

their sleep, flew away. Owls screeched and flew from one limb to another. But Elias neither heard nor saw them. He thought he was being followed by the infuriated shades of his ancestors. He saw the horrible basket hanging from every branch with the blood-covered head of Bálata, just as his father had described it to him. He thought he saw the dead body of his grandmother lying at the foot of every tree. He seemed to see the skeleton of his dishonored grandfather in the darkness, and the skeleton, the old woman, and the head all cried out to him, "Coward! Coward!"

He left the mountain and fled down toward the sea. He ran along the beach in agitation. But there in the distance, amid the waves, where the light of the moon seemed to raise a fog, he thought he saw a shade raise itself, the shade of his sister, with her breast covered with blood, her hair hanging loose in the air.

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Elias fell upon his knees on the sand.

"And you, too!" he cried stretching out his arms.

Then, with his eyes fixed on the fog, he arose slowly and, advancing toward it, went into the water as if to follow somebody. He waded on over the gentle slope of the beach which forms the bar. He was already far from the shore and the water was up to his belt. He went on and on, as if fascinated by a seducing spirit. The water was now up to his breast. Suddenly, the discharge of musketry awoke him from his dream, the vision disappeared, and the young man returned to reality. He stopped, reflected, and noticed that he was in the water. The lake was smooth and he could still see the lights in the fishermen's huts.

He returned to the shore and made his way toward the town. What for? He himself did not know.

The town seemed uninhabited. The houses were all closed. Even the animals, the dogs which are accustomed to bark at night, had hid themselves through fear. The silvery light of the moon increased the sadness and solitude.

Afraid of meeting the Civil Guards, he went through the orchards and gardens. In one of the gardens he thought he saw two human forms, but he continued his way. Jumping over fences and walls, he arrived after great labor at the other side of the town, and directed his steps toward Ibarra's house. The servants were in the door, lamenting and commenting on the arrest of their master.

Aware of what had passed, Elias went away, but returned to the house, leaped over the wall, crawled through a window and went into the cabinet or laboratory, where the candle which Ibarra had left was still burning.

Elias saw the papers and the books. He found the arms and the little sacks which contained the money and the jewelry. All that had passed ran through his imagination again, and, seeing all the papers which might incriminate Ibarra, he thought of collecting them, throwing them through the window and burying them.

He glanced toward the garden and, by the light of the moon, he saw two Civil Guards coming with an adjutant. Their bayonets and helmets were glistening in the light.

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Then he decided. He piled up the clothes and papers in the middle of the cabinet, emptied the oil in a lamp upon the pile and set fire to it. He quickly buckled the arms around him. He saw the picture of Maria Clara, hesitated—put it in one of the little sacks, and jumped out of the window with them all.

It was already time, for the two Civil Guards were forcing their entrance.

"Let us go up to get your master's papers," said the adjutant.

"Have you permission? If not, you shall not go up!" said an old servant.

But the soldiers pushed the servants aside with the butts of their guns and went upstairs. A thick smoke was already filling the whole house, and gigantic tongues of flame were coming out from the *sala*, licking the doors and windows.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" they all cried.

Each hurried to save what he could, but the fire had filled the small laboratory, breaking out furiously among the inflammable materials. The Civil Guards had to turn back. The fire, roaring and sweeping all before it, closed the passage to them. In vain they brought water from the well. All were shouting, and crying for help, but they were isolated. The fire reached the other rooms and in thick columns of smoke ascended to the heavens. Some peasants came from a distance, but they arrived only in time to see the frightful spectacle, the end of that old building, so

Chapter XXXVI.

What People Say and Think.

Day dawned at last for the terrorized people. The streets in which the *cuartel* and the tribunal were situated were still deserted and solitary. The houses showed no signs of life. However, a shutter was opened with a creaking noise and an infant head stuck out and looked in all directions.... Slap!... A sound announces hard contact between a strip of leather and a human body. The child made a grimace, closed its eyes and disappeared. The shutter was closed again.

The example had been set. Without any doubt the opening and closing of the shutter has been heard, for another window was opened very slowly and cautiously and a wrinkled and toothless old woman thrust out her head. She was called Sister Ruté. She looked about, knit her brows, spit noisily and then crossed herself. In the house opposite, a little window was timidly opened and her friend, Sister Rufa appeared. They looked at each other for a moment, smiled, made some signals, and again crossed themselves.

"*Jesús!* It was like a thanksgiving mass," said Sister Rufa.

"Since the time that Bálat sacked the town I have never seen a night like it," replied Sister Puté.

"What a lot of shots! They say that it was old Pablo's gang."

"*Tulisanes?* It couldn't be. They say that it was the *cuaderillos* against the Civil Guards. For this reason, they have arrested Don Filipo."

"*Sanctus Deus!* They say that there are no less than fourteen killed."

Other windows were opened and different faces appeared, exchanging salutations and commenting on the affair.

In the light of the day—which promised to be a splendid one—could be seen in the distance, like ash-colored shadows, soldiers hurrying about in confusion.

"There goes another corpse!" said some one from one of the windows.

"One? I see two."

"And so do I. But do you know what it was?" asked a man with a crafty face.

"Certainly. The *cuaderillos*."

"No, Señor. An uprising at the *cuartel*."

"What uprising? The curate against the *alferez?*"

"No, nothing of the sort," said he who had asked the question. "The Chinese have risen in revolt."

And he closed his window again.

"The Chinese!" repeated all, with the greatest astonishment.

In a quarter of an hour other versions of the affair were in circulation. Ibarra, with his servants, it was said, had tried to steal Maria Clara, and Captain Tiago, aided by the *Guardia Civil* had defended her.

By this time the number of the dead was no longer fourteen, but thirty. Captain Tiago, it was said, was wounded and was going right off to Manila with his family.

The arrival of two *cuaderillos*, carrying a human form in a wheelbarrow, and followed by a Civil Guard, produced a great sensation. It was supposed that they came from the convent. From the form of the feet which were hanging down, they tried to guess who it could be. By half-past seven, when other Civil Guards arrived from neighboring towns, the current version of the affair was already clear and detailed.

"I have just come from the tribunal, where I have seen Don Filippo and Don Crisostomo prisoners," said a man to Sister Puté. "I talked with one of the *cuaderilleros* on guard. Well, Bruno, the son of the man who was whipped to death, made a declaration last night. As you know, Captain Tiago is going to marry his daughter to a Spaniard. Don Crisostomo, offended, wanted to take revenge and tried to kill all the Spaniards, even the curate. Last night they attacked the convent and the *cuartel*. Happily, by mercy of God, the curate was in Captain Tiago's house. They say that many escaped. The Civil Guards burned Don Crisostomo's house, and if they had not taken him prisoner, they would have burned him, too."

"They burned the house?"

"All the servants were arrested. Why, you can still see the smoke from here!" said the narrator, approaching the window. "Those who come from there relate very sad things."

All looked toward the place indicated. A light column of smoke was still ascending to the heavens. All made comments more or less pious, more or less accusatory.

"Poor young man!" exclaimed an old man, the husband of Puté.

"Yes!" replied his wife. "But he did not order a mass for the soul of his father, who undoubtedly needs it more than others."

"But wife, you don't have any pity...."

"Sympathy for the excommunicated? It is a sin to have pity for the enemies of God, say the curates. Don't you remember? He ran over the sacred burial ground as if he were in a cattle pen."

"But a cattle pen and a cemetery are much alike," responded the old man, "except that but one class of animals enter the cemetery."

"What!" cried Sister Puté. "Are you still going to defend him whom God so clearly punishes? You will see that they will arrest you, too. You may support a falling house, if you want to!"

The husband became silent in view of this argument.

"Yes," continued the old woman, "after striking Father Dámaso, there was nothing left for him to do but to kill Father Salví."

"But you can't deny that he was a good boy when he was a child."

"Yes, he was a good child," replied the old woman, "but he went to Spain. All those who go to Spain return heretics, so the curates say."

"Oh!" exclaimed the husband, seeing his revenge. "And the curate, and all the curates, and the Archbishops, and the Pope, and the Virgin—are they not Spaniards? Bah! Are they heretics, too? Bah!"

Happily for Sister Puté, the arrival of a servant, who rushed in confused and pale, cut off the discussion.

"A man hanged in a neighboring orchard!" she exclaimed breathless.

"A man hanged!" exclaimed all, full of amazement.

The women crossed themselves. No one could stir.

"Yes, Señor," continued the servant, trembling. "I was going to gather some peas in.... I looked into the orchard next door ... to see if there ... I saw a man swinging.... I thought it was Teo ... I went nearer to gather peas, and I saw that it was not he but it was another, and was dead ... I ran, ran and...."

"Let us go and see it," said the old man, rising. "Take us there."

"Don't go!" cried Sister Puté, seizing him by the shirt.

"You'll get into trouble! He has hanged himself? Then all the worse for him!"

"Let me see it, wife! Go to the tribunal, Juan, and report it. Perhaps he is not dead yet."

And he went ino[typo, should be into?] the orchard, followed by the servant, who kept hid behind him. The women and Sister Puté herself came along behind, full of terror and curiosity.

"There it is, Señor," said the servant stopping him and pointing with her finger.

The group stopped at a respectful distance, allowing the old man to advance alone.

The body of a man, hanging from the limb of a *santol* tree, was swinging slowly in the breeze. The old man contemplated it for some time. He looked at the rigid feet, the arms, the stained clothing and the drooping head.

"We ought not to touch the corpse until some official has arrived," said he, in a loud voice. "He is already stiff. He has been dead for some time."

The women approached hesitatingly.

"It is the neighbor who lived in that little house; the one who arrived only two weeks ago. Look at the scar on his face."

"Ave Maria!" exclaimed some of the women.

"Shall we pray for his soul?" asked a young girl as soon as she had finished looking at the dead body from all directions.

"You fool! You heretic!" Sister Puté scolded her. "Don't you know what Father Dámaso said? To pray for a damned person is to tempt God. He who commits suicide is irrevocably condemned. For this reason, he cannot be buried in a sacred place. I had begun to think that this man was going to have a bad ending. I never could guess what he lived on."

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"I saw him twice speaking with the sacristan mayor," observed a girl.

"It couldn't have been to confess himself or to order a mass!"

The neighbors gathered together and a large circle surrounded the corpse which was still swinging. In half an hour some officers and two *cuaderillos* arrived. They took the body down and put it in a wheelbarrow.

"Some people are in a hurry to die," said one of the officers, laughing, while he took out the pen from behind his ear.

He asked some trifling questions; took the declaration of the servant, whom he tried to implicate, now looking at her with evil in his eyes, now threatening her and now attributing to her words which she did not say—so much so that the servant, believing that she was going to be taken to jail, began to weep and finished by declaring that she was looking for peas, but that ... and she called Teo to witness.

In the meantime, a peasant with a wide hat and a large plaster on his neck, was examining the body, and the rope by which it was hanging.

The face was no more livid than the rest of the body. Above the rope could be seen two scars and two small bruises. Where the rope had rubbed, there was no blood and the skin was white. The curious peasant examined closely the *camisa* and the pantaloons. He noted that they were full of dust and recently torn in some places. But what most attracted his attention were the "stick-tights"¹ on his clothing, even up to his neck.

"What do you see?" asked the officer.

"I was trying to identify him, señor," stammered the peasant, lowering his hat further from his uncovered head.

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"But haven't you heard that it was one Lucas? Were you sleeping?"

All began to laugh. The peasant, embarrassed, muttered a few words, and went away with head down, walking slowly.

"Here! Where are you going?" cried the old man. "You can't get out that way. That's the way to the dead man's house."

"That fellow is still asleep," said the officer with a jeer. "We'll have to throw some water on him!"

Those standing around laughed again.

The peasant left the place where he had played so poor a part and directed his steps toward the church. In the sacristy, he asked for the sacristan mayor.

"He is still sleeping!" they replied gruffly. "Don't you know that they sacked the convent last night?"

"I will wait till he awakes."

The sacristans looked at him with that rudeness characteristic of people who are in the habit of being ill-treated.

In a dark corner, the one-eyed sacristan mayor was sleeping in a large chair. His spectacles were across his forehead among his long locks of hair. His squalid, bony breast was bare, and rose and fell with regularity.

The peasant sat down near by, disposed to wait patiently, but a coin fell on the floor and he began looking for it with the aid of a candle, under the sacristan mayor's big chair. The peasant also noted "stick-tights" on the sleeping man's pantaloons and on the arms of his *camisa*. The sacristan awoke at last, rubbed his good eye, and, in a very bad humor, reproached the man.

"I would like to order a mass said, señor," replied he in a tone of excuse.

"They have already finished all the masses," said the one-eyed man, softening his accent a little. "If you want it for to-morrow.... Is it for souls in Purgatory?"

"No, señor;" replied the peasant, giving him a *peso*.

And looking fixedly in his one eye, he added:

"It is for a person who is going to die soon." And he left the sacristy. "I could have seized him last night," he added, sighingly as he removed the plaster from his neck. And he straightened up and regained the stature and appearance of Elias.

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¹ A plant (*Desmodium caresceus*), the dry seeds of which cling to the clothing.

Chapter XXXVII.

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Vae Victis!

Civil Guards were passing with a sinister air to and fro in front of the door of the tribunal, threatening with the butts of their guns the daring boys who stood on tip-toe or raised each other up in order to look through the grates in the windows.

The *sala* did not present that same joyful aspect as it did when the program for the festival was being discussed. It was gloomy and the silence was almost death-like. The Civil Guards and the *cuaderilleros* who were occupying the room scarcely spoke and the few words that they did pronounce were in a low tone. Around the table sat the *directorcillo*, two writers and some soldiers scribbling papers. The *alferez* walked from one side to the other, looking from time to time ferociously toward the door. Themistocles after the battle of Salamis could not have shown more pride at the Olympic games. Doña Consolacion yawned in one corner of the room, and disclosed her black palate and her crooked teeth. Her cold and evil look was fixed on the door of the jail, covered with indecent pictures. Her husband, made amiable by the victory, had yielded to her request to be allowed to witness the interrogation and, perhaps, the tortures which were to follow. The hyena smelled the dead body, she licked her chops and was wearied at the delay in the punishment.

The *gobernadorcillo's* chair, that large chair under the portrait of His Majesty, was empty and seemed destined for some other person.

At nearly nine o'clock, the curate, pale and with eyebrows knit, arrived.

"Well, you haven't made any one wait!" said the *alferez* sarcastically to the friar.

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"I would have preferred not to be present," replied Father Salví, in a low voice, without taking notice of the bitter tone.... "I am very nervous."

"As no one came, I decided that, in order not to leave the chair empty, your presence.... You already know that the prisoners are to leave town this afternoon."

"Young Ibarra and the *teniente mayor*?"

The *alferez* pointed toward the jail.

"Eight are in there," said he. "Bruno died last night at midnight, but his declaration has been obtained."

The curate saluted Doña Consolacion, who responded with a yawn and an "aah!" The friar took the big chair under the picture of His Majesty.

"We can begin," said he.

"Bring out the two who are in the stocks!" ordered the *alferez* in his most terrifying voice. And turning to the curate, he added, changing his tone:

"They are fastened in the stocks with two holes vacant!"

For those who are interested in instruments of torture, we will say that the stocks is one of the most innocent. The holes in which are fastened the legs of the prisoner are a little more or less than a palm apart. Leaving two holes vacant, and putting the prisoner's legs in the holes on either side, would make the position strained, so that the ankles would suffer peculiarly and the lower extremities be stretched apart more than a yard. It does not kill instantly, as may well be imagined.

The turnkey, followed by four soldiers, drew back the bolt and opened the door. A nauseating odor, and the thick, damp air escaped from the dense darkness of the prison and, at the same time, groans and sighs were heard. A soldier lighted a match, but the flame was extinguished in that foul, vitiated atmosphere, and they had to wait till the air was renewed.

In the vague light of a candle, several human forms could be discerned. They were men, some of whom locked their arms around their knees and hid their heads between them, others were lying down, with their mouths to the ground, some standing, and some leaning against the wall. A blow and a creaking sound was heard, accompanied by oaths; the stocks were being opened.

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Doña Consolacion's body was bent forward, the muscles of her neck were rigid, her eyes riveted to the half open door.

Between the soldiers came out Tarsilo, the brother of Bruno. He wore handcuffs. His torn clothes disclosed well-developed muscles. His eyes were fixed insolently on the *alferez's* wife.

"This is the one who defended himself most bravely, and who ordered his companions to flee," said the *alferez* to Father Salví.

Behind came another miserable sight, a man crying and weeping like a child. He was limping and his pantaloons were stained with blood.

"Mercy, señor, have mercy! I will not enter the *cuartel* yard again," he cried.

"He is a crafty fellow," said the *alferez*, speaking to the curate. "He wanted to flee, but had received a flesh wound."

"What is your name?" asked the *alferez*, speaking to Tarsilo.

"Tarsilo Alasigan."

"What did Don Crisostomo promise you for attacking the *cuartel*?"

"Don Crisostomo has never communicated with us."

"Don't deny it! You wanted to surprise us for him!"

"You are mistaken. You whipped our father to death. We avenged him and nothing more. Look for your two soldiers!"

The *alferez* looked at the sergeant, surprised.

"They are at the bottom of that precipice. We threw them there yesterday. There they will rot. Now kill me! You will know nothing more."

Silence and general surprise.

"You are not going to tell who were your accomplices?" said the *alferez* in a threatening manner and brandishing a whip.

A scornful smile curled the lips of the culprit.

The *alferez* conferred for some minutes with the curate in a low voice. Then turning to the soldiers, he ordered:

"Take him to where the dead bodies are!"

In a corner of the yard, upon an old wagon, were five bodies close together and

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half covered by a filthy piece of torn matting. A soldier on guard was pacing up and down, and constantly spitting.

"Do you recognize them?" asked the *alferez*, lifting the matting.

Tarsilo did not respond. He saw the dead body of Pedro, with two others; one, his own brother, riddled with bayonet wounds, and the other, Lucas, with the rope still around his neck. His look became gloomy and a sigh seemed to escape from his breast.

"Do you know them?" they asked him.

Tarsilo remained silent.

There was a whistling sound and the whip came down across his back. He trembled, and his muscles contracted. The lashes were repeated, but Tarsilo continued impassive.

"Let them whip him till they cut him to pieces or till he makes a declaration," cried the *alferez*, exasperated.

"Speak then!" said the *directorcillo* to him. "They will surely kill you."

They led him back to the *sala* of the tribunal, where the other prisoner was invoking God, grating his teeth and shaking on his legs.

"Do you know this man?" asked Father Salví.

"This is the first time I have ever seen him," replied Tarsilo, looking with a certain pity on the other.

The *alferez* gave him a cuff with his fist and kicked him.

"Tie him to the bench!"

Without taking off the bloody handcuffs, he was fastened to the wooden bench. The unhappy fellow looked about him as if in search of some one, and his eyes fell on Doña Consolacion. He smiled sardonically. Those present were surprised and followed his glance and saw the señora. She was biting her lips.

"I have never seen an uglier woman," exclaimed Tarsilo amid the general silence. "I prefer to lie down on this bench as I am doing than to lie by her side, like the *alferez*."

The Muse turned pale.

"You are going to whip me to death, *alferez*," he continued, "but to-night I will be avenged by your woman."

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"Gag him!" shouted the *alferez*, furious and trembling with rage.

It seemed as though Tarsilo had wanted the gag, for when he had it in his mouth, his eyes gleamed with a ray of satisfaction.

At a signal from the *alferez* a guard, armed with a whip, began his cruel task. The whole body of Tarsilo shrank. A groan, suppressed and prolonged, could be heard in spite of the rag which stopped up his mouth. He lowered his head. His clothes were being stained with blood.

Father Salví, pale and with a wild look, rose to his feet laboriously, made a sign with his hand and left the *sala* with vacillating steps. In the street, he saw a girl, leaning her back against the wall, rigid, immovable, listening attentively, looking into space, her marble-like hands extended along the old wall. The sun was shining full upon her. She was counting, it seemed without breathing, the sharp blows and listening to that heart-rending groan. She was Tarsilo's sister.

In the meantime, the scene was continuing in the *sala*. The unfortunate fellow, overcome with pain, had become silent and waited for his punishers to tire. At last, the soldier breathless, let fall his arm. The *alferez*, pale with wrath and astonishment, made a signal for them to unloose him.

Doña Consolacion then arose and whispered something into her husband's ear. He nodded his head, signifying that he understood.

"To the well with him!" said he.

The Filipinos know what that means. In Tagalog they call it *timbain*. We do not know who could have been the inventor of this method of punishment, but we are

of the opinion that he must have lived long ago. In the middle of the tribunal yard there was a picturesque stone-wall, roughly made out of cobble stones, around a well. A rustic apparatus of bamboo in the form of a lever serves to draw out the vile, dirty and bad smelling water. Broken dishes, refuse and all sorts of filth collected there, since the well was a common receptacle for everything that the people threw away or found useless. An object which fell into the place, no matter how good it may have been, was thereafter surely lost. However, the well was never closed up. At times, prisoners were condemned to go down and make it deeper, not because it was thought that the work would be useful in any way, but because the work was so difficult. If a prisoner went down in the well once, he invariably contracted a fever, from which he died.

Tarsilo contemplated all the preparations of the soldiers with a firm look. He was very pale and his lips were trembling or murmuring a prayer. The haughtiness of his desperation seemed to have disappeared, or at least to have weakened. A number of times he bent his head, fixed his eyes on the ground, resigned to his suffering.

They took him to one side of the stone wall. Doña Consolacion followed smiling. The unfortunate wretch glanced enviously toward the pile of dead bodies, and a sigh escaped from his breast.

"Speak now!" said the *directorcillo* again. "They will certainly drown you. At least, die without having suffered so much."

"When you come out of this, you will die," said a *cuaderillero*.

They took the gag out of his mouth and hung him by his feet. He had to go down head first and remain under the water some time just like a bucket, except that a man is left under the water a longer time.

The *alferez* went to look for a watch that he might count the minutes.

In the meantime, Tarsilo was hanging, his long hair waving in the air and his eyes half closed.

"If you are Christians, if you have hearts," he begged, in a low voice, "let me down rapidly and make my head strike against the wall that I may die. God would reward such a good deed.... Perhaps some day you will be in the same straits as I am now."

The *alferez* returned and with watch in hand witnessed the descent.

"Slowly, slowly!" cried Doña Consolacion following the poor fellow with her eyes. "Be careful!"

The pole was being lowered slowly. Tarsilo rubbed against the projecting stones and the dirty plants which grew in the crevices. Then, the pole ceased to move. The *alferez* was counting the seconds.

"Up!" he ordered dryly, at the end of a half minute.

The silvery harmony of the drops of water falling back into the well, announced the return of the unfortunate man to the light. As the weight on the end of the lever was heavy, he came up quickly. The rough pieces of stone and pebbles, torn loose from the walls, fell with splashes to the bottom.

His face and hair full of filthy mud, his body wet and dripping, he appeared again in the sight of the silent crowd. The wind made him shiver with cold.

"Do you want to make a declaration?" they asked him.

"Take care of my sister!" the unhappy one murmured, looking at the *cuaderillero*, with supplication.

The bamboo pole creaked again, and again the condemned man disappeared. Doña Consolacion observed that the water remained still. The *alferez* counted a minute.

When Tarsilo came up again, his face was livid and his features contracted. He glanced at those standing around and kept open his bloodshot eyes.

"Will you make a declaration?" asked the *alferez* again, with vexation.

Tarsilo shook his head and again they let him down. His eyelids were almost closed and his eyes were gazing at the white clouds floating in the heavens. He bent his neck to keep sight of the light of day, but he was soon submerged in the water. That filthy curtain closed from him the sight of the world.

A minute passed. The Muse saw large bubbles of air come up to the surface of the water.

"He is thirsty," said she, laughing.

The water was again smooth.

This time a minute and a half had passed when the *alferez* gave the signal.

Tarsilo's features were no longer contracted. The half opened lids showed the white of his eyes. Muddy water, clotted with blood, ran out of his mouth. The cool wind was blowing, but his body no longer shivered.

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Those present, pale and terrified, looked at each other in silence. The *alferez* made a signal for them to take him down from where he was hanging, and stepped aside for a few moments. Doña Consolacion a number of times applied the lighted end of her cigar to the bare legs of Tarsilo, but his body did not quiver. It put out the light.

"He has asphyxiated himself," murmured a *cuaderillero*. "See how his tongue is turned, as if he wanted to swallow it."

The other prisoner, trembling and perspiring, contemplated the scene. Like a madman he looked about him.

The *alferez* ordered the *directorcillo* to question him.

"Señor, Señor," he groaned. "I will tell you all that you wish."

"Good. Let us see! What is your name?"

"Andong, Señor!"

"Bernardo ... Leonardo ... Ricardo ... Educardo. Gerardo ... or what?"

"Andong, Señor," repeated the imbecile.

"Call it Bernardo or whatever you please," said the *alferez*, decided not to bother more about it.

"What family name?"

The man looked at him frightened.

"What's your name? What do you add to the name Andong?"

"Ah, Señor! Andong Medio-tonto (half-fool), Señor."

Those standing around could not resist a laugh. The *alferez* himself stopped short.

"What is your business?"

"Cocoonut tree pruner, Señor, and servant for my mother-in-law."

"Who ordered you to attack the *cuarte*?"

"Nobody, Señor."

"What's that; nobody? Don't you lie or we will put you in the well. Who ordered you to do it? Speak the truth."

"That's the truth, Señor."

"Who?"

"Who?"

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"I ask you who ordered you to revolt."

"What revolt, Señor?"

"That one last night, when you were in the tribunal yard."

"Ah, Señor!" exclaimed Andong, blushing.

"Who was to blame for that?"

"My mother-in-law, Señor."

A laugh of surprise followed this reply. The *alferez* stopped and looked sharply at

the simple peasant, who believed that his words had produced a good effect. More animated, he was about to continue when the crack of a whip cut him short.

"To the jail!" ordered the *alferez*. "This afternoon, send him to the capital."

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Chapter XXXVIII.

The Accursed.

The news that the prisoners were going to depart spread quickly through the town. At first, the news was heard with terror; afterward, came tears and lamentations.

The members of the families of the prisoners were running about madly. They would go from the convent to the *cuartel* from the *cuartel* to the tribunal, and not finding consolation anywhere, they filled the air with cries and moans. The curate had shut himself up because he was ill. The *alferez* had increased his guards, who received the supplicants with the butts of their guns. The *gobernadorcillo*, a useless being, anyway, seemed more stupid and useless than ever.

The sun was burning hot, but none of the unhappy women who were gathered in front of the *cuartel* thought of that. Doray, the gay and happy wife of Don Filipino, wandered about, with her tender little child in her arms. Both were crying.

"Get out of the sun," they said to her. "Your son will catch a fever."

"What is the use of his living if he has no father to educate him?" replied the dispirited woman.

"Your husband is innocent. Perhaps he will return."

"Yes, when we are in our graves."

Capitana Tinay wept and cried for her son, Antonio. The courageous Capitana Maria gazed toward the small grate, behind which were her twins, her only sons.

There, too, was the mother-in-law of the cocoanut tree pruner. She was not crying; she was walking to and fro, gesticulating, with shirt sleeves rolled up, and haranguing the public.

"Have you ever seen anything equal to it?" said she. "They arrest my Andong, wound him, put him in the stocks, and take him to the capital, all because he happened to be in the *cuartel* yard."

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But few people had any sympathy for the Mussulman mother-in-law.

"Don Crisostomo is to blame for all of this," sighed a woman.

The school teacher also was wandering about in the crowd. Ñor Juan was no longer rubbing his hands, nor was he carrying his yard stick and plumb line. He had heard the bad news and, faithful to his custom of seeing the future as a thing that had already happened, he was dressed in mourning, mourning for the death of Ibarra.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, an uncovered cart, drawn by two oxen, stopped in front of the tribunal.

The cart was surrounded by the crowd. They wanted to destroy it.

"Don't do that!" said Capitana Maria. "Do you want them to walk?"

This remark stopped the relatives of the prisoners. Twenty soldiers came out and surrounded the cart. Then came the prisoners.

The first was Don Filipino; he was tied. He greeted his wife with a smile. Doray broke into a bitter lamentation and two soldiers had to work hard to keep her from embracing her husband. Antonio, the son of Captain Tinay, next appeared, crying like a child—a fact which made the family cry all the more. The imbecile, Andong, broke out in a wail when he saw his mother-in-law, the cause of his misfortune. Albino, the former seminary student, came out with his hands tied, as did also the twin sons of Capitana Maria. These three youths were serious and grave. The last who came was Ibarra. The young man was pale. He looked about for the face of

Maria Clara.

"That is the one who is to blame!" cried many voices. "He is to blame and he will go free."

"My son-in-law has done nothing and he is handcuffed."

Ibarra turned to the guards.

"Tie me, and tie me well, elbow to elbow," said he.

"We have no orders."

"Tie me!"

The soldiers obeyed.

The *alferez* appeared on horse-back, armed to the teeth. Ten or fifteen more soldiers followed him.

Each of the prisoners had there in the crowd his family praying for him, weeping for him, and calling him by the most affectionate names. Ibarra was the only exception. Even Nor Juan himself and the school-teacher had disappeared.

"What have you done to my husband and my son?" said Doray to Ibarra, crying. "See my poor boy! You have deprived him of a father!"

The grief of the people was changed to wrath against the young man, accused of having provoked the riot. The *alferez* gave orders to depart.

"You are a coward!" cried the mother-in-law of Andong to Ibarra. "While the others were fighting for you, you were hiding. Coward!"

"Curses upon you!" shouted an old man following him. "Cursed be the gold hoarded up by your family to disturb our peace! Curse him! Curse him!"

"May they hang you, heretic!" cried one of Albino's relatives. And unable to restrain himself, he picked up a stone and threw it at Ibarra.

The example was quickly imitated, and a shower of dust and stones fell on the unfortunate youth.

Ibarra suffered it all, impassive, without wrath, without a complaint—the unjust vengeance of suffering hearts. This was the leave-taking, the "adios" tendered to him by his town, the center of all his affections. He bowed his head. Perhaps he was thinking of another man, whipped through the streets of Manila, of an old woman falling dead at the sight of the head of her son. Perhaps the history of Elias was passing before his eyes.

The cortége moved slowly on and away.

Of the persons who appeared in a few opened windows, those who showed the most compassion for the unfortunate young man were the indifferent and the curious. All his friends had hidden themselves; yes, even Captain Basilio, who forbade his daughter Sinang to weep.

Ibarra saw the smouldering ruins of his house, of the house of his fathers where he had been born, where he had lived the sweetest days of his infancy and childhood. Tears, for a long time suppressed, burst from his eyes. He bowed his head and wept, wept without the consolation of being able to hide his weeping, tied as he was by the elbows. Nor did that grief awaken compassion in anybody. Now he had neither fatherland, home, love, friends or future.

From a height a man contemplated the funeral-like caravan. He was old, pale, thin, wrapped in a woollen blanket and was leaning with fatigue on a cane. It was old Tasio, who as soon as he heard of what had happened wanted to leave his bed and attend, but his strength would not permit it. The old man followed with his eyes the cart until it disappeared in the distance. He stood for some time, pensive and his head bowed down; then he arose, and laboriously started on the road to his house, resting at every step.

The following day, shepherds found him dead on the very threshold of his solitary retreat.

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Maria Clara is Married.

Captain Tiago was very happy. During all this terrible time nobody had busied himself with him. They had not arrested him, nor had they submitted him to excommunications, court trials, electrical machines, continual hot foot baths in subterranean places, or to any of the other punishments which are well known to certain people who call themselves civilized. He had returned to his Manila house. Those who had been the Captain's friends—for he had renounced all his Filipino friends from the moment that they were suspected by the Government—had also returned to their homes after some days of vacation spent in the Government buildings. The Governor General had himself ordered these people to leave their possessions, for he had not thought it fitting that they should remain in them during the great danger.

Captain Tiago was overflowing with gratitude, but he did not know exactly to whom he was indebted for such signal favors. Aunt Isabel attributed the miracle to the Virgin of Antipolo, to the Virgin of the Rosary, or at least to the Virgin of Carmen. The least that she would concede was that it was due to Our Lady of Corea. According to the Aunt, the miracle was certainly due to one of these Virgins. Captain Tiago did not deny that it was a miracle, but he added:

"I do not believe, Isabel, that the Virgin of Antipolo could have done it alone. My friends have aided in it; my future son-in-law, Señor Linares has, as you know, joked with Señor Antonio Canovas himself, whose portrait we saw in 'Ilustracion.'"

And the good man could not suppress a smile every time that he heard any important news about the event. And there was good reason for it. It was whispered about that Ibarra was going to be hanged; that, even if many proofs had been lacking, at last one had appeared which could confirm the accusation; and that skilled workmen had declared that, as a matter of fact, the work for the school-house could pass for a fort or a fortification. Even if defective in some parts, that was as much as could be expected from ignorant Indians. These rumors quieted the Captain and made him smile.

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Just as the Captain and his cousin, Aunt Isabel, were of different opinions about the miracle, so, too, the other friends of the family were divided into different parties—those who followed the miracle monger, and those who followed the Government. The latter party, however, was quite insignificant. The miracle mongers were sub-divided into other factions: the Sacristan Mayor of Binondo, the woman who sold the wax candles, and the chief of one of the brotherhoods, all saw the hand of God in the miracle, moved by the Virgin of the Rosary. The Chinese candle maker, who provided the Captain whenever he went on a pilgrimage to Antipolo, was saying as he sat fanning himself and wiggling his foot:

"What for you b'long foolish? Thisee belong Mergin Antipolo. She can do muchy more: others, no can do. No b'long plopper say pidgin b'long other man."

Captain Tiago held the Chinaman in great estimation and made him pass for a prophet and doctor. Examining the hand of his deceased wife in the sixth month of her pregnancy, he had prophesied:

"If thisee one no b'long man, and no go dead side, will b'long bery good woman."

And so it was that Maria Clara came to this earth and fulfilled the Chinaman's prophecy.

Captain Tiago, being a prudent and timid person, could not decide the question of the miracle as easily as the Trojan Paris. He could not give preference to one of the Virgins for fear of offending some other of them, a thing which might bring about grave results. "Prudence," he said to himself. "Be prudent! Let us not lose all now."

He was in the midst of these doubts when the party in favor of the Government, or the Governmental party, arrived, viz., Doña Victorina, Don Tiburcio, and Linares.

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Doña Victorina did all the talking for the three men and for herself also. She mentioned the visits which Linares had made to the Governor General, and repeatedly brought out the benefits derived from having a relative of *catagoría*.

For some days past, she had been trying to be Andalusian by suppressing the *d* in all words and in changing the *s* to *z*. No one could get the idea out of her head; she would prefer to lose her front curls first.

"Yes," she said, in speaking of Ibarra. "That fellow merits very well all that he is going to get. I told you so when I saw him for the first time. I told you he was a *filibustero*. What did the General tell you, cousin? What did he say? What news did you give him about Ibarra?"

Seeing that the cousin hesitated in his reply, she went on, directing her words to Captain Tiago.

"Believe me, if they convict him, as is to be hoped, it will be through my cousin."

"Señora, Señora!" protested Linares.

But she did not give him any time.

"Oh, what a diplomat you have turned out to be! But we all know that you are the adviser of the Governor General, that he could not live without you. Ah! What a pleasure to see you, Clarita."

Maria Clara seemed paler than ever, although she was now quite recovered from her illness. Sadly smiling, she approached and greeted Doña Victorina with a formal kiss.

After the customary words had been exchanged, Doña went on with her false Andalusian.

"We came to visit you. You have been saved by the efforts of your friends,"—looking significantly at Linares.

"God has protected my father," said the girl, in a low voice.

"Yes, Clarita, but the time for miracles has passed long ago. As we Spaniards say: 'Have no trust in the Virgin and save yourself by running.'"

"The—th—the ot—ot—other way," said the doctor, correcting her proverbial quotation.

Captain Tiago, who had not yet found opportunity to say a word, ventured to ask her, giving much attention to her reply: "So you, Doña Victorina, believe that the Virgin...?"

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"That is precisely what we came for, to speak to you about *the* Virgin," replied she, indicating Maria Clara. "We have a matter to talk over."

The maiden understood that she ought to retire. She sought an excuse and went away, supporting herself on the furniture as she walked along.

What was said in the conference which followed was so low and mean that we prefer to omit it. It is sufficient for us to say that when they took their leave all were happy, and that Captain Tiago afterward said to his cousin:

"Isabel, send word to the restaurant that we are going to give a *fiesta* to-morrow. You get Maria ready to be married in a short time."

Aunt Isabel looked at him, surprised.

"You will see! When Señor Linares is our son-in-law all the palaces will be open to us. They will be envying us; they will all die with envy."

And thus it was that at eight o'clock on the following evening, Captain Tiago's house was again full of guests, only that this time the men whom he had invited were either Spaniards or Chinamen, while the fair sex was represented by Spaniards born in the Peninsula or in the Philippines.

The larger part of our acquaintances was there: Father Sibyla, Father Salví and several other Franciscans and Dominicans, the old lieutenant of the Civil Guard, Señor Guevara, more melancholy than ever; the *alferez*, who related his battle for the thousandth time, feeling himself head and shoulders above everybody and a veritable Don Juan de Austria, now a lieutenant with the rank of commander; De Espadaña, who looked at the former with respect and fear and avoided his glance; and the indignant Doña Victorina. Linares was not yet present, for, being a very important personage, it was fitting that he should arrive later than the others.

Maria Clara, the subject of all the gossip, was the center of a group of women. She had greeted and received them ceremoniously, but did not throw off her air of sadness.

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"Psh!" said one of the girls. "A little stuck-up!"

"A cute little thing," replied another, "but he might have selected some one of a more intelligent appearance."

"It's the money; he's a good-looking fellow and sells himself for a good price."

In another part of the room they were talking like this:

"Marry, when her former betrothed is about to be hanged!"

"I call that prudence; to have one on hand as a substitute."

Possibly the young maiden heard these remarks as she sat in a chair near by, arranging a tray of flowers, for her hand was seen to tremble, she turned pale and bit her lips a number of times.

The conversation among the men was in a loud tone. Naturally, they were conversant with the recent happenings. All were talking, even Don Tiburcio, with the exception of Father Sibyla, who maintained a disdainful silence.

"I have heard that Your Reverence leaves the town, Father Salví?" asked the newly made lieutenant, now made more amiable by the star on his sleeve.

"I have nothing more to do now in San Diego. I am permanently settled in Manila now ... and you?"

"I also leave the town," replied the former *alferez*, straightening up. "The Government needs me to take command of a flying column to clear the provinces of *filibusteros*."

Friar Salví looked him over from head to foot, and turned his back to him completely.

"Is it yet known for a certainty what is to become of the leader of the revolutionists?" asked a Government employee.

"Are you referring to Crisostomo Ibarra?" asked another. "What is most probable and most just is that he be hanged, as those were in '72."

"He will be exiled," said the old lieutenant, dryly.

"Exiled! Nothing more than exiled! But it will be a perpetual exile!" exclaimed several at the same time.

"If that young fellow," Lieutenant Guevara went on to say in a loud voice, "had been more cautious; if he had trusted certain people less with whom he had correspondence; and if the officers had not made a subtle interpretation of what was written—if it had not been for all of this, that young man would surely have gone free."

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This statement by the old lieutenant and the tone of his voice produced a great surprise in the room. Those who heard it did not know what to say. Father Salví looked in another direction, perhaps so as not to meet the dark look which the old man directed toward him. Maria Clara dropped her flowers and sat motionless. Father Sibyla, the one who knew how to keep silent, appeared to be the only one who knew how to ask questions.

"Are you referring to the letters, Señor Guevara?"

"I am telling what the defendant's attorney told me. He has taken up the case with zeal and interest. Aside from some ambiguous lines which this young man wrote to a young woman before departing for Europe, they have found no proof to sustain the accusation. In these few lines, the officers saw a plan and threat against the Government."

"And what about the declaration made by the bandit before he died?"

"That statement has proved of no account, since, according to the bandit himself, the conspirators never had communicated with the young man, but only with one, Lucas, who was Ibarra's enemy, as they have been able to prove, and who committed suicide, perhaps from remorse. It has been proved that the papers found in the possession of the dead man were forged, since the handwriting was like that of Ibarra seven years ago, but not like that of to-day—a fact which shows that it was copied from the letter used as evidence against him. Besides, his attorney says that if Ibarra had not admitted the genuineness of the letter, he would have been able to do much for him; but, at the sight of it, the young man turned pale, lost heart and acknowledged that he had written it."

"Do you say," asked a Franciscan, "that the letter was directed to a young woman?"

How did it get into the hands of the officers?"

The lieutenant did not reply. He looked for a moment at Friar Salví and then walked off, twisting nervously the end of his grey beard. In the meantime, others were commenting something like this:

"There you see the hand of God!" said one. "Even the women hate him."

"He had his house burned, thinking that he could thus save himself. But he did not reckon with his host—that is, with his *querida*,¹ with his *babai*,"¹ added another, smiling. "That is God's work. Santiago protects Spain!"

The old army officer stopped and approached Maria Clara. She was listening to the conversation, immovable in her seat. The flowers were at her feet.

"You are a very prudent young woman," said the old lieutenant to her in a low voice. "You have done well to hand over the letter.... In this way you will assure yourself of a peaceful future."

With dull eyes, and biting her lips, she looked at him as he walked away. Luckily, Aunt Isabel passed her at this moment. Maria Clara summoned enough strength to catch hold of her aunt's dress.

"Aunt," she murmured.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the latter, frightened, as she saw the young woman's face.

"Take me to my room!" she begged, clinging to the arm of the old woman in order to raise herself to her feet.

"Are you sick, my child? You seem to have lost all your strength. What is the matter with you?"

"A little sick to my stomach ... the crowd in the *sala* ... so much light ... I need to rest. Tell father that I am going to sleep."

"You are cold! Do you want some tea?"

Maria Clara shook her head negatively. She closed the door of her room and locked it, and, her strength failing her, she fell to the floor, at the feet of an image, weeping and sobbing:

"Mother, mother, my mother!"

The moonlight was shining through the open window and door which led out upon the *azotea*.

The orchestra continued playing gay waltzes. The laughter and the hum of conversation could be heard in her bedroom. A number of times her family, Aunt Isabel, Doña Victorina, and even Linares, knocked at her door, but Maria Clara did not move. There was a rattle in her throat.

Hours passed. The pleasures of the table ended, and dancing followed. Her little candle burned out, but the maiden lay quietly on the floor, the rays of moonlight shining upon her at the foot of an image of the Mother of Jesus.

Gradually the noises in the house died away, the lights were put out, and Aunt Isabel again knocked at the door of her room.

"Let us leave her; she is sleeping," said her aunt. "At her age, with nothing to trouble her, she sleeps like a corpse."

When all was again silent, Maria arose slowly and glanced around her. She saw the *azotea* and the small climbing plants bathed in the melancholy light of the moon.

"A peaceful future! Sleeping like a corpse!" she murmured in a low voice, and turned toward the *azotea*.

The city was quiet. Only the noise of an occasional carriage passing over the wooden bridge could be heard in the stillness of the night, while the tranquil waters of the river were reflecting the moonlight.

The maiden raised her eyes to the pure, sapphire-colored sky. Slowly she took off her rings, her hair-combs, her earrings, and her breast-pin, and placing them upon the balustrade of the *azotea* she looked out toward the river.

A *banca*, loaded with rice grass, stopped at the foot of the landing on the bank of the river at the rear of the house. One of the two men who were propelling the boat went up the stone steps, leaped over the wall, and a few seconds afterward, steps were heard coming up the *azotea*.

Maria Clara saw him stop on discovering her, but it was for only a moment. The man advanced slowly and at about three steps from the maiden, stopped again. Maria Clara stepped back.

"Crisostomo!" she gasped, full of terror.

"Yes, I am Crisostomo!" replied the young man, in a grave voice. "An enemy, a man who has good reason to hate me, Elias, has helped me out of the prison into which my friends had thrown me."

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Silence followed these words. Maria Clara bowed her head and allowed both her hands to drop at her side.

Ibarra continued:

"Beside the dead body of my mother, I swore to make you happy, whatever might be my destiny. You can break your oath; she was not your mother. But I, who am her son, I hold her memory sacred, and, running great risk, I have come here to fulfill my oath. Fortune permits me to speak with you personally. Maria, we shall not see each other again. You are young and perhaps some day your conscience may accuse you.... I come to tell you, before leaving, that I forgive you. Now, may you be happy, and good-bye!"

Ibarra tried to leave, but the maiden stopped him.

"Crisostomo!" she said. "God has sent you to save me from desperation.... Hear me and judge me!"

Ibarra wished to withdraw gently from her.

"I have not come," said he, "to call you to account.... I have come to give you peace."

"I do not want the peace which you give me. I will give myself peace. You despise me, and your contempt will make my life bitter till death."

Ibarra saw the poor girl's desperation, and asked her what she desired.

"That you may believe that I have always loved you."

Crisostomo smiled bitterly.

"Ah! You doubt me, you doubt the friend of your infancy, who has never hidden a single thought from you," exclaimed she in grief. "I understand you. When you know my history, the history which they revealed to me during my illness, you will pity me and you will no longer answer my grief with that bitter smile. Why did you not let me die in the hands of my ignorant doctor? You and I would have been happier then."

Maria Clara rested a moment and then continued:

"You have doubted me; you have wished my mother to pardon me. During one of those nights of suffering, a man revealed to me the name of my true father, and forbade me to love you ... unless my true father should pardon you for the offense you committed against him."

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Ibarra recoiled and looked in terror at the maiden.

"Yes," she continued. "This man told me that he could not permit our marriage, since his conscience would not allow it, and he would find himself compelled to publish the truth at the risk of causing a great scandal, because my father is ..."

And she whispered a name in the young man's ear in a scarcely audible voice.

"What was I to do? Ought I to sacrifice to my love the memory of my mother, the honor of the man who innocently supposes himself my father, and the good name of my real father? Could I do that without you despising me for it?"

"But the proof? Have you proof? You need proof!" exclaimed Crisostomo, deeply agitated.

The maiden drew two letters from her bosom.

"Two of my mother's letters: two letters written in remorse before I was born. Take them, read them and you will see how she cursed me and desired my death, which my father in vain tried to cause by drugs. These letters were forgotten in the house where he lived; a man found them and kept them. They would only give them to me in exchange for your letter ... to make certain, as they said, that I would not marry you without the consent of my father. From the time that I began to carry them in my bosom instead of your letter, my heart was chilled. I sacrificed you, I sacrificed my love.... What would not a person do for a dead mother and two living fathers? Did I suspect the use to which they were going to put your letter?"

Ibarra was prostrated. Maria Clara went on:

"What was there left for me? Could I tell you who was my father? Could I ask you to seek the pardon of him who had so much desired my death, and who made your father suffer? There was nothing left for me but to keep the secret to myself, and to die suffering.... Now, my friend, you know the sad history of your poor Maria. Will you still have that contemptuous smile for her?"

"Maria, you are a saint."

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"I am happy now that you believe me."

"However," added the young man, changing his tone. "I have heard that you are about to marry."

"Yes," sobbed the maiden. "My father asked this sacrifice of me. He has fed me and loved me, and it was not his duty. I pay him this debt of gratitude which I owe him by assuring him peace through this new relative, but ..."

"But?"

"I shall not forget the oaths of fidelity which I made to you."

"What do you think of doing?" asked Ibarra, trying to read her eyes.

"The future is obscure and Destiny is hidden in darkness. I do not know what I am to do; but I know that I can love only once, and that without love I never will belong to any one. And you, what is to become of you?"

"I am nothing but a fugitive.... I am fleeing. In a very short time, they will discover my escape, Maria...."

Maria Clara clasped her arms about her lover's neck, kissed his lips repeatedly, hugged him, and then, abruptly breaking away from him, said:

"Flee! flee! *Adios!*"

Ibarra looked at her, his eyes sparkling, but she motioned and he went away, staggering like a drunken man. Again he leaped over the wall and entered the *banca*. Maria Clara, leaning on the door casing, watched him depart.

Elias took off his hat and bowed profoundly.

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¹ Both words mean mistress.

Chapter XL.

[Contents]

The Pursuit on the Lake.

"Listen, Señor, to my plan," said Elias, as they directed the *banca* toward San Miguel. "I will for the present hide you in the house of my friend in Mandaluyong. I will bring you all your money, which I have saved and kept for you at the foot of the old *balitâ* tree, in the mysterious tomb of your grandfather. You shall leave the country."

"To go to a strange land?" interrupted Ibarra.

"To live in peace the remaining days of your life. You have friends in Spain, you are rich, you can get yourself pardoned. By all means, a foreign land is better for you than your own country."

Crisostomo did not reply. He meditated in silence.

Just then they reached the Pasig and the *banca* was headed up the stream. Over the Bridge of Spain a horse-man was galloping at high speed, and a prolonged, sharp whistle was heard.

"Elias," replied Ibarra, "you owe your misfortunes to my family; you have saved my life twice; I owe you not only gratitude, but also restitution of your fortune. You advise me to go to a foreign land and live; then come with me and we will live like brothers. Here, you, too, are miserable."

Elias sadly replied:

"Impossible! It is true that I can neither love nor be happy in my country; but I can suffer and die in it, and perhaps die for it; that would be something. Let my country's misfortune be my own misfortune. Since no noble thought unites us, and since our hearts do not beat in harmony at the mention of a single word, at least, let a common misery unite me to my fellow countrymen; at least, let me weep with them over our grief; let the same misery oppress all our hearts."

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"Then why do you advise me to leave?"

"Because in other lands you can be happy, and I cannot; because you are not made to suffer, and because you would hate your country, if some day you should see the cause of your misfortune: and to hate one's own country is the greatest misery."

"You are unjust to me," exclaimed Ibarra, with bitter reproach. "You forget that I have scarcely arrived here, and that I have already sought its welfare."

"Do not be offended, Señor. I am not reproaching you. Would to God that all might imitate you. But I do not ask for the impossible and you should not be offended if I tell you that your heart deceives you. You love your country because your father has taught you to love it; you love it because you had in it your love, your fortune, your youth; because it smiled on you, and because it has not until now done you an injustice. You love your country as we all love that which makes us happy. But, on that day when you see yourself poor, ragged, hungry, persecuted, denounced and betrayed by your very countrymen, on that day you will curse yourself, your country and all."

"Your words grieve me," said Ibarra, resentfully.

Elias bowed his head, meditated and replied:

"I wish to set you right, Señor, and to avoid a miserable future for you. You remember the time when I was talking to you in this same *banca* and under the light of the same moon. It was a month ago, a few days more or less. Then you were happy. The plea of the unfortunates did not reach you. You disdained their complaints because they were complaints from criminals. You gave ear to their enemies, and, in spite of my reasons and pleas, you put yourself on the side of their oppressors. On you depended at that time whether I should turn criminal or allow my life to be taken in fulfillment of my sacred pledge. God has not permitted it, because the old chief of the bandits has been killed. A month has passed and now you think differently."

"You are right, Elias, but man is influenced by changes in circumstances. Then I was blind, and obstinate. What did I know? Now misfortune has torn the veil from my eyes. The solitude and misery of my prison life have taught me; now I see the horrible cancer which is sapping the life of society, which hangs to its flesh and which requires violent extirpation. They have opened my eyes; they have made me see the ulcer; they force me to become a criminal. I will be a *filibustero*, but a true *filibustero*. I will call upon all the unfortunates, on all who have beating hearts within their breasts, on all who sent you to me.... No, no! I will not be criminal! It is never a crime to fight for one's country! We for three centuries have given them our hand, we have asked them for their love, we have anxiously wished to call them our brothers. How have they replied? With insults and jests, denying us even the quality of being human beings. There is no God, there is no hope, there is no humanity. There is nothing but the right of force."

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Ibarra was excited. His whole body was trembling.

They passed by the Governor General's palace, and believed they saw agitation and movement among the guards.

"Have they discovered our flight?" murmured Elias. "Lie down, Señor, so that I can cover you up with the grass, for, when we cross over to the side of the river near the powder house, the sentry may be surprised at seeing two of us in this small *banca*."

As Elias had foreseen, the sentry stopped him and asked him where he came from.

"From Manila, with grass for the magistrates and curates," replied he, imitating the accent of one from Pandakan.

A sergeant came out and was informed what was going on.

"*Sulung!*" (Go on!) said he. "I warn you not to receive any one in your *banca*. A prisoner has just escaped. If you capture him and hand him over to me I will give you a good reward."

"All right, Señor. What is his description?"

"He wears a frock coat and speaks Spanish. With that much, be on the watch!"

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The *banca* went on. Elias turned his face and saw the shadow of the sentry, still standing on the bank of the river.

"We will lose several minutes," said he, in a low voice. "We will have to go up the Beata river in order to carry out my pretense of being from Peña Francia."

The town was sleeping in the light of the moon. Crisostomo arose to admire the sepulchral peace of Nature. The river was narrow and its banks formed a plain planted with rice.

Elias threw the load on the bank, picked up a piece of bamboo and drew out from under the grass in the *banca* some empty sacks. They went on rowing.

"You are master of your own will, Señor, and of your own future," said he to Crisostomo, who kept silent. "But if you will permit me to offer a suggestion, I say to you: Look well at what you are going to do. You are about to start a war, for you have money, talent, and you will quickly find aid, for, unfortunately, many are discontented. Furthermore, in this fight, which you are to begin, those who are going to suffer most are the defenseless, the innocent. The same sentiments which a month ago prompted me to come to you and ask for reforms, are those which now move me to ask you to reflect. The country, Señor, is not thinking of separating itself from the mother country. It asks only a little liberty, a little justice, a little love. The discontented will assist you, the criminals and the desperate, but the people will hold aloof. You are mistaken if, seeing everything dark, you believe that the country is desperate. The country suffers, yes, but it still hopes, believe me, and will only rise in revolt when it has lost patience; that is, when those who govern wish it—which is still far off. I myself would not follow you. I shall never take recourse to these extreme remedies while I see hope in men."

"Then I will go without you!" replied Crisostomo, resolutely.

"Is it your firm decision?"

"Yes, my firm and only decision: I call to witness the memory of my father! I cannot allow them to deprive me of peace and happiness with impunity, I who have desired only my country's welfare, I who have respected all and have suffered on account of a hypocritical religion, on account of love for my country. How have they responded to me? By burying me in an infamous prison and by prostituting my fiancée. No, not to avenge myself would be a crime. It would be encouraging them to commit new injustices. No! it would be cowardice, it would be pusillanimity to weep and groan while there is life and vigor, when to insult and challenge are added scoffery and contemptuous ridicule! I will arouse this ignorant people, I will make them see their misery—this people who do not think of each other as brothers, who are mere wolves devouring each other. I will tell them to rise against this oppression and appeal to the eternal right of mankind to conquer their liberty!"

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"Innocent people will suffer."

"All the better! Can you lead me to the mountain?"

"Till you are safe!" replied Elias.

They again went up the Pasig. They spoke from time to time of indifferent things.

"Santa Aña!" murmured Ibarra. "Do you recognize that house?"

They passed by the country house of the Jesuits.

"There I passed many happy and joyful years!" sighed Elias. "In my time we used to come here every month ... then I was like the others. I had fortune, family; I was dreaming and planning a future for myself. In those days I used to visit my sister in the neighboring convent. She made me a present of a piece of her own handiwork. A girl friend used to accompany her, a beautiful girl. All has passed like a dream."

They remained silent till they arrived at Malapad-na-bató. Those who have glided over the bosom of the Pasig on one of those magical nights when the moon pours forth its melancholy poetry from the pure blue of the sky, when the darkness hides the misery of men and silence drowns the harsh accents of their voices, when Nature alone speaks—those who have seen such nights on the Pasig will understand the feelings which filled the hearts of both young men.

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In Malapad-na-bató the carbineer was half asleep, and, seeing that the *banca* was empty and offered no booty for him to seize, according to the traditional custom of his corps and the use made of that position, he readily let them pass on.

Nor did the Civil Guard at Pasig suspect anything, and they were not molested.

It was just beginning to dawn when they reached the lake, calm and smooth as a gigantic mirror. The moon was growing dim and the Orient was rosy with the tints of morning. At a distance, a mass of grey could be discerned advancing toward the *banca*.

"The *falúa* (or Government steamboat) is coming," murmured Elias. "Lie down and I will cover you with these sacks."

The outline of the vessel became more clear and perceptible.

"She is putting in between the beach and us," observed Elias uneasily.

And then he changed the course of the *banca* a little, rowing toward Binangonan. To his great surprise he noticed that the *falúa* was also changing its course, while a voice cried out to him.

Elias stopped and meditated. The shore of the lake was very far off, and they would soon be in the range of the rifles on the *falúa*. He thought of returning to the Pasig. His *banca* was swifter than the *falúa*. But fate was against him! Another boat was coming up the Pasig, and they could see the helmets and shining bayonets of the Civil Guards.

"We are caught!" he murmured, turning pale.

He looked at his robust arms and taking the only course which remained to him, he began to row with all his strength toward the Island of Talim. In the meantime, the sun had risen.

The *banca* glided along rapidly. Elias saw some men standing up on the *falúa*, making signals to him.

"Do you know how to manage a *banca*?" he asked Ibarra.

"Yes; why?"

"Because we are lost if I do not leap into the water and make them lose the trail. They will follow me. I swim and dive well.... I will take them away from you, and then you can save yourself."

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"No; you remain and we will sell our lives dearly."

"Useless! We have no arms, and with those rifles they will kill us like birds."

At that moment a *chiss* was heard in the water like the fall of a hot body, and was followed immediately by a report.

"Do you see?" said Elias, putting his paddle in the *banca*. "We will see each other again at the tomb of your grandfather on *Nochebeuna* (Christmas eve.) Save yourself."

"And you?"

"God has taken me through greater dangers."

Elias took off his *camisa*. A ball grazed his hands and the report sounded out. Without being disturbed, he stretched out his hand to Ibarra, who was still in the bottom of the boat. Then he arose and leaped into the water, pushing away the small craft with his foot.

A number of cries were heard. Soon at some distance the head of the young man appeared above the water as if to get breath, dropping out of sight at the next instant.

"There, there he is!" cried a number of voices, and the balls from their rifles whistled again.

The *falúa* and the other *banca* took up the chase. A light track of foam marked his course, every moment leading farther and farther away from Ibarra's *banca*, which drifted along as if abandoned. Every time that the swimmer raised his head to breathe the Civil Guards and the men on board the *falúa* discharged their guns at him.

The pursuit continued. Ibarra's little *banca* was already far off. The swimmer was approaching the shore of the lake and was now some fifty yards distant from it. The rowers were already tired, but Elias was not, for his head often appeared above the water and each time in a different direction so as to disconcert his pursuers. No longer was there a light trail to betray the course of the diver. For the last time they saw him near the shore, some ten yards off, and they opened fire.... Then minutes and minutes passed. Nothing appeared again on the tranquil surface of the lake.

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Half an hour afterward one of the rowers pretended to have discovered signs of blood in the water near the shore, but his companions shook their heads in a manner which might mean either yes or no.

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Chapter XLI.

Father Dámaso Explains.

In vain the costly wedding gifts were heaped upon the table. Neither the diamonds in their blue velvet caskets, nor the embroidered *piña*, nor the pieces of silk had any attractions for Maria Clara. The maiden looked at the paper which gave the account of Ibarra's death, drowned in the lake, but she neither saw nor read it.

Of a sudden, she felt two hands over her eyes. They held her fast while a joyous voice, Father Dámaso's, said to her:

"Who am I? Who am I?"

Maria Clara jumped from her seat and looked at him with terror in her eyes.

"You little goose, were you frightened, eh? You were not expecting me? Well, I have come from the provinces to attend your wedding."

And coming up to her again with a smile of satisfaction, he stretched out his hand to her. Maria Clara approached timidly and, raising it to her lips, kissed it.

"What is the matter with you, Maria?" asked the Franciscan, losing his gay smile, and becoming very uneasy. "Your hand is cold, you are pale.... Are you ill, my little girl?"

And Father Dámaso drew her up to him with a fondness of which no one would have thought him capable. He grasped both the maiden's hands and gave her a questioning look.

"Haven't you any confidence in your godfather?" he asked in a reproachful tone. "Come, sit down here and tell me your little troubles, just as you used to do when you were a child, when you wanted wax-candles to make wax figures. You surely know that I have always loved you.... I have never scolded you...."

Father Dámaso's voice ceased to be brusque; its modulations were even caressing. Maria Clara began to weep.

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"Are you weeping, my child? Why are you weeping? Have you quarrelled with Linares?"

Maria Clara covered her eyes with her hands.

"No! It is not he now!" cried the maiden.

Father Dámaso looked at her full of surprise.

"Do you not want to entrust your secrets to me? Have I not always managed to satisfy your smallest caprices?"

The young woman raised her eyes full of tears toward him. She looked at him for some time, and then began to weep bitterly.

"Do not cry so, my child, for your tears pain me! Tell me your troubles. You will see how your godfather loves you."

Maria Clara approached him slowly and fell on her knees at his feet. Then raising her face, bathed in tears, she said to him in a low voice, scarcely audible:

"Do you still love me?"

"Child!"

"Then ... protect my father, and break off the marriage!"

Then she related her last interview with Ibarra, omitting the reference to her birth.

Father Dámaso could scarcely believe what he heard.

"While he lived," continued the maiden, "I intended to fight, to wait, to trust. I wanted to live to hear him spoken of ... but now that they have killed him, now there is no reason for my living and suffering."

She said this slowly, in a low voice, calmly and without a tear.

"But, you goose; isn't Linares a thousand times better than....?"

"When he was living, I could have married ... I was thinking of fleeing afterward ... my father wanted nothing more than the relative. Now that he is dead, no other man will call me his wife.... While he lived, I could have debased myself and still had the consolation of knowing that he existed and perhaps was thinking of me. Now that he is dead ... the convent or the tomb."

Her voice had a firmness in its accent which took away Father Dámaso's joy and set him to thinking.

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"Did you love him so much as that?" he asked, stammering.

Maria Clara did not reply. Father Dámaso bowed his head upon his breast and remained silent.

"My child!" he exclaimed, his voice breaking. "Forgive me for making you unhappy without knowing it. I was thinking of your future; I wanted you to be happy. How could I permit you to marry a native; how could I see you an unhappy wife and a miserable mother? I could not get your love out of your head, and I opposed it with all my strength. All that I have done has been for you, for you alone. If you had become his wife, you would have wept afterward on account of the condition of your husband, exposed to all kinds of vengeance, without any means of defense. As a mother, you would have wept over the fortune of your sons; if you educated them, you would prepare a sad future for them, you would have made them enemies of the Church and would have seen them hanged or exiled; if you left them ignorant, you would have seen them oppressed and degraded. I could not consent to it! This is why I sought as a husband for you one who might make you the happy mother of sons born not to obey but to command, not to suffer but to punish. I knew that your friend was good from infancy. I liked him as I had liked his father, but I hated them both when I saw that they were going to make you unhappy, because I love you, I idolize you, I love you as my daughter. I have nothing dearer than you. I have seen you grow. No hour passes but I think of you; I dream of you; you are my only joy."

And Father Dámaso began to weep like a child.

"Well, then, if you love me do not make me eternally unhappy. He no longer lives; I want to be a nun."

The old man rested his head on his hand.

"To be a nun, to be a nun!" he repeated. "You do not know, my child, the life, the misery, which is hidden behind the walls of the convent. You do not know it! I prefer a thousand times to see you unhappy in the world than to see you unhappy in the cloister. Here your complaints can be heard, there you will have only the walls. You are beautiful, very beautiful, and you were not born for it, you were not born to be the bride of Christ! Believe me, my child, time will blot it all out. Later you will forget, you will love your husband ... Linares."

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"Either the convent or ... death!" repeated Maria Clara.

"The convent, the convent or death!" exclaimed Father Dámaso. "Maria, I am already old, I will not be able to watch you or your happiness much longer.... Choose another course, seek another love, another young man, whoever he may

be, but not the convent.”

“The convent or death!”

“My God, my God!” cried the priest, covering his head with his hands. “Thou punisheth me. So be it! But watch over my child.”

And turning to the young woman: “You want to be a nun? You shall be one. I do not want you to die.”

Maria Clara took his two hands, clasped them in her own and kissed them as she knelt.

“Godfather, my godfather!” she repeated.

Immediately, Father Dámaso went out, sad, with drooping head and sighing.

“God, O God! Thou existeth, for Thou punisheth. But avenge Thyself on me and do not harm the innocent. Save my child!”

Colophon

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Further translations have been made in all the major Philippine languages, at least four more in English, and in German, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, and Thai.

Encoding

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2009-10-15 Started.

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Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

Page	Source	Correction
16	venders	vendors
36	Siblya	Sibyla
52	.	?
54	sacristian	sacristan
54	commiting	committing
100	Tagalo	Tagalog
102	[<i>Not in source</i>]	'
127	sacristry	sacristy
133	a	[<i>Deleted</i>]
133	lashs	lashes
137	,	[<i>Deleted</i>]

148	Tunason	Tunasan
156	huband	husband
165	aproaching	approaching
172	venders	vendors
174	'	"
176	exchange	exchanged
181	"	[Deleted]
185	physiogomy	physiognomy
197	detroyed	destroyed
198	ino	into
203	unincumbered	unencumbered
215	Tagalo	Tagalog
234	sacristry	sacristy
249	Linars	Linares
259	Crisosotomo	Crisostomo

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