

ASIA



THE LITTLE  
BROWN BROTHER

Stanley Portal Hyatt

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# THE LITTLE BROWN BROTHER

BY

STANLEY PORTAL HYATT



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*To the Memory  
of those gallant Americans*

**THE OFFICERS OF NATIVE TROOPS**

*who fell during the Pulajan Campaign in the  
Island of Samar 1904-1905, and of  
that brave and well-beloved  
young Englishman*

**AMYAS PORTAL HYATT**

*who died towards the close of that campaign  
in Manila Hospital*



## TO THE AMERICAN NATION

It is always an invidious task for a man of one nation to write of the domestic affairs of another, for he lays himself open to charges of lack of experience and lack of insight, not to speak of prejudice. Criticism from without is far more galling than that which comes from within. For these reasons I wish to write a note of explanation, almost of apology, to the American people.

Let me say at once that I wrote the "Little Brown Brother" as a plain story, with no ulterior political motive, no desire to point any special moral or to plead any special cause. I based my story on the things I had seen in the Philippine Islands, and to a very large extent the book is historical. True, I had to draw my own deductions as to what was going on behind the scenes, but I believe that in my solution lies the only possible explanation of the events which occurred during the period in question. I invented an island and a number of characters, whilst for those other characters which are drawn from living persons I found new names.

As I said above, I planned out the book as a story, a narrative into which I could introduce pictures of life and conditions as I had seen them in the Islands; and, so far as my own people are concerned, its interest is chiefly on this plane. To the American nation, however, the book may make a more intimate appeal,

for there can be few who have not lost either a relative or a friend in those gloomy, jungle-clad islands, who do not treasure up the memory of one good white man sacrificed to the cause of civilization in the Far Eastern Tropics. In a way, I would sooner write to the people of the United States on this question than to my own countrymen, because there is a bond of common sorrow between the American nation and myself—I lost my own brother in the Islands, a victim to the hardships of a campaign during which he and I had fought side by side with the soldiers of the States, and had learned that brothers-in-arms can become almost as dear as brothers-in-blood. I received such unvarying courtesy and kindness from the Army in the Philippines that I should be more than ungrateful did I not try to place on record my appreciation; but even had I been treated coldly my admiration would remain, and I should still regard the American officer as the keenest professional man in the world, and the American enlisted man as the type of what a soldier should be. I will admit that I went prepared to criticise. I had heard of graft and of the water-cure, yet after months of the closest association with the Army I carried away the impression of professional cleanliness, and a high sense of personal honor.

My critics—and I expect to have many—will probably call me a racial fanatic because of my views on the color question, views which I did not intend to obtrude on the reader, but which came in as an inevitable part of my story. Once again, however, I will

repeat that I have no wish to preach any doctrine. I write merely of the things I know, and so far as color is concerned, I have behind me ten years' experience of colored races, African and Asiatic. I will admit that I have but little sympathy with the educated Oriental, who is now beginning to figure so largely in both America and England. I deny absolutely his claim to speak on behalf of the voiceless millions of his fellow-countrymen; his ways are not their ways, his ideals not their ideals. He seeks for place and influence and power; they ask for but a sufficiency of good for their wives and children, which, though it may sound little, represents an almost unattainable ideal to some four hundred millions of Asiatics. Votes and education are well enough in their way, but the first needs of the Asiatic peasant are food and peace, and the nation which insures him these has indeed done a great work.

Finally, though I cannot foresee the reception my book will have, I feel sure that many will understand the spirit in which it is written. The Boy I loved best of all God's creatures died as a result of fighting for the United States, and, if only for that reason, I should be bitterly sorry to write a word which could hurt the nation he placed next to his own.

Therefore, I am sending out the "Little Brown Brother" with a certain degree of confidence. Many may dislike my views, some may even resent them, but I feel sure that the majority of the great American nation will acknowledge my sincerity.

STANLEY PORTAL HYATT.



# THE LITTLE BROWN BROTHER

## CHAPTER I

“ In the land of dopy dreams, sunny, happy Philippines,  
Where the natives steal and lie, and Americanos die,  
The soldiers sing this song as they go marching by.”

THE singer's voice, clear, fresh, and boyish, broke the morning stillness of the palm grove, startling greatly a white-clad native who, intent on lashing together a bundle of newly-gathered cocoanuts, had not noticed the approach of the column of soldiers, which was winding in single file, like some enormous blue and yellow serpent, along the narrow footpath.

The men had been marching in silence, shuffling a little wearily in the heavy sand; for though the day was still young, they had already covered a considerable distance, in the course of which they had waded three rivers, floundered through a huge reeking mangrove swamp, and climbed a dozen abominably steep hills, on whose slopes the mud had been, if possible, even worse than on the level. For the first few miles they had laughed and chattered, then as the grit and slime began to find their way in through boots and leggings, they had reviled the islands and their turbulent inhabitants with a picturesque flu-

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ency born of long practice; but now, with the welcome change in the country and the near prospect of breakfast—for they could see the smoke from the town rising in a faint blue haze a few hundred yards ahead—the cursing and chattering had both ceased, whilst the stragglers had broken into a run to close up the gaps in the long line.

“In the land of dopy dreams”—a ripple of laughter ran down the column as the youngster suddenly struck up the song, and those nearest to the officers glanced at them with furtive amusement; then a couple of hundred voices thundered out the chorus:—

“ Damn, damn, damn the Filipinos,  
Pock-marked, yellow-skinned ladrones,  
Underneath the Starry Flag  
Civilize them with a Krag,  
And return us to our own beloved homes.”

One or two of the officers smiled grimly, but none took any notice, save the junior subaltern, who, having been unable to keep up with his own company, was now right at the rear, trudging along just behind the officer in command, a grizzled old major. The subaltern was a very young man, who had recently got a commission straight from civil life, and he came from a New England city where they professed to believe in racial equality. He flushed angrily as the chorus rang out.

“Do you hear that, sir?” he panted. “That song is forbidden, isn’t it?”

The elder man looked round in quick displeasure.

"I am in command here," he began stiffly; then seeing the youngster's face fall, his tone changed. "I am sometimes very deaf, Rayne," he went on with a kindly smile; "I can't hear what they are singing. A commanding officer often has to be both blind and deaf in these God-forsaken islands," he added with a sigh.

The lieutenant dropped behind with a muttered apology—he was only a boy, after all, and very new to the work—whilst the major unconsciously squared his shoulders and stepped forward briskly, keeping time to the tune; for though in the regiment they called him the "old man," though he was a little stiff in the joints and the hills sometimes tried him sorely, he had unlimited grit and staying power, and at the end of a long day's march he was often fresher than any of those under his command, men his juniors by five-and-twenty years.

The major smiled to himself a little sadly, perhaps at the thought of all his subordinate yet had to learn, perhaps because he recalled those far-off days when he, too, had been young and hot-headed, when he still believed the world could be governed by ideals; but a few yards further on, the thud of hoofs made him glance round quickly, and his face lighted up with genuine pleasure as he caught sight of a young girl, who, mounted on an ungainly Chinese pony, was cantering towards him from the shore, skillfully guiding her savage, hard-mouthed little steed in and out amongst the palm trees. A moment later, she reined up beside him, and, im-

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petuously tugging off her gauntlet, held out a firm brown hand, over which he bent with an old-fashioned courtesy.

“I am so glad I came this way,” she said, rather breathlessly. “I usually go in the other direction; but this morning I found the Presidente’s pigs straying, and I always make a point of chasing them as far from home as I can. Then I heard the men singing, and I knew it must be you. But we had no idea you were coming in so soon. Why didn’t you let us know?”

The major laughed. “I only knew it myself two days back, so I hardly had a chance to send word to your ladyship. But it comes to the same thing, now you have met us—thanks to the pigs.”

The girl pouted. “It isn’t the same thing, you know it isn’t. I would have come out and joined you half-way. I love watching the men marching.” Then, seeing his look of amusement, she broke into a laugh. “Oh, well, I suppose I must forgive you this time. Perhaps you couldn’t help it, after all. Only remember your promise—you have got to take me out on one of your expeditions some day.”

The major nodded. “Yes, some day. But we may have no more. It is peace now, you know.”

Her lip curled. “Peace!” she retorted scornfully. “Peace! here in Lamu. Well, never mind. You have promised, and I mean to keep you to it.” She turned suddenly to the subaltern, who had been listening in wide-eyed astonishment. “You heard that? You are a witness.”

The boy blushed crimson. "Yes, I heard it," he stammered.

"All right," she answered cheerfully. "See that you remember." Then, to the major, "Introduce me," she commanded.

"Miss Westley—Mr. Rayne."

The youngster blushed again, and raised his hat. The girl surveyed him critically for a moment. "You should have saluted; it would have been nicer," she remarked coolly, then seemed to forget him entirely, and rode on beside the major.

Rayne tramped behind and watched her with a curious mixture of interest and resentment. He wished she were not so horribly rude and forward, for in other ways she was delightful. Sitting erect on her ugly little pony, with her big white helmet and her well-cut riding habit, she looked charmingly fresh and clean and wholesome, so much so that he glanced down ruefully at his own mud-stained uniform and sodden boots and leggings. She was pretty too, very pretty, he admitted that half-grudgingly; though he told himself that he liked a more severe style of beauty, something classical and regular. There was no soul, no depth in that laughing, girlish face, he decided; but then he had been brought up by a doting mother and sisters, who indulged in theories, and whose girl friends had not been calculated to arouse either enthusiasm or dislike. He wondered whether she could be a typical English girl—her speech, her helmet, a score of things proclaimed her nationality. If she were, he felt that all he had been

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told of Englishwomen was absolutely wrong. He was surprised, too, at the major. That grim veteran was laughing and chattering like a boy going off for a holiday, chattering to a feather-brained girl of eighteen, nineteen at the most, he who so seldom talked much to any one save the grim old soldiers. The junior subaltern began to consider himself deeply injured. He detested this unknown girl already, he was sure of that, quite sure—until, after a moment's whispered conversation with his companion, she turned to him suddenly with a triumphant air.

“Mr. Rayne, you are to come to breakfast with us. The major says so. And you are to forgive me for being rude. The major says that too.”

The lieutenant blushed, then laughed boyishly, and immediately decided that first impressions are sometimes very wrong. The major looked round at him and smiled.

“Yes, Rayne,” he said. “We are nearly in Calbayog now, so we must do what the Queen of Calbayog says. I learnt that long ago.”

The head of the column was almost in the town. Through a break in the palms they could already see quaint little native houses perched up aloft on spidery frameworks, mere bamboo skeletons, with walls and roofs covered with that most crude and effective of thatchings, the leaf of the nipa palm. A few cocks were still crowing in a perfunctory sort of way, as though, somehow, they had overslept themselves and missed the dawn; a score of lean pigs scur-

ried away, grunting at the sight of the strangers; but with the exception of these, and a couple of hideous water buffalo wallowing lazily in a half-dried pool of mud, Calbayog seemed yet to be asleep. Even the smoke which drifted slowly upwards from the cooking places had the appearance of coming merely from long-smoldering logs, and not from fires in which any one was taking an intelligent interest.

The place was very beautiful, in a heavy, drowsy style. The little town of Calbayog—which, with the exception of a few whitewashed stone buildings in the neighborhood of the plaza, consisted entirely of nipa shacks dotted about with seeming irregularity amongst tall cocoanut trees and broad-leaved banana palms—straggled for nearly a mile along a narrow strip of level ground, which lay between the shore and a range of steep, jungle-clad hills. The northern point of the bay ended abruptly in a rocky headland, crowned with a bright green hemp patch; but on the southern sweep the palms gradually gave place to bush, which in its turn finished in a vast bed of tangled mangroves, half of which were growing with roots actually submerged in the salt water. Drawn up on the white sands of the beach were scores of native canoes, mere hollowed logs, with weird, unsubstantial-looking outriggers projecting on either side. Several more or less dilapidated fish traps, flimsy bamboo fences hundreds of feet in length, jutted out into the shallower portions of the bay, where the coral of the bottom shone with wonderful blue-green tints through the still water. Be-

side the primitive jetty lay a Spanish coaster, a steamer of other years, almost picturesque by reason of her obvious decrepitude; whilst an equally ancient steam-launch, with a very small funnel and an unreasonably large deckhouse, was moored a few hundred yards away, in company with half a dozen square-sterned native sailing craft.

Somehow, everything seemed to harmonize. For once, Man's handiwork did not clash with that of Nature. The boats lay absolutely motionless at their moorings; not a breath of wind stirred the leaves of the palms or raised a ripple on the face of the water; the sky was cloudless down to the very horizon. One could almost imagine that nothing ever did move in Calbayog, that nothing ever would move. The whole scene was absolutely calm and restful, the very embodiment of languid peace, save perhaps on the hills, where the jungle seemed lowering and sullen, pregnant with possibilities of danger.

"My kingdom," said the girl, pointing with her riding whip.

The major nodded. "I hope your subjects are loyal, loyal to us as well as to you; loyal—" and then, as if in answer, a rifle cracked out from somewhere ahead, and one of the soldiers clapped his hand to his side with a startled yelp of pain.

The column halted immediately, and the sharp, purposeful clicking of rifle-bolts ran down the line, almost before an order could be given. The girl reined up abruptly.

"Oh!" she cried, "oh!" her eyes blazing with

excitement, "there it is, up on the hillside, beyond the banana grove," as a thin wisp of smoke floated upwards in the still air; and then, without an instant's hesitation, she gave her pony a sharp cut with the whip, and galloped off to join a dozen men of the leading company, who were already running in the direction of the hill. The major sprang forward in a vain attempt to stop her.

"Come back, Clare," he cried; "come back at once." But she took no notice of his command, and he could see her pulling the little revolver out of her holster, as though she meant to do more than merely watch what might happen. Rayne also started forward, but quickly realized the hopelessness of pursuit, for the plucky little horse was going like the wind, and in a very few moments the girl was abreast of the running soldiers. The two officers at the rear could hear her shout something to the men, then she drew ahead, as if to point out the path; but at the foot of the hill she reined up sharply, raised her pistol, and fired a couple of shots in quick succession. As the soldiers reached her, they too halted and stood, with rifles in readiness, scanning the hillside; but apparently it was all over, for after a few words with the lieutenant in command, the girl turned her pony's head slowly, reluctantly, and the whole party followed her back to rejoin the column.

The rest of the men had ejected their cartridges and were ready to start again, but before moving they waited for her, as though by a common impulse,

and as she rode down the line they cheered her, making the very hillsides ring, rousing the natives in the shacks near by, and bringing those startled little brown men tumbling down their crazy ladders to discover what new madness had possessed the cursed Americanos.

The girl flushed crimson, then she turned very pale, then crimson again, and she bowed a little awkwardly. The major gave her a keen glance as she drew up beside him. He had cheered too, although he had not intended to do so, and he hoped that neither she nor any one else had noticed it.

“Well, Clare?” he said severely.

“Well, major?” she retorted defiantly, staring straight ahead.

The major smiled under his grizzled mustache, and for a little way they went on in silence; then the subaltern ventured to murmur—

“You should have saluted when we cheered you. It would have been nicer.”

She turned round quickly, and to his astonishment he saw that there were tears in her eyes.

“Please don’t,” she said, almost humbly.

The major looked up in surprise. “Clare,” he began again, but she cut him short instantly.

“You shan’t scold me, major, you shan’t. I won’t have it. If you try, I shall never, never speak to you again. I know I did wrong, but—but it was awfully nice.”

The old soldier’s face relaxed. “I suppose I must forgive you,” he laughed.

"Of course you must," she answered promptly.  
"Every one does, always."

"Did you hit him?" he asked.

She shook her head. "No. I suppose if I were a nice girl, I should say I was glad I missed. But you say I am not nice, and I am certainly not glad, not a little, wee bit. Was that poor soldier hurt much?"

"Only a flesh wound. But what did you think you were going to do when you raced off like that?"

"Oh, I just wanted to see. I always like to know what is going on," she said airily.

The officers laughed; then—

"You ought to be a boy," said the subaltern.

She pouted. "You are awfully rude."

"You ought to be back at school," declared the major.

"You are even ruder than he is," she retorted gaily. "I have half a mind not to let either of you come to breakfast, but I suppose I must now. I had better go and tell them. Come up as soon as you can," and she cantered on ahead into the town.

## CHAPTER II

MAJOR JOHN FLINT was essentially a soldier. With him, as with so many American officers, the army was his home. An old bachelor, he had few friends, few interests, outside the Service, which he had entered as a boy, and in which he looked forward to spending the rest of his active life.

Politics left him unmoved—he served the United States, not a party. The pursuit of wealth left him equally cold—the army had furnished him with all he had needed during the past thirty-five years, and he knew that, when he grew too old for its purposes, it would give him an adequate pension. A true West Pointer, the major took his profession as seriously as other men take their business, and, if not a brilliant officer, was a thoroughly sound one. For the rest, though he himself would probably have rejected the description with surprise, he was intensely aristocratic—which means he was too proud to be guilty of a discourteous or dishonorable thing, because honor and courtesy had been traditions in his family for generations, traditions which were, in fact, almost the only legacies he had received from his father, a very gallant Virginian gentleman, who had charged with Longstreet and died of a broken heart after the surrender at Appomattox.

In Lamu, as in the other islands, the natives had

revolted immediately the United States annexed the archipelago; but for some time the Americans were too fully occupied in Luzon to spare any attention for the lesser members of the group; and it was not until Aguinaldo had been captured that a force, of which Major Flint's three companies formed almost half, was sent to deal with the local outbreak.

No one was very clear as to what cause the rebels in Lamu were supposed to be upholding. In Manila, the half-breeds, or mestizos, many of whom have that education which white men who do not know the East mistake for civilization, doubtless dreamt of founding a republic, in which they themselves would hold the reins of power, and so have unlimited opportunities of satisfying their cupidity and lust; but in the outlying islands—where the vast majority of the inhabitants are pure Orientals, somewhat like dark Japanese in face, but true Malays in nature—it seemed as though a sheer love of disorder lay at the root of the trouble, which was really an elaborate brigandage, whose chief characteristics were its utter lack of purpose and the hideous cruelties practised by the leaders.

The bulk of the natives, the tao or peasantry, loathe anything which disturbs the languid calm of the palm groves. Their idea of bliss is to be relieved from the necessity of thought, and to have a cock-fight every day; but they are hopelessly devoid of initiative, ready to take orders from any one who appears to be in a position to command, and if any of the turbulent hillmen, or the mestizo agitators

from the towns, call on them to rise and fight, they will do so because compliance seems the safest policy. True, they pay dearly for it. In the end, the white men probably come along and burn their village; but, after all, had they not joined the insurgents, their village would have been burned just the same, and their women carried off as well. The tao must suffer in any case; they learnt that long ago, being, like most Asiatic peasants, a people foredoomed to sorrow; but they have learnt, too, the course which will entail the least suffering.

The Americans had lost a good many men in Lamu, the dense jungle affording unlimited cover for the insurgents, whose practice it was to spring out suddenly on a column as it floundered in single file up some muddy footpath, to cut and slash for a few moments with their bolos, the hateful two-foot long native knives, and then to disappear as quickly as they had come. They fought merely to kill, not to gain any tactical advantage. It was a miserable, nerve-shattering, inglorious warfare; and at first the soldiers, the younger ones especially, detested it; but, as time went on, they grew to take a grim satisfaction in slaying the bolomen, and to look forward hopefully to the day when they should force the enemy to an unconditional surrender, and so be able to hang the leaders comfortably and at their leisure. Consequently, the sudden announcement that the Civil Government had decided to do as it had done in the other islands, to patch up a peace with the leaders and withdraw the troops from Lamu,

left the soldiers very sore. They felt that they were being robbed of the fruits of their labors, that, after all, the enemy were the real victors, that their fallen comrades were to go unavenged, because politicians who had risked nothing and suffered nothing, wished to have the credit of finishing the war. It was this feeling which made them thunder out the prohibited marching song—prohibited at the request of the late governor-general—with such particular zest as they marched into the town of Calbayog, where the transport was to meet them; and it was a knowledge of this feeling, perhaps a lurking sympathy with it, which made the major so conveniently deaf.

The men formed up on the outskirts of the town, then swung smartly down the one main street to the plaza, escorted by a crowd of nondescript mongrels, which yapped at the heels of the rear files with futile persistence. A few youngsters, who had just come out to give the family fighting-cocks their morning airing, clasped the over-fed birds more tightly in their arms and retreated into neighboring doorways, whence they cursed the Americanos as loudly as they dared; a couple of women wrangling in a Chinaman's store paused to stare insolently at the strangers; a stout half-caste, dressed in a suit of gaudy and soiled pyjamas, came out on to a balcony and waved his hand to the major, who passed him with unseeing eyes; but, beyond these, no one took any notice of the troops.

The soldiers piled their belongings round the crude

belfry, which, as usual in a Filipino town, occupied the center of the plaza; but they did not stack their rifles; for, despite the proclamation of peace, they had the most profound distrust of the natives, and saw in each of the little brown men, who now began to stroll up languidly, cigarette in mouth, not a peaceful fisherman or cultivator, but a possible wielder of the hated bolo.

"You wouldn't think that there innocent little citizen ever killed a man, would you?" remarked a private—an enlisted man is the correct term in the American service—indicating the Filipino to whom he referred by the simple device of throwing a pebble at him. "The women-folk would just slobber over him at a New England missionary caucus, and the mayor would want to shake his hand and say he was proud; but I'll take my oath I saw him dancing round in red shoulder-straps and a big red sash the day we had that scrap on the side of the volcano. I had a crack at him then. I suppose I must have missed," he added regretfully.

The corporal to whom he spoke looked up from a tin of bacon and beans. "Better luck next time," he said sympathetically.

"There won't be no next time," remarked another private with a grin. "He's your blooming little brown brother now, bless his black little heart. You'll have to love him, or you'll have to get out of the islands mighty quick. The governor said so at Ilo-Ilo."

"Little brown—" growled the first speaker. "He

ain't no brother of mine. They took my best pal prisoner in Luzon, and all we found of him was his head stuck on a post. I would teach 'em if I had my way. They would soon learn what it cost to torture good American citizens," and he got up and strode away wrathfully.

The corporal looked after him curiously. "Queer-tempered chap," he said. "Still, I guess most of us feel the same.—Here, you long-haired little reptile, keep a bit farther away, will you?" and he jumped up with a drawn revolver as a young native swaggered by, a naked bolo in his hand.

"What is the trouble now, corporal?" It was the senior captain, a big raw-boned New Yorker, who asked the question.

The private answered. "Corporal Wilsher don't like my little brown brother there coming so close, captain," he drawled, in that easy tone of mingled independence and good-comradeship which the American soldier assumes towards his officers when not actually on duty.

The captain bit his lips to stifle a laugh. "Oh, well, if that's a relative of yours, you can just keep him away, and any more of your family who happen around, see? You can go and tell the sergeant of the guard that I say no natives with bolos are to come on the plaza."

Major Flint waited till he saw that everything was in order, then he called the junior subaltern.

"We had better go up and get our breakfast now,

Rayne. If we wait any longer we shall have Miss Westley sending for us. It is only a little way, that large house just beyond the church."

As they walked up, the older man gave his companion a few particulars about their hosts. Robert Westley, the only Englishman in Calbayog, was a hemp-buyer, with a very large connection throughout the southern islands. In common with most of the British merchants, he had been able to carry on his business during the rebellion; for, even in war-time, the natives wanted to sell hemp, and the American army chiefs had wisely made no attempt to stop the trade, knowing well that, despite their outward neutrality, men of Westley's type were entirely on the side of order, and that, after the revolt had been put down, their influence and local knowledge would be of great assistance to the new government.

Clare Westley was an only child, and, her mother having died when she was but a few days old, she had been her father's constant companion, since her return from an English school.

The major had known them many years, having first met Westley in London when Clare was still a baby, and during the recent campaign he had had numerous opportunities of improving the acquaintance, Calbayog having been the principal base of operations against the rebels.

The Westleys lived in a big, square, whitewashed house, a rather somber-looking place, which still seemed to reflect something of the spirit of its architect, a long-forgotten Spanish governor, who had

built it in those far-off days when the flag of Spain still stood for victory, and the ruler of Lamu was generally a nobleman in his own land, always a prince in the East, Calbayog being then the seat of government for half the southern islands. The old fort, erected at the same time, had been allowed to fall into decay when Spain could no longer afford to maintain her garrison; and the high gallows in the plaza, also put up by the authority of that wise and energetic governor, had been hewn down thoughtlessly in the short burst of enthusiasm which followed the defeat of the Spaniards in Manila Bay; but the house had been kept in repair by a long succession of British merchants, to the first of whom it had been sold by a needy descendant of its builder. True, it possessed no artistic merit—art is difficult to achieve when one has to consider both the tropical sun and the constant likelihood of attacks from one's fellow-townsmen; but it had what were far more essential, cool, lofty rooms, wide verandas, and heavy iron-bound doors and shutters.

Robert Westley, a tall spare man with gray hair and kindly blue eyes, met them at the door.

“We were afraid you were not coming after all,” he said, as he showed them into the dining-room.

Clare was staring rather absently through one of the open windows, but she turned quickly and greeted her guests with a cheerful nod. “You are late,” she said calmly, as she took her seat at the head of the table. “I should not have waited much longer, because I happen to be hungry—in fact, I should

not have waited so long if father had not insisted. Now, Mr. Rayne, I ought to have explained—we don't have any of your nasty breakfast foods, or American dishes with funny names, things that sound like tinned toads. But perhaps the major told you?"

The subaltern laughed. Somehow, his shyness had vanished, and he felt absolutely at ease. The house had an air of restful comfort, which was wonderfully refreshing after the roughness of camp life. There was very little furniture in the rooms, as is right in the East, but that little was very good; whilst the table was set with linen and silver of a quality which surprised him greatly. In the American homes he had visited in Manila, there had been but few luxuries. Men had not tried to adapt themselves to their new surroundings, but had endeavored rather to introduce American methods of life; and, of course, they had failed, as every one must fail who tries to change the ways of the East. But now, as he saw at a glance, he was with people who understood, who accepted the languor and apathy, the eternal dilatoriness and the heat, as inevitable, as part of the Scheme of Things, and instead of chafing at them, set to work to make the best of the situation. Moreover, the uniformed servants, the elaboration, the note of extravagance even, in the preparations for the meal, struck him forcibly; for it was obvious that the pride they betokened was an utterly impersonal thing, the pride of race, part of a studied system for maintaining the barrier between white and

brown; and, though he had been brought up to believe in republican simplicity, in equality and a score of other theories, he found himself curiously in sympathy with his hosts, who, apparently, believed in none of these things.

“This is the last time we shall see you here for a long time, major.” It was Robert Westley who spoke.

The soldier nodded. “Yes; I expect the transport in by midday. The other troops have already sailed from the southern coast. The islands need no garrisons now, you see. They are sending you school-teachers instead of infantry, slate pencils instead of cartridges. In learning about the beauties of the square on the hypotenuse, the Filipino is going to forget how to use the bolo.” He laughed as he said it, but his tone was bitter, for the honor of his country was very dear to him.

“What is the object?” asked the Englishman. “You were winning everywhere. Another three months, and you could have made your own terms. And yet the insurrectos are practically treated as victors.”

“It is a question of votes,” answered the major. “The presidential election is coming on, and they want to be able to tell the people at home how nicely the islands have been pacified.”

Robert Westley sighed. “I am sorry, very sorry. It is a fatal policy. Still, I expected it when I heard of the new governor of Lamu.”

The major looked up quickly. “The new gov-

error? Who is that? It is the first intimation I have had."

Clare answered him. "Antonio Anũgar. Ugh! that fat, greasy mestizo. You know, the man who had not the pluck to be an insurrecto, but ran away to Hong-Kong until he saw you were getting the best of it, and then came back as an Americanisto."

The soldier frowned. "Is that really so? I know the man. I saw him on a veranda this morning, and he had the impertinence to wave to me."

Clare clapped her hands gleefully. "And you passed him unnoticed, as you passed me once, when I rode across your parade-ground whilst you were drilling, and you had told me not to come. Oh, how lovely! I know your look. And Anũgar is the great friend of the great Commissioner Furber, who is supposed to be the most powerful man in Manila."

The major turned to her with a smile. "At times, Clare," he said, "you have considerable insight. I did fail to notice him. But tell me, Westley," to his host, "can we trust the man? Is he loyal?"

"I think so," answered the Englishman. "He has committed himself rather definitely. He caught a famous ladrone, Lasara, and got him hanged. The people will remember that against him. I think Clare is a little hard on him. I have known him in business a long time, and he always struck me as being rather a strong man, though whether he will be strong enough to handle the hillmen remains to be seen. Still, now that your fellows are going, he will have a chance to show his mettle, too many chances, per-

haps." He sighed wearily, and handed his cigar-case to his guest.

The major looked at Clare with a twinkle in his eyes. "May I smoke?" he asked.

"Of course," she answered promptly, at the same time producing a cigarette case from her own pocket. "Would you sooner have one of mine?" she added to Rayne, who, not being used to ladies who smoked, was watching her with wide-eyed astonishment.

The boy blushed. "Thank you. I have one," he stammered.

The major lit his cigar, then turned again to his host. "Anũgar's influence was not sufficient to stop one of his people taking a shot at us as we came in. Didn't Clare tell you? She was the heroine of the morning."

The girl looked down. "It wasn't anything. Don't be silly, major. It was only that I happened to see him, father, and the others did not—that was all."

Her father smiled; he knew he would hear the story later from the major. "Did you recognize him? Was he one of our people, or a regular insurrecto?" he asked.

Clare shook her head, but said nothing until the muchacho, the youngster who had just come in with the coffee, had left the room. Then she looked up, and her face was very pale. "It was neither," she said in a low voice, "neither. It was a pulajan. I saw the red cross."

### CHAPTER III

“It was a pulajan. I saw the red cross,” repeated Clare.

The two elder men stared at her in astonishment, whilst Rayne looked from one to the other, seeking an explanation.

Robert Westley was the first to speak. “Are you sure, Clare, quite sure?” he asked.

The girl had recovered her coolness, and blew out a cloud of smoke before answering. “Quite sure,” she replied. “A horrible pulajan, with a big red cross on the front of his tunic, and another on his hat. That was why I shot at him, major.” She turned to that officer, half-defiantly. “I wanted to kill him. I should have told you at the time, only—only I was excited, and it did not seem to mean so much till I thought it over. But I am quite sure.”

“Then I wish you had killed him,” answered the major. “Don’t you, Westley?”

The Englishman nodded. His face had grown very hard, and Rayne noticed that the kindly blue eyes were quite different now.

“I know very little about them,” continued the soldier, “except what I heard from old Don Pedro at Catarman, though that was enough. But I understood the whole business was over.”

“What are pulajanes?” asked Rayne half shyly, glancing towards Clare.

The girl made a wry face. “Hillmen, most of them. Beasts, murderers, horrible brutes.”

“I am afraid that will not convey very much to him,” said her father, smiling at her vehemence; then he turned to the subaltern, and told him briefly of one of those horrible forms of fanaticism which, from time to time, have broken out in most of the islands, and which will probably continue to break out as long as there is a native left to wield a bolo. “The Lamu pulajanes are a clan, or rather a sect,” he explained. “Bloodthirsty fanatics, who claim to be the true Catholic Church, and prove their claim by slaying all doubters, and looting their property. They carry a red cross on their breasts and another on their hats, whence they get their name of ‘the pulajanes’ or ‘men in red.’ It is spelt ‘pulajan,’ but pronounced ‘pullaharn.’ The great majority are hillmen, and the coast tao have an unutterable horror of them. Years ago, they used to be very strong, both in Lamu and in two or three other islands, but latterly, since you Americans came, I have not even heard their name mentioned, and I hoped the thing had died out altogether. The Spaniards left them alone as much as possible, except when the little fiends burnt a coast town. Once, Clare and I were going round on the *Cervantes*, one of my steamers, and we put into Catubig, a port on the East Coast. It was a big place, but the pulajanes had been there the day before. It was a sight——”

Clare stopped him abruptly. "Don't, father—don't," she said, covering her face with her hands. "I thought I had forgotten it—those poor women and that little boy. Oh, Mr. Rayne," she looked up with wet, flashing eyes, "I know you were shocked with me for shooting this morning, but if you had seen what we saw at Dolores, if you had seen it——"

She broke off suddenly, and, for a moment, there was an awkward silence; then the major asked, "Why haven't we run up against them before?"

Robert Westley shrugged his shoulders. "It is hard to say. To my certain knowledge, the movement has flared up and died down again three times during the twenty-five years I have been in the islands. There has always been a great deal of mystery about it. No one ever really knew who Papa Pablo, the pulajan pope, the head of the whole abominable business, was. Some said he was an old fisherman on the Gandara River, who quarreled with a priest over a woman, shot him at the altar, and then took to the bush. Others swore he was a rich mestizo in Manila, and yet others doubted his very existence. I don't believe a dozen of the pulajanes themselves knew the truth. He was just a name, a vague intangible terror."

"'He was,' you say," said the major. "Is he dead then?"

The Englishman shook his head. "No one knows. We have not heard of him for several years now; but, as I said, the whole business apparently ends, and then springs up again in a hideous sort of way.

We seldom worried about it here, for the pulajanes never interfered with white men. It was the tao who suffered—as usual. Their creed? It is a gross caricature of Catholicism, with this brute Papa Pablo at its head, and with massacre and loot as its ends. One important article of faith is that whoso dies fighting the infidel rises again in three days—in another island; and the rank and file evidently believe it by the wholly reckless way in which they fight. We used to get reports of encounters between pulajanes and people of the northern towns, and sometimes between pulajanes and other mountain clans, but it was all very vague; for, you see, latterly Spain had no hold on the interior of this island. We really know little definite about pulajanism, except that, wherever the red cross is seen, there you will have burning towns and murdered men.”

The major sighed. “It is not surprising, after all, that the Spaniards were so ready to sell the islands. But, tell me, there is an old villain called Enrique de la Cruz, who seems to have a kind of stronghold up in the mountains. Is he connected with these delightful fanatics?”

Clare answered him. “Of course not,” she exclaimed indignantly. “Enrique is quite the best native in Lamu, in any of the islands, perhaps. He is a fine old gentleman, and would no more join the pulajanes than those silly insurrectos. He would bolo any of them who dared to go on his land.”

The major smiled. “It does not, somehow, sound a very gentlemanly way of receiving visitors, Clare.”

The girl tossed her head. "I don't care. They ought to be boloed for the way they treat the tao. Don't you think so, Mr. Rayne?" turning suddenly to the subaltern, who flushed awkwardly, muttered something incoherent, and glanced appealingly at the major. The latter came to his rescue promptly.

"Mr. Rayne has hardly had time to judge yet, and—well," his eyes twinkled, "he is a Yankee, you know. They have theories in his State."

"Is that true?" Clare looked at the boy with new interest. "Are you really one of those people, Mr. Rayne? How funny! Oh, but you will learn better soon," she added with conviction.

The boy blushed again, and the two older men laughed; then, "You were going to tell me about your friend, the illustrious Enrique, Clare," the major reminded her.

"Enrique? He is an old dear, the chief of a little clan right up in the mountains, where they have volcanoes, and precipices, and hot springs, and all that sort of thing. He has always been independent, but he never raids the coast villages, and any white man who goes up there has a splendid time. It's true, isn't it, father? You remember Mr. Foster, the red-headed Scotchman?"

Mr. Westley laughed. "Yes; he is quite a gentleman in his own way, though you forgot to say that he is also a ladrone, a professional brigand, with rather lax ideas of mine and thine. Still, I have always got on excellently with him in business. I buy a great deal of hemp, which, I am morally certain,

comes from him; and I believe he only robs other robbers. I have never seen the man himself, though. Did you run across him, Flint?"

"Captain Rawson did," replied the major. "You ask him, if you see him. He has not recovered from his surprise yet. He was chasing an insurrecto outfit, pressing it pretty hard, when he suddenly got notice to quit. It seemed he was trespassing on Enrique's ground. An old tao brought the message. He was quite apologetic, though he remarked casually that there were two hundred bolomen in the bush close by. He said Enrique had no quarrel with us; and that, if Rawson would go outside his boundaries, he would send the bunch of insurgents down to him." He paused and flicked away his cigar ash carefully.

"Well, did he do so?" asked Clare impatiently.

The major looked at her with a queer smile. "Yes," he answered slowly, "he did—partially. He sent their heads first, in baskets, and said the señor captain could have the bodies as well, if he really needed them."

Clare pushed away her chair and got up quickly. "You are horrid, major. I don't like you a little bit.—Mr. Rayne, come out on the balcony and talk of nice things."

When they had gone, the major gave his host a full account of the morning's happenings in the palm grove. Westley made no remark till he had finished; then—

"I knew she had plenty of grit," he said quietly. The major turned on him, almost savagely.

“Grit!” he growled, “grit! Is that all you have to say?” He stopped abruptly and stared out of the window. When he spoke again, his voice was perfectly calm. “What do you make of it, Westley? What does it mean?”

The Englishman blew out a cloud of smoke and watched it drifting upwards. “The shot? And the pulajan venturing down here? Clare may have been mistaken; but if she is not, it looks very ugly. It means that ghastly business is beginning again, and means, too, that they have plenty of friends here, otherwise they would never dare show that detestable uniform so close to Calbayog. I am afraid, also, that his shooting at you means a declaration of war against your people, although, there again, it may have been nothing but mere bravado on the man’s part. But I doubt that. He was down here for a purpose. What will you do?”

The major sighed. “Nothing, except tell the general, and he can do nothing. You know the feeling between the Civil Government and the army—how they hate us.” He got up from his chair and paced the room. “Oh, Westley, it makes me so hot—damn them!—after all we have done—the army’s work—these grafters coming in, like a flight of hungry vultures. First they give the credit to the volunteers, then to the politicians. We don’t want the credit, damn the credit! But we do want a chance to finish our job, to give the United States value for the good men who have gone. God knows! we have paid enough for the islands, in money as well as blood, and they

ought not to be dragged into the mud of party politics, to be made to provide fat jobs for the politicians, and be used as pawns in the elections. The new régime has only just begun, and yet I can see the end of it already—more burned towns, more blood, more misery, both here and in the States. Won't it be so?"

"I am afraid you are right," replied the Englishman gravely. "You can't change the East—you can't hustle the East. All the education in the world will leave the Oriental an Oriental still. Having a vote will not protect the tao of Lamu from Papa Pablo, and it is the tao who ought to be considered first, not those frothy agitators in the towns. But I suppose it must be so, now; and in a few years' time you will have to fight the whole thing over again.—Well, Cinicio," to the muchacho who had just come in, "what is it?"

"The governor, señor. He wishes to see the señor comandante."

The major flushed angrily. "Confound his impertinence, following me here. May I tell him——"

Westley laid a hand on his arm. "See him here by all means, Flint. I will join the others outside," and he moved towards the door, but the major stoped him.

"I have no private business with natives, governors or insurrectos. He can say it before you, or not at all."

The governor entered with an apologetic air. He was a handsome man, like so many of his kind, but

it was entirely the handsomeness of the half-caste—dark, sensual, full-blooded, with that underlying something, that vague indeterminate characteristic, which is so utterly repellent to the clean-bred white man. The Eurasian generally, the mestizo particularly, gives one a feeling it is almost impossible to express in words. It is not the dull sallowness of his complexion, not his apparently greasy skin, not the lean, nervous hands, not the cringing servility which always seems to lurk even under an arrogant exterior. It is different to these—more than these. It is really the whole of your Western breeding and traditions, the whole of your Western pride, if you will, protesting against being brought into blood relationship with the East, rejecting, even before it is made, a possible claim of cousinship on the part of the East.

The American drew himself up stiffly as the governor came into the room. He was a Southerner to the backbone, and he saw in the stout and rather over-dressed visitor, not the representative of the United States, but merely a colored man who expected to shake hands with him. Westley, however, knew how to manage these things, and the mestizo was guided to a chair, and provided with a cigar, before he had time to realize that the soldier had merely vouchsafed him a cold bow.

The governor apologized profusely for his intrusion. He knew he was taking a liberty, he said, but he felt sure that Señor Westley would forgive him. His business was very simple; he merely wished to

call the major's attention to the fact that, doubtless through an oversight, he had omitted to ask permission from the civil authorities before letting his men camp on the plaza. It was a formality, merely a formality; but Commissioner Furber had impressed on him the necessity of having it respected. "I have a copy of the ordinance here," he added, holding out a paper.

The major waved it aside. His face had grown red with anger, and he was chewing fiercely on his cigar. "I have no wish to see it," he answered coldly. "Although it is new to me, I have not the slightest doubt the Commission made such a law. It is exactly what I should have expected." He got up suddenly. "I have the honor to ask you to allow my troops to camp in the plaza."

The governor rose in his turn and bowed. "And I have the greatest pleasure in granting it," he answered; then, as he resumed his seat, his manner changed. "You must forgive me, señor—really you must. I am sure you will, when you think of it in the right way. If we are to give peace to this unhappy island, the laws must be rigidly enforced, and the example must come from above. You and I must set it. Is it not so?"

The major bit his lips. The other was so obviously right that his own anger seemed rather unreasonable; whilst, despite his dark skin, the governor had the manners of a gentleman. It was Westley who came to his rescue again.

"Your business is quickly over, señor," he said,

turning to the governor. "Curiously enough, I had just been telling Major Flint of your appointment. He knew nothing of it before."

The governor jumped up quickly. "Is that so? A thousand apologies, major. I had no idea that you did not know; and, of course, these new laws only became operative when I took up office. But still I trust you understand. Ah, I see you do. Now, as to this outrage, this shot which was fired—" And he looked at the soldier inquiringly.

The major shook his head. "I know nothing beyond the bare facts," and he glanced towards Westley, who was casually rolling up a loose leaf of his cigar, as though the matter in question was one in which he took no interest.

"Ah!" the governor gave a little laugh of satisfaction; "then I can earn your forgiveness, and, I hope, your gratitude; for I have the culprit, or rather his body."

The major started, though Westley merely looked up with mild interest. "Yes," continued Anũgar, "one of my police followed and shot him. He was just a madman, who must have done it out of bravado. You know him, Señor Westley—Simeon Talibat."

The Englishman raised his eyebrows. "Simeon, who used to be one of my boatman? I thought he was quite harmless."

The governor gave a gentle little laugh. "He is harmless now, señor.—I regret it deeply, major, regret the outrage as much as my uncongenial official

task. Still, I have done my best to avenge the one and obtain forgiveness for the other."

The major's stiffness relaxed. The man's suaveness disarmed him. Anũgar might be a half-breed, might be the representative of the detested Civil Government, but both officially and personally his attitude was perfectly correct; moreover, he made no attempt at familiarity. Consequently, when he took his departure a few minutes later, the major bade him farewell with something almost approaching cordiality.

"He is better than I expected, Westley," the soldier remarked, "much better. So Clare was wrong, after all. Why didn't you mention the pulajanes to him?"

The Englishman shook his head. "I am not so sure, even now, that she was mistaken. As for the other matter, I never mix in native politics. It would be fatal to my business; and, moreover, these new officials are rather touchy about interference or advice.—Do you suppose Anũgar knows anything about Papa Pablo? No, probably not as much as I do, because he was never in Lamu at the time of the pulajan raids, but was managing a hemp warehouse in Panay. Well, shall we join the young people?"

The major got up. "Yes. Oh, there was one thing I meant to ask you, though I dare not suggest it before Clare. Did it ever strike you that this Enrique de la Cruz might possibly be Papa Pablo himself?"

"Yes, it did at one time," Westley admitted; "but I don't think so now. Even a Filipino would find it

hard to run two mutually hostile bands; besides, I fancy Enrique has a certain amount of crude principle, whilst Pablo, if there is such a person, must be a perfect fiend."

Clare was lying back in a long bamboo chair, a cigarette poised daintily between her fingers and a look of great amusement on her face, watching the subaltern, who was leaning forward eagerly, evidently explaining something with considerable earnestness, for he did not seem at all pleased to see the major come out, and he obeyed rather sulkily when Clare bade him resign his chair to his superior officer.

"It is the major's turn now," she remarked, "though you may stay and listen. Major, sit here. I have been telling Mr. Rayne—I won't say Lieutenant Rayne, it sounds so like the Salvation Army—I have been telling him that all ladies smoke in the Philippines, smoke lots and lots of cigarettes. But I don't think he believes it. Do you?" turning suddenly to the unfortunate boy. "Oh, well he will learn. Then I have been telling him about the natives, how I hate them—at least the educated ones. He has got dreadful ideas about teaching the tao, giving them votes and so on, quite 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' sort of notions. I tell him it is perfectly horrid. He says he would like to marry a mestiza."

"No, no, really, Miss Westley; I didn't say that. I said I didn't see why a white man shouldn't do it if he liked," protested her victim.

"Well, that is just as bad," she retorted. "And

you must positively have thought of doing it, or you would not have suggested it."

"But every one has a right to his opinions, Clare," remonstrated the major.

"Not to nasty opinions," she replied. "And when they come here they must think as I do. You know that, and you always agree with me."

The major smiled. "Perhaps I have learnt it is the wisest.—Well, Rayne, I am afraid it is time we went down. Unless I am very much mistaken, that is the transport coming round the point; the *General Sherman*, I think."

Clare jumped up and glanced seawards. "It is the *General Sheridan*, not the *Sherman*; I can tell that by the amount of sheer she has got. I should say she is a very bad sea-boat," she added critically.

"I will inquire," said the major gravely.

"You need not," she retorted. "You will find out for yourself. To-morrow, you will be punching into the teeth of the monsoon, and it is blowing awfully stiff this year, Captain Hillier of the *Cervantes* says. They always tell me those things, you know. Mr. Rayne, you look seasick already. Well, if you must go, we will see you off; won't we, father?"

Robert Westley and Rayne walked on ahead, whilst Clare and the major followed some little distance behind.

"You look nice and sunburnt and fit," the girl remarked, glancing appreciatively at her companion. "Only I wish you wore helmets as our soldiers do. I am sure some of those poor boys feel the sun dread-

fully in those silly little hats. I like him too," nodding towards Rayne's tall, slim-built figure. "I like him, because he is fresh and natural and very young, and because he hasn't got long hair and padded shoulders like the American civilians in Manila."

The major gave her a keen look. "You are not to make him silly, Clare. Do you hear? He is going away, I know, but he is sure to meet you in Manila."

"I shall do what I like," she replied decisively. "It would be very nice for him, and would do him—oh, heaps of good. He thinks he despises girls. You know it would be nice for him, wouldn't it, major?" and she slipped her arm into that of the veteran and looked up at him with laughing eyes.

The heaviness of noontide had already fallen on Calbayog. Such activity as had followed the belated awakening of the town had died away again as soon as the sun began to grow really hot. The dozen or so fishermen, who had put out into the bay two or three hours before, could still be seen, a few hundred yards from the shore, dozing in their boats. In the Chinese stores, the owners, despairing of further custom until evening, had stretched themselves on their counters, and were dreaming opium-tinged dreams of the happy day when they would return to the Flowery Land with bags of dollars bulging with pesos extracted from the detested Filipinos by a rigid attention to business, coupled with an expert knowledge of three-card monte. In the main street, an unusually energetic tao had started to repair a casting-net, which, for that purpose, he had spread right across the

roadway; but apparently the unwonted exertion had been too much for him, and he was now sleeping the sleep of the tired toiler in the doorway of the courthouse. Half a dozen carabao, the hateful water buffalo, were trying to cool their ungainly carcasses in a pool of mud beside the church, whilst waiting for some one to come to drive them to pasture. Gaunt pigs innumerable slumbered as peacefully as the flies would permit beneath the perched-up nipa shacks. A tribe of lean dogs of undecided breed and objectionable tendencies, nosing wearily in the many heaps of garbage for stray pieces of offal, were the only things stirring, save in the plaza, where, just as Clare and the major came up, a sudden tremor of excitement seemed to run through the lounging groups of soldiers, bringing them smartly to their feet, and sending most of them running, rifle in hand, to the further corner of the square.

The major turned quickly to his companion. "Stay here, Clare," he commanded, then hurried forward; but the girl noted with a little thrill of satisfaction that, even in his haste, he found time to raise his hand to his hat in salute.

Clare made no attempt to follow him. It was quite different to what it had been earlier in the day in the palm grove—there, she could be of assistance; now, she knew she would only be in the way. So she stood still and waited. She was not kept long in suspense. In a few minutes, the soldiers began to drift back in twos and threes, talking eagerly; then her father and the major came across the plaza to her.

“ Well, what was it? ” she asked, looking from one to the other.

The major answered her. “ It was one of my men. He went down to that little creek to collect shells, and they have just found him, boloed.”

She gave a quick cry, but it was wrath, not dismay. “ Oh, the fiends! Pulajanes? ”

The major shook his head. “ There is nothing to show.—Well, Captain Rawson? ” to the senior captain, who had just stalked up.

The officer handed him a little pouch. “ They found this clutched in his hand, sir; this and some torn scraps of red and white linen. Corporal Webster just gave them to me.”

The major examined the bag curiously, then untied the string round its neck and took out a tiny glass phial and a crude little book. Clare gave one glance at the things, then turned eagerly to Westley.

“ Father,” she began, “ it is——”

The Englishman nodded. “ Yes; you were right, Clare.”

The major looked up quickly. “ What do you mean? What are these? ”

Clare replied, “ The bottle is oil of St. Francis, and the book is Papa Pablo’s missal. It is an *antig-antig*, a pulajan charm.”

## CHAPTER IV

A MAN stood on the steps of Hong-Kong post office watching the tide of cosmopolitan humanity streaming along Queen's Road Central. There is a tremendous fascination about those few hundred yards of road. Hong-Kong is one of the great meeting-places of the world—the greatest, perhaps—and Queen's Road Central is the main highway of Hong-Kong. Nowhere else in the world will you see so many different types. Every race, class, and creed is there, from Farthest East to Farthest West, from the latitude of Archangel to the latitude of the Horn—Christian and Confucian, Buddhist and Jew, follower of Zoroaster and follower of the latest blasphemous crank, worshiper of stone devils and worshiper of the gold dollar; Chinese coolies who have never known the meaning of a full meal, and millionaires who have never denied themselves anything; daintily-dressed white ladies borne aloft in sedan-chairs, and kimono-clad Japanese girls shuffling along on foot; Tommy Atkins in a ricksha and sailor-men rolling a little in their gait; white police, Indian police, Chinese police, and police military and naval; tourists staring at everything, and bearded Sikhs stalking along with eyes which see none but their own officers; Eurasians in huge topees and mandarins in wonderful silks; Hindoo merchants in white, and solemn-eyed missionaries

in black ; skippers of great liners and skippers of grotesque junks ; British officers in mufti and American officers in uniform ; peers and opium smugglers, members of Parliament and pirates ; merchant princes and gun-runners ; some of the best and many of the worst—you can see all these in Queen's Road Central, jostling one another, hurrying along in pursuit of pleasure or wealth, or the bare means of sustaining existence until the morrow.

The man on the post office steps surveyed the scene languidly, with an air of being outside it all, of having no part in the hustling life around him. He was obviously a gentleman ; yet, in some almost indefinable way, he appeared different to the majority of his own class in Hong-Kong. His thirty-odd years seemed to have left him weary and disillusioned, and one felt instinctively that, as he was now looking on, so he always looked on with those rather somber eyes, himself without purpose or occupation, watching the activity of others.

He was evidently waiting for some one, for, from time to time, he glanced up the street, then at the clock ; but there was nothing of impatience in his manner. He finished one cigar and took out his case to get a fresh one, but apparently remembered that he had none left, for he replaced the case in his pocket ; then, after another glance up the street, descended the steps slowly and strolled across the road towards a tobacconist's shop.

A huge Sikh policeman on point duty glanced at him keenly, then stiffened up and saluted. The man

raised his eyebrows slightly, and returned the salute in the quick, mechanical way of the officer. The policeman stroked his beard gravely, and watched him till he disappeared in through the door of the shop.

“It is North Sahib,” he uttered to himself. “North Sahib indeed. He does not remember me; but then I was not of his company; though if I spoke to him of his father—” he sighed, and swung round smartly to revile a ricksha coolie, who, seeing his enemy’s abstraction, was trying to slip past on the wrong side.

A couple of mail boats had come in an hour before, with every berth full; consequently, a stream of conveyances was hurrying up from the quay, bearing a crowd of visitors eager to make the most of their short stay, before hurrying on to the Mecca of all good globe-trotters, Yokohama.

As North Sahib, otherwise Derek Wallas North, late of the Indian Staff Corps, came out of the tobacconist’s, three sedan-chairs swung up the street, each following closely in the wake of the other.

In the first was an elderly lady with hard eyes and a handsome face, whilst in the others were two girls, obviously her daughters. All were well-dressed, and one of them, the girl in the last chair, was very pretty, in a dainty, fresh sort of way. Derek started slightly when he saw them, then paused on the curb whilst they passed. The first two went by without seeing the tall, white-clad figure; but the third one looked him full in the face, flushed suddenly, then leaned out eagerly and bowed. The man raised his

hat and took a step forward, as if to speak to her; but the bearers had not noticed the greeting, and the chair swung on, and was quickly swallowed up in the stream of traffic. Derek stared after it a moment, smiled rather bitterly, then crossed the road, and again took up his station on the steps.

"Mother," said the girl who had bowed, when, a few minutes later, they entered the hall of their hotel—"Mother, I saw Derek just now."

Lady Lancaster turned round sharply. "Derek? You mean your cousin? How annoying! I am glad I did not see him, for I should have cut him. No one knows him now, since that scandalous affair over which they turned him out of the Service."

The girl flushed. "They didn't turn him out," she answered bravely; "he resigned of his own accord."

Lady Lancaster tossed her head. "He resigned because he had no choice. Did you bow to him?" she added with sudden suspicion.

The girl nodded; her mouth was quivering suspiciously, and there were tears rising in her eyes.

Her mother's hard face grew even harder. "I am ashamed of you, Enid. Every one says he is killing himself with drink. I am glad my poor sister did not live to see her son's disgrace," and Lady Lancaster snorted in a way that her husband, the late general, had known only too well.

The girl said nothing until her mother was busy with the hotel clerk, impressing on that awe-stricken Eurasian the absolute necessity of their having first-

floor rooms at fourth-floor prices ; then she turned to her sister.

“ It is a shame, Mary ; a horrible shame ! Every one is down on poor Derek. I think he has been treated hatefully all through. It was disgusting of Elsie Norman to throw him over in the way she did.”

The other girl shrugged her shoulders ; she had her mother’s eyes and discontented mouth. “ I dare say,” she replied indifferently ; “ still, he brought it on himself ; and Elsie thought at the time she was doing better in marrying that old judge—no one imagined then that Derek would come in for the property so soon, and he has a detestable temper. If the scandal had come after he got the estate, it might have been hushed up ; and I’m sure, as it was, the family did its best ; but he made things impossible by refusing to speak. Anyway, there is no excuse for what he is doing now.”

“ What is that ? ” asked her sister defiantly.

“ Why, drifting about the East, loafing and drinking, and mixing with all sorts of queer people. He spends most of his time with that hateful Jack Wilson—you know, the son of the doctor at Ambersham, who is skipper of a low tramp steamer. It shows Derek is ashamed to go home. But it’s very hard on us. He might have the decency to stay where our friends won’t see him.”

“ Who told you about him ? ” demanded Enid hotly.

“ Frank Onslow,” answered the other. “ He saw

Derek at Macao, and says he was doing nothing but play fan-tan, and, of course, drink—like all those horrid Norths.”

The younger girl's lip curled. “Frank Onslow! Then I don't believe a word of it. Anyway, what was that pious young man, himself, doing at Macao?”

Her sister laughed hardly—she was wonderfully like her mother. “I didn't suppose you would believe it. Still, I don't think even our creditable cousin himself would deny it. You had better try. Ask him what he has been doing since he left India.”

Enid flushed. “I will, if I get the chance.”

Derek North had not long to wait when he returned to his position on the post office steps. In a few minutes a man came hurrying up, a short square-built man, with the mark of the sea on him so plainly that all could read it.

“Sorry to keep you waiting,” the new-comer said, “but I had a bit of a row with them at the office. Shall we go and quench our thirst?—No, not that place. Let's go to the ‘Victorian.’ I can tell you all about it there.”

Derek nodded—he was a man of few words—and they walked up to the same hotel Lady Lancaster was honoring with her presence, and seated themselves at one of the little tables in the corner of the smoking-room. The other man, Jack Wilson, master of that rather notorious little tramp, the *Cingalee*, said little until the bar-boy had fulfilled their orders, then he

turned to his companion with what was, for him, a very worried look.

“I’ve got to take those guns,” he said; “I can’t get out of it. The owner himself arranged it; and, I must admit, arranged it pretty well, too. From the number of the cases, there must be a thousand of the confounded things, and any amount of ammunition. It’s a dirty game, though. I don’t mind the risk, I have taken much bigger ones; and, as you know, I have run guns before; but those were for niggers to shoot other niggers with, so it didn’t matter. Here, however, it’s different. These are going to be used to kill white men.”

“Whom do you suppose they belong to, then?” asked Derek.

“Our little brown brother, of course,” answered the skipper promptly.

Derek looked up quickly from the cigar he was cutting. “Who the devil is he? I never heard of him before.”

The skipper grinned. “The American’s little brown brother, I mean. Don’t you know that since Aguinaldo and his brigands promised to be good, all the Filipinos have been raised to the proud position of little brown brothers? Oh, you may laugh, but the late governor-general said so officially. What makes me think these wretched guns are for him, is that they are to be landed at Guyal, an outlier of the Philippines. There’s no one there now—there hasn’t been since one of our gunboats shelled a hive of Chinese pirates several years ago; but it’s an ideal

jumping-off place for the islands. There's only one harbor and a few square miles of sand and mangrove swamp, and lots of sharks and devil-fish and whacking great bats, a beast of a place altogether. I'm just to dump the cases down and clear out, and some one else is coming to fetch them away, in native sailing boats. After that I go on to Laguan and Calbayog."

Derek was abstractedly building a little pyramid of match sticks on the marble table top. "It's a bit low-down," he said, without looking up.

Wilson nodded emphatically. "It is; it's rotten business right through; but then it's a damned rotten, low-down place, this China coast. A sailor-man can't afford a conscience, though. I can only trust the Recording Angel will shove it all down to the owner."

"I dare say he will," drawled Derek. "Anyway, I am hardly the one to preach to you.—Two more whiskies-and-sodas, John, long ones, savee?—Well, Wilson," he began again, then paused and went on building his pyramid of matches; but, as he placed the last one in position, he glanced up with a smile. "Well, Wilson, it's rotten business, as you say; but it sounds interesting, and I have no character to lose, so I'll come with you, if you're not tired of my company. I should like to see the islands and the American's new-found relative."

The skipper made a grimace. "You won't like him, though the islands are fine. As the hymn says, only man is vile there. Of course, I shall be glad to have you, you know that. I should miss you hor-

ribly if you decided," he hesitated a little, "if you decided to do the sensible thing and go home."

Derek shook his head. "I'm not going to," he answered quietly, then changed the subject abruptly. "Have you any idea who is behind this business, who pays for the guns?"

"Not the slightest," replied the skipper; "but I presume it's the old crowd who ran the last show in Luzon. It's easier than ever now, for half the leaders the army intended to hang have fat official billets under the Civil Government. Manila is just honey-combed with treason, they say.—Well, shall we go aboard? No, no, not another drink now, thanks."

As they went out of the smoking-room a man but-tonholed the skipper. "Half a minute, captain," he said.

Derek strolled into the hall, where he languidly scanned the shipping announcements whilst waiting for his friend. Many people were passing in and out, a constant stream of visitors, but he took no notice of any of them, until, suddenly, he heard his own name spoken: "Derek." He faced round quickly, and saw Enid Lancaster, the girl of the sedan-chair, standing just behind him. She held out her hand with a nervous, impulsive gesture.

"Derek, I'm so glad I've met you. I hoped I should. I—I—" and she flushed and stammered.

Derek understood—perhaps because he knew her mother so well. "Shall we go in here, Enid? It's cooler, I think." He pushed open the big door and held it whilst she entered, then let it swing to behind

them, and, for a moment, there was an awkward silence.

“It’s a long time since I saw you,” he began at last. “Three years, isn’t it?”

She nodded. “Yes. We have been at home ever since. But now we’re going to Japan; I suppose because it’s the right thing to do. We came in this morning on the *Corinth*, and we’re going to stay here a week, till the next boat. We—I,” she broke off suddenly. “O Derek, I don’t want mother to see me talking to you; but I did want to say how sorry I was about it all, for the way they’ve treated you, and that—that I never believed it—that thing. I know people are horrid to you, but I should hate you to think I was like the others. They say such dreadful things about you. They are not true, are they? Say they’re not true, do!”

Derek listened with a queer expression in his eyes. “It’s awfully good of you, Enid,” he said slowly. “I knew you would never turn on me. You were always the only decent one of the family. As for the rest”—his face grew very dark—“it was my own fault, though. They began to talk; and, well, I have given them reason—at least since I chucked the Service.”

The girl was fidgeting with her gloves, drawing them nervously through her hand. “Why don’t you go home, Derek?” she asked. “You ought to, instead of—” and she paused.

He finished the sentence for her. “Instead of loafing about the East.”

She looked up and faced him. “Yes, that, and—

they say you drink too much." She had summoned up all her courage, and brought out the last words almost harshly.

Derek turned away and stared out of the window. "It's awfully good of you, Enid," he repeated. "I know they've been busy with my name, and—I'm a fool, you see," he added lamely.

Enid Lancaster stamped her foot. "You are not a fool," she retorted, with a degree of energy one would not have expected from her. "You are not. You are capable of good things, big things; only you won't trouble to do them now. You were angry because people were so ready to believe evil of you, and now you are sulking. Oh, it is so feeble, Derek, so utterly feeble. You were very different once. Why can't you be so again?"

He smiled bitterly. "Don't you know the proverb about the dog with a bad name?"

She turned towards the door with a sigh. "You could fight it all down, if you would only try. Do something, Derek. Force people to believe in you again. Write another book, or better still, go home and live at your own place, and face them all. Good-by. Don't be angry with me, Derek; I didn't mean to say so much, and I didn't mean to hurt you. But do, do give it up and do go home. You're not offended? We are still friends; aren't we?"

Derek nodded. "Of course; I hope we shall always be that. Good-by," and he opened the door to let her out.

"Try," she said in a low voice as she passed him.

He looked after her with thoughtful eyes, then went to rejoin Wilson, who was waiting for him on the veranda.

"I just met my cousin, Enid Lancaster," he remarked.

Wilson laughed. "Yes, the old dowager swept past me a moment ago, so I supposed the girls were here too. I guess I shall dream of the look I got. Her ladyship never did love me."

Derek was even more silent than usual whilst the sampan was taking them to the *Cingalee*, which lay near the Kowloon shore; and when they got aboard he drew a chair into the shadow of the chart-house, and sat for a long time, smoking and staring at nothing. At last, he got up and went into the cabin, where Wilson was busy with some accounts.

"I think I shall change my mind, Jack," he said abruptly. "I have half a mind to go home."

The skipper swung round in his chair. "I am sorry, old man," he said. "Sorry for my own sake—and infernally glad for yours; much more glad than sorry, too. You really mean it, I suppose. Which way will you go, East or West?" And they fell to discussing routes and steamship lines, until a quartermaster interrupted them by coming in with a note.

Wilson glanced at it, then handed it to Derek.

"It's for you," he said.

Derek flushed as he saw the writing on the envelope, then he tore it open and his flush deepened. He read the letter through rapidly, re-read it more care-

fully, then crushed it savagely into a ball and tossed it overboard.

“The damned old harridan!” he muttered.

The skipper looked at him curiously, awaiting an explanation, which came a moment later.

“From my aunt, my loving aunt,” Derek growled. “That pillar of society, Lady Lancaster. She requests me to refrain from claiming acquaintance with any of the family, as it is ‘so painful under the circumstances,’ and Mr. Kennet-Lake, to whom Enid is engaged, naturally objects. Then she has the cheek, the infernal insolence, to demand that I disappear from the ken of respectable people, so that the family—God help it!—shall not be disgraced any further.”

Wilson’s eyes flashed. “I shouldn’t take any notice of it, if I were you. You know what she is, and, anyway, they and their friends aren’t the whole of the world.”

Derek got up from his seat suddenly. “Damn them!” he said, then went out on to the deck, where he leaned against the rail, chewing savagely on the end of an unlighted cigar. The Chinese steward came to tell him tea was ready, but he took no notice. At last, he tossed his cigar away, lighted a new one, and went back to the cabin, where Wilson was still writing.

“I am going ashore,” he said shortly. “I can’t stand doing nothing. Are you coming?”

“Don’t be a fool,” retorted the sailor. “No, I can’t get away yet. There is a man coming aboard about those guns. Stay and have some dinner, and I’ll go with you later.”

## 54      The Little Brown Brother

Derek shook his head and hailed a passing sampan.

It was after midnight when he came aboard again. His face was pale and his eyes a little bloodshot; but his hand was perfectly steady and his rather drawling speech as clear as ever.

“Hullo! Still up?” he said, as he looked into the skipper’s cabin. “When do you sail, Wilson? I’ll come with you and see you run your guns. I’ve finished adding to the Great Pavement.”

## CHAPTER V

THE mate of the *Cingalee* was leaning over the rail of that little 1200-ton tramp, discoursing learnedly of things maritime to the new chief engineer, a red-bearded giant who had just joined, his predecessor having been removed to hospital to expiate, by a raging dose of fever, a long course of covert insobriety.

"Wonderful, isn't it?" remarked the mate, pointing with the stump of his cigar at the assembled multitude of shipping. "Nothing else like it in the world, except, perhaps, Singapore. Two whacking great Blue-funnel boats just in and a Standard oil-tank, and!—yes, by Jove!—there's the whole fleet coming up. Talk about a procession! How those fellows can handle them!"

The chief had no imagination, and he never waxed eloquent over anything you could not oil, but it is impossible for any one to be wholly dead to the big-ness of Hong-Kong, so he nodded gravely.

"Yes," he admitted, "it's wonderful, especially to think of the money that's made here. Still," he added cautiously, as an afterthought, "I have my doubts as to the state of the engines of some of your craft, the wee ones in particular."

The mate laughed and lit a fresh cigar, at which he puffed reflectively as he watched a huge Hamburg liner glide past.

“Noisy brutes, square-heads,” he remarked at last. “Hear ’em bellowing orders? I wonder what they’d do in a typhoon. I dare say they can worry through in fine weather; but, if I ever go passenger, I go under my own flag, where you know that the man on the bridge has passed a proper examination. Liner service wouldn’t suit me, though—wearing a fathom of gold braid and a boiled shirt. Give me a tramp after all, one like this, I mean, not one of your barnacle-bottomed Geordie colliers or Indian Ocean crocks, which potter round, littered with spewing coolies. Load? Oh, we load for anywhere in these waters, and take some queer cargoes. The old man’s well known, you see, and not over particular. The owner treats us pretty well, too—for a Scotchman,” he added, with a side glance at his companion.

The chief ignored the insult—perhaps because he had heard it before. “She is well found below,” he said, “very well found; but yon man in hospital must have been a poor, shiftless inebriate by some of his work I’ve noticed. The Second is busy on it now. That’s him,” as a voice floated up from the bowels of the ship, praying that unprintable things might happen to some one else, apparently a Chinese fitter.

The mate grinned. “I knew you’d condemn his notions. I never heard two of you black brigade agree yet,” he remarked politely. “Ah, there’s the old man in that sampan. He’s got his pal with him; so I suppose he’s coming again this trip.”

“Who is he?” demanded the chief.

The mate shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know

anything about him except that his name is North, and that he's a very nice chap, and never seems to do anything or want to do anything. He's not a shiftless inebriate, as you call 'em, yet; but I shouldn't like to bet on what he will be by-and-by."

The chief sighed heavily. "Whisky is an awful thing."

The mate glanced at him quickly, then with an obvious effort, he stifled a suitable retort, and went to the gangway to receive his skipper.

A week later, the *Cingalee* was well to the southeast of Luzon, out in the broad Pacific, punching her way through an ugly head-sea. She was a good sea-boat, and, for a tramp, remarkably well engined; but this trip she was very light, and, as a consequence, was dancing about like a cork. Each time she drove her nose into a wave, a great cloud of spray flew over the fo'c'sle head, often reaching as far aft as the bridge, whilst about every tenth billow came aboard in a solid green lump. Down in the engine-room, the second engineer was standing with his hand on the stop-valve, perspiring freely, and blaspheming even more freely at the racing screw. The mate was on watch, and beside him on the bridge was Derek North, who now looked a very different man to the weary loungeur of Hong-Kong. Clad in dripping oilskins, he stood up and faced the weather, obviously reveling in its fierceness. His eyes were bright and clear, and there was no hint of slackness in the tall figure. Nature had intended him to be a fighter, and anything of danger or opposition very quickly brought out the

real man. He forgot his troubles, forgot his quarrel with society, as he grasped the rail and watched the oncoming waves.

"Choice, isn't it?" said the mate, stooping down behind the weather-cloth to light his cigar. "But it's always dirty down here at this season."

"Have you been here before, then?" asked Derek.

The mate nodded. "Yes, at the beginning of the big insurrection. We took a lot of troops down in the old *Caliph*. There was some money flying about then; they didn't mind—Hullo! what's that, away to the southward? Smoke, isn't it? Take the glasses yourself and see what you make of it, Mr. North."

Derek steadied himself against the rail, and took a long survey of the object on the horizon.

"Yes," he said at last; "it's a steamer, a small one, with a white, or light gray, hull."

The mate's face fell. "Then ten to one it's one of those Yankee coastguards. Inquisitive beggars, some of them; because they're new, I suppose." He had another look, walked up and down the bridge several times, then looked again.

"Yes," he said. "That's what she is, a coast-guard. I'd better tell the old man," and he scrambled down the ladder.

By the time the skipper came on deck the stranger was quite clear—a trim-built little boat of some four hundred tons, with a white hull and mahogany deck-houses.

Wilson regarded her with an unfriendly eye. "We'll keep on our course," he said. "If we try and

avoid her she may take it into her head to follow. I can't imagine what she's doing out here."

The other vessel came up fast, and the watchers on the bridge were soon able to make out all her details.

"Two long guns," said Wilson, who had the glasses. "One-pounders, I suppose, just for'ard of the wheel-house, and a machine-gun abaft the funnel—a Maxim, I expect; no, one of those rotten Gatlings. What's her name? P—A—L—*Palapog*; I remember her now. I saw her doing her trials at Woosung. Looks as if she wanted to speak to us. All right, Mr. Morgan, let her have her way."

The stranger ranged up close. It was a fair wind for her, and she was making much better weather of it than the *Cingalee*; but, none the less, she was steering very wide.

"A brown brother at the helm, I'll be bound," growled the skipper. "Give her a bit more room, Mr. Morgan. There's her skipper. By Jove, it's Peter Jansen! Square-face Pete." He picked up the megaphone. "Oh, Peter, hullo! Is that really your slim self, you old bull of Bashan?"

A hugely fat man waddled to the coastguard's side, steadied himself by the gun, and looked at the other solemnly. He needed no megaphone. "Hullo, Wilson!" he bellowed back. "I thought it was you.—Going piratin' again? Don't get cross. Going south, you say? Calbayog? I've just come from there. Manila afterwards? All right, see you there. I'm going into dock—new propeller. Jack is up

there. Jack—can't you hear? Jack Lefevre. We'll have a drink at your expense. Good-by," and the two vessels swung apart again.

Wilson waved a farewell, then turned to the mate—

"You know him, don't you, Mr. Morgan? Square-face Pete, who lost his ticket through piling up the *Saragossa*. He's a Dutchman of sorts, but he had a British ticket. The Court wasn't at all nice to him; yet here he is commanding a Yankee Government vessel."

The mate scratched his head. "He's a good seaman, sir, when he's sober. I sailed as second with him once—kind of smuggling cruise. I suppose the Yanks believe in set a thief to catch a thief, or, maybe, he's reformed."

Wilson snorted. "It's time the old ruffian did. Well, what's your dead reckoning? A hundred and eighty? Ah! The weather looks like breaking, and if we slow down so as to make Guyal to-morrow early, we may get a show to land our stuff right away. I'm glad that fellow is past. I shouldn't have liked Fat Pete to catch us.—Coming down, North?"

When Derek came on deck the following morning, the weather had changed completely. The wind had dropped about midnight, and the *Cingalee* was now running on an even keel.

Wilson was already on the bridge, clad in pyjamas, smoking his before-breakfast cigar.

"Better, isn't it?" he remarked. "There's Guyal, dead ahead. I wonder if any one's there? We can

anchor close in, and land the stuff in one of the life-boats. The cases aren't heavy."

The skipper navigated his vessel with infinite caution round the end of the long outer reef, and into the narrow little bay which formed the one harbor of Guyal. Seen from the ship, the island was not attractive. There was a line of tall cocoanut palms fringing the white beach, and beyond the palms a strip of marsh, covered with tall, rank grass, and, beyond the marsh again, a low, bush-clad rise; whilst, so far as one could see, the rest of the coast-line consisted of foul mangrove beds.

"Get out that starboard boat, Mr. Morgan," said the skipper, as soon as he had brought the *Cingalee* to an anchor. "Are you coming ashore, North?—Oh, yes, give us a couple of those shot-guns; you never know what you may run into down here."

Derek and the skipper glanced round curiously as they walked up the beach; but there was no sign of life, no hint of man's presence, beyond a dilapidated shack on the edge of the palm grove.

"That's where I was told to stow the guns," remarked the skipper. "We'll have a look at it, though it's obviously empty."

The place proved to be a mere shelter which had evidently been put up by Filipinos, for in front of it lay a typical collection of litter—rotting cocoanut husks, a few broken earthenware pots, the remains of a native guitar, and a pile of crab shells.

Derek stirred one of the ash-heaps with his foot.

"These have been here a good many months. I wonder who built the place?"

"Refugees, I expect," answered the skipper. "Some one is always taking refuge from some one else in the Philippines. It's the custom of the country. Well, there's no one here to worry about. We may as well get back, land the stuff, and clear out as quickly as we can, in case a coastguard or a gunboat comes along."

The work of getting the cases ashore took longer than Wilson had expected, and the day was almost gone before the boat was hoisted in again.

"We'll get away at once, Mr. Morgan," said the skipper. "I want to be off as soon as—What the blazes is that?" as a sudden roaring came from the engine room.

"Main steam-pipe joint blown," the chief explained a minute later, as he emerged from below, dripping with perspiration. "No one hurt, sir, but it means a couple of hours, at least."

Wilson swore feelingly. "We can't go out to-night, then. I don't intend to risk that reef in the dark.—All right, Mr. Munro, you can take your time over it."

It was a perfect night. A faint breeze was blowing in from the seaward side, not sufficient to disturb the water, but still enough to waft in the roar of the swell on the outer reef, where, even in the calmest weather, the mighty Pacific seemed to lash itself into fury against the insignificant little bank of coral, which dared to brave its power. Outside

the chart-room, Derek and the skipper were lounging in long cane chairs, talking disjointedly. Under the influence of the night, Derek had slipped back into his careless manner. There was no excitement, no danger, nothing to occupy his thoughts. From time to time, he helped himself out of a bottle of whisky which stood on a table beside him, apparently drinking it, not so much because he had any special desire for it, but because there was nothing else to do.

Wilson looked at him once or twice with a rather worried expression, as though he wanted to say something, but did not like to begin. At last, "See that great bat?" he remarked. "There's another. Horrid, ghostly things, aren't they? Do you remember the bats we used to try and tame at school—those huge-eared little beggars? I wonder when I shall see the old place again. You will probably go there long before I shall."

Derek shook his head. "I think not," he answered wearily.

The skipper leaned forward, endeavoring to make out his friend's face in the darkness. "Aren't you ever going to try, North? Aren't you ever going to do anything again?"

The other man turned away and stared out into the night. "The Service was the only thing I cared about, and I made that impossible—being a fool."

Wilson tossed his cigar away impatiently. "There are lots of other things worth doing, if you only like to look for them." He got up abruptly and laid his hand on the other's shoulder. "Give it up, North,"

he said, rather unsteadily. "Drop this infernal whisky. It will get the upper hand of you in the end, as it did with—forgive my saying it—your father and your uncle. It doesn't help you to forget. Give it up, man. Hang it all, you were meant for something better."

Derek turned to him defiantly. "You never saw me drunk. No man ever did. Besides—What's that?" he broke off suddenly. "Isn't it a steamer's screw?"

Wilson went to the rail and listened attentively. Mingling with the distant roar of the reef was another sound, much nearer, like the churning of a propeller in the water. For a minute, the two men peered into the blackness, then the skipper turned into the chart-room and fetched the glasses.

"I can't make out anything," he growled. "These may show it. Yes, by Jove, there is a boat—coming in—No, is she? Take the glasses. Can you distinguish her? Only her hull, and that's vague? No lights showing?"

"It must be some one who knows his way," remarked Derek.

The skipper nodded. "Yes, you are right; but she is very small, and it's high tide, so she has an easier job than we had. Her skipper has come in to see if we are here. He would hardly have made us out from the other side of the reef, as I have had all our own lights covered. But I expect he has spotted us by now. Yes, he's going on, and out by the northern passage."

The entrance to the harbor was very narrow, and the *Cingalee* was anchored well inside; consequently, in a few minutes the stranger was out of sight, hidden by the northern arm of the bay.

The skipper, who was visibly disturbed, laid the glasses down with an oath. "She has gone now, and I made out nothing of her. This light is hopeless for seeing anything. I don't like it, North; I don't like it at all."

Derek laughed. "It's rather creepy, isn't it? Something of the phantom ship about the way she seemed to glide along. Who do you suppose it is?"

Wilson shrugged his shoulders. "The people who have come for the guns, perhaps, although I don't see why they should fool about like that. If they didn't want to meet us, they could have hung about some distance off till they saw us go."

"A gunboat or a coastguard?" suggested Derek.

"I am pretty certain on that point," answered the skipper. "They would have come straight in and shoved their searchlight on us, to make sure we dumped nothing overboard. No, it may be the owners of the guns; but, more likely, it's some one who has got wind of them, and wants them for a rival insurrection, or to sell in the Celebes or one of those groups. I only hope he is not waiting to ease us of some of our coal and stores as well. Don't laugh, there are more pirates left than people think, and he would know we couldn't very well complain, as, if we did, we should have to explain why we were here."

"What do you propose to do?" asked Derek.

“To go to bed,” answered Wilson promptly. “The other fellow evidently knows the reef, but I don’t; and, pirate or no pirate, I’m not going to move till I can see.”

At dawn, when Derek went on deck, he found the skipper already pacing the bridge.

“Good-morning, North,” Wilson said; “we can get out now, I think.—All right, Mr. Morgan,” to the mate, who was on the fo’c’sle head; “get your anchor up.”

The *Cingalee* seemed a terribly long time clearing the harbor. It was full daylight before she crept past the point and came in view of the open sea. Derek gave one rapid glance round. There was the stretch of mangrove swamp along the coast, the line of broken water marking the outer reef, and the ocean itself beyond. There were these—and nothing more. The stranger of the night before had disappeared completely.

Derek turned to the skipper with a laugh. “Did we dream it, Wilson?”

The other shrugged his shoulders. “I should almost say so, if I hadn’t seen her myself, and—and, if it wasn’t for that,” and he pointed to a case, an obviously fresh whisky case, floating in the water a few yards away.

## CHAPTER VI

THE Governor of Lamu sighed rather wearily, swept the pile of documents into the drawer of his desk, then rang the bell for his secretary.

“ I will see the Presidente of San Ramon now,” he said.

Anũgar was sitting in his private office, a fine, airy room on the first floor of the government buildings, which, despite their high-sounding name, merely consisted of a large whitewashed house, a wholly unpretentious place, with nothing to distinguish it from the neighboring houses, save the shabby native policeman dozing on the step.

The Presidente of San Ramon, a full-blooded native, a peasant still in all essentials, entered humbly, hat in hand, and seated himself on the very edge of a chair.

The governor plunged straight into business. “ I have looked into that matter of the subscriptions for the Rizal monument, and I have cabled to Manila, telling them of your protest; but the Commission will not alter its instructions. It requires every town and village to subscribe towards the cost of a worthy memorial to this patriot who was executed by the Spaniards.”

The presidente made a hopeless gesture. “ But, señor, our people will not subscribe. They say, ‘ Who

was Rizal?' I answer, 'He was a Tagalog insurrecto in Luzon.' They retort, 'What have we, who are Visayans by race, to do with an accursed Tagalog? Why should we give a peso each to honor his memory? Let the Tagalogs themselves, or the Americanos, find the money.' They are right, señor, you must admit they are right; and, moreover, they are very, very poor."

"I know there is much in what you say," Anūgar answered, "but, Señor Lukban, I cannot help you. It is useless for me to send another protest. The Commission is determined that this shall be a national matter, and will remove any presidente who does not assist it. Try again, señor. Reason with your people; make them understand that, henceforth, Tagalogs and Visayans, and even Moros, must all be one nation; and that, in honoring a man of one race, they are honoring all. I will get you an extension of time in which to obtain the money, if it should be necessary.—And now, as to these reports of ladronism which I hear from your district—Why is it not put down?" His voice, friendly before, suddenly grew severe.

The other man shifted uneasily in his seat. "I have done my best. My police have been out every day. I have arrested suspects, and have tried all means to force a confession from them, but without result. I can get nothing definite, only vague rumors that pulajanes have been seen."

Anūgar, who had been drumming on the table with his fingers, turned on him sharply. "And meanwhile

men are killed, and women and carabao carried off. I hear, too, that one of your suspects died from your treatment. Pulajanes! Every presidente who is too weak to control his district comes here and complains to me of pulajanes, yet none ever brings me a pulajan to hang. I shall have to take the field myself and root them out, as I am going to root out Enrique de la Cruz. Perhaps in destroying the one I shall be destroying both."

"Señor, it is impossible. I know—" the presidente began, but the governor cut him short.

"How do you know? I hear of pulajanes and ladrones, and," he paused and looked at the other meaningly, "I also hear of presidentes who send letters to De la Cruz. Once and for all, Señor Lukban, I will tell you that those days are past. I shall hang ladrones, and I shall hang pulajanes, and—I shall also hang any official who holds communication with either. Do you understand me? Yes. Well, you may repeat my words to all your friends, especially to the tenientes of Las Navas and San Polycarpio."

The presidente wiped the perspiration from his face with a very shaky hand. "It shall be done, señor," he muttered, then he rose and took his leave, obviously glad to be gone.

As the door closed behind his visitor, Anúgar got up and studied a map of Lamu, which hung on the wall. He found San Ramon, a town on the northern coast, and underlined the name in red ink.

"I shall have to find a new presidente," he mur-

mured; then he turned to greet a stout, elderly American who had just entered, unannounced.

The new-comer, the chief auditor of the Finance Bureau in Manila, sank heavily into a chair and fanned himself with a handkerchief.

“Your clerks’ office is more than hot, governor,” he panted. “I shall have to recommend them to build you a new one before I come down for the next audit. I am sure you deserve it for the economies you have effected. I hope I find things as good over in Leyte.”

Anũgar bowed at the compliment. “Perhaps the Governor of Leyte has not such as good a staff as I have; and, of course, I started with the advantage of twenty years’ business training. Still, he has a more peaceful island than mine.” He sighed, and stared out of the window towards the harbor, where he could see a vessel flying the red ensign steaming slowly to the anchorage.

The auditor’s voice recalled him. “I thought Lamu was quiet enough for the moment. They tell me a man can walk from end to end of it in safety.”

“It is better than it was,” Anũgar admitted modestly, “and, if the Commission will only let me have a little more freedom of action, I shall make it better still. Señor, I must break the power of the ladrones, the organized banditti. The people are perfectly contented—you have seen that for yourself—but so long as a man like Enrique de la Cruz remains at liberty, my work must be incomplete. The Commission will have to allow me more police. Remember, this

islands is a hundred and fifty miles long, and eighty miles across; and that is a large area to control."

The auditor nodded. "Is it bad country?"

"Bad country, señor?" Anūgar laughed softly. "That depends on your point of view. You have seen the hills behind the town? Well, practically the whole of the interior is the same as those—not very high, never more than three or four hundred feet above sea-level, but terribly steep and covered with giant trees and a dense tangle of undergrowth. Between the hills, you will find narrow, muddy valleys. There is no variety anywhere. If you have seen one range of hills and one valley, you have seen them all. Bad country? Yes, from the soldiers' standpoint, but not from ours. The soil is wonderful—marvelous!" His eyes flashed with enthusiasm. "True, we grow no tobacco or sugar-cane in Lamu, but we have something far better in the hemp. If we clear away the undergrowth, hemp will spring up spontaneously, whilst in the valleys we can raise our rice and sweet potatoes."

"If you have lasting peace," interjected the American.

"We have got lasting peace now," answered the mestizo. "You may have heard otherwise; but I am in a position to know better than any one else. There are foolish tales abroad, of course, absurd exaggerations—some due to a desire to injure me, others to sheer ignorance. I have many enemies, señor. I am hated, both because I try to do my duty, and," he

smiled scornfully, "and because I have native blood in my veins."

The auditor fidgeted awkwardly with his match-box. "I shouldn't have expected that," he muttered.

Anũgar shrugged his shoulders. "It is so, though; and it makes my position a very hard one at times. I know how many of your countrymen, and all Englishmen, feel about it. They cannot conceal their prejudice. Yet, I almost thank them for it, because it makes me work the harder. I am going to show them what a Filipino can do, what our nation is really worth."

The American looked at him with genuine admiration. "We have been expecting big things from you, governor, and I am sure now that we are going to have them. It will be worth a great deal in the States if the party is able to point to the islands, and show that, in spite of all the croakers and the critics, our policy has been a success. The presidential election is right on us now; and, if only the other governors will do as well as you have done, the Philippines, instead of being a drag on us, will help to get our man in. The islands must be at peace when the nation goes to the poll; and, for that reason, they may want you to leave your old ladrone for a month or two. After the election, the sooner you smash him the better."

"I suppose it must be so," Anũgar answered, with a shade of disappointment in his voice. "But it is difficult for us to realize all these things yet; although I know that we Filipinos have everything to gain

by your party's success. Still, I am going to ask you to support my application for a few more police, who, after all, will prevent disorder, not cause it."

The auditor got up and shook hands heartily. "You may depend on me to help you in that matter, so far as it lies in my power."

When the American had gone, the governor summoned his secretary once more.

"What steamer is that in the harbor—the British vessel which has just come in?" he asked.

"The *Cingalee*, from Hong-Kong," answered the man.

The governor nodded, and returned to his papers.

## CHAPTER VII

“ I DON'T think I like him. I am not quite sure. Somehow, he is different to most men. Who is he, Captain Wilson? ”

Clare Westley was leaning back in her favorite chair, looking critically at Derek North, who, all unconscious of her scrutiny, was deep in conversation with her father at the other end of the veranda.

The skipper laughed rather uneasily. “ He is my best chum,” he answered loyally and evasively. “ We have known each other ever since we were kids.”

The girl nodded. “ I see. You don't want to tell me. But I shall find out. I always do. I know you will be here a fortnight before you have a full cargo. He will tell me himself by that time.”

Wilson took refuge in silence. Clare was an old friend of his, and he had learnt long ago that she usually succeeded in getting her own way; but, none the less, he thought that the case of Derek North would prove an exception, though, being wise, he did not say so.

Meanwhile, Robert Westley had been telling his guest of the curious incident which had marked the departure of the American troops six months previously, an incident the more puzzling because it had been followed by no other open hostilities on the part

of the pulajanes, although there had been rumors of red-cross bolomen being seen in the northern districts. For the moment, Westley said, Lamu was at peace, and yet, in spite of the seeming quiet, many of the coast tao were dangerously discontented. They had suffered terribly during the years of anarchy, and had hailed joyfully the proclamation of peace, with its seeming promise of a firm and even-handed rule; but, instead of the white officials for whom they had looked, they had found mestizos, as corrupt as they were cruel; whilst the new system of taxation, a bewildering variety of petty imposts, pressed on them far more heavily than a poll-tax would have done.

It was useless to tell the tao that, because he had no vote, he would not be taxed, and then to charge him a fee whenever he felled a tree to make a canoe. His slow Asiatic mind failed to grasp the great principle involved. He did not want a vote, but he did want a canoe, and it was his custom to fell any tree which happened to suit him; consequently, he continued to do as his fathers had done, and when he found he had broken the law and was to be tried by some seemingly irresponsible native magistrate, he did again what his father would have done—took his bolo and all his portable goods into the jungle and became an outlaw.

“Hundreds have gone already,” Westley said. “Yet we hear of no new ladrone bands, and Enrique de la Cruz would not receive them. I am very much afraid the pulajanes must be gathering in many of these malcontents, who, if not good fighting men

themselves, can be used as scouts, or can be put to work raising crops for the fighting men."

It was useless, also, to impress on the tao that the garrisons had been withdrawn because the day of the soldier was over and that of the school-teacher had dawned. The peasant shook his head. He knew well how sharp were the bolos of the hillmen, how quickly a nipa thatch could be fired, and that a knowledge of arithmetic would help him little when the men in red came yelling down the hillside.

"Some of the tao are too miserable and apathetic to take any steps," concluded Westley, "though others would join any one who started a revolt, because they despair of protection from the authorities. Of course, my information is all unofficial, and I have no idea what steps Anũgar may be taking, or to what extent he has a free hand; but I fancy he has to take all his orders from Furber, who is a rabid fanatic on this racial question. Personally, I am afraid there is trouble in the air, though we might go on for a year or two without a rising, unless some one runs in a cargo of guns."

Derek was staring out into the bay, staring at nothing in particular. "Would guns make much difference?" he asked, without looking round.

"All the difference," answered his host promptly. "If you have firearms, uniforms with red shoulder-straps, and nicely engraved commissions, you can raise an army of sorts in twenty-four hours in any of the islands. You don't need a Cause when you have those."

Derek nodded thoughtfully. "I understood the bolo was the national weapon."

"So it is. Every Filipino can use that, whilst not one in a hundred can shoot. But guns are an enormous moral support. They reassure waverers, and——"

"What are you two discussing so solemnly?" Clare's voice broke in suddenly. "Father, you are talking about pulajanes. Ugh! hateful creatures. Come and sit down here, Mr. North. Captain Wilson has been telling me such stories about your trip round Sumatra, and I want to know how much of it is true."

Derek seated himself on the foot-rest of the chair next to hers.

"Yes," he added gravely. "You repeat what he told you, and I will see what I can confirm."

"No, no, no," she laughed. "You tell me your stories, and I will see how far they tally with his. Now begin about the Achinese pirates," and she settled herself back in her chair, as though preparing to listen to a long tale.

Derek threw a helpless glance at the skipper, who shook his head mournfully.

"Perhaps you weren't there, then?" suggested Clare.

Derek's face brightened. "No; I wasn't. I remember now."

The girl clapped her hands delightedly. "Oh, how lovely! And you were supposed to be the hero

of the adventure.—Captain Wilson, why don't you write novels?"

The skipper blushed. "I'm afraid it's not in my line, Miss Westley. Mr. North does that sort of thing."

The girl turned quickly to Derek. "Do you? Oh, tell me about it?"

North smiled. "It is only Wilson trying to get even with me, Miss Westley; because I gave him away, you see."

She looked at him doubtfully. "Haven't you ever written anything?"

"Well, yes, but nothing much. Only an account of one of the Indian frontier shows."

"Ah!" she glanced at him with more interest than she had shown before. "Was it—oh, well, you shall tell me all about it another time. Don't forget.—Captain Wilson, we are coming down to tea on board the *Cingalee* to-morrow. I want to have a look at your funny little tramp. Good-night.—Good-night, Mr. North."

Robert Westley walked to the gate with his guests. "I am very glad to have met you, Mr. North. Come up to the house whenever Calbayog bores you, which will, I expect, be pretty often."

Derek was rather thoughtful as he walked down to the quay. Wilson glanced at him curiously once or twice. "Nice people, aren't they?" he remarked at last.

"Very," answered Derek, "very. What did you tell him about me?" he added abruptly,

“Nothing—except, of course, that you were an old chum of mine.”

Derek nodded. “I see. I told him myself I had left the service under a cloud.”

Wilson stared at him in astonishment. “What on earth made you do that?” he demanded.

Derek shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t like sailing under false colors, I suppose.”

“H’m. And what did Westley say to it?”

“Only what you heard when we left him at the gate.”

. . . . .

The following afternoon, the Westleys’ boat came out to the *Cingalee* with only Clare on board.

“Father couldn’t come,” the girl announced. “He was busy with the skipper of that,” pointing scornfully at a decrepit little Spanish steamer with a big rusty funnel in the stern, and square, ugly bows high out of the water. “He really couldn’t get away, but I didn’t want you to put on clean things for nothing, so I came alone. Oh, Mr. Morgan,” to the mate, who was standing rather nervously in the background, “I didn’t know you were here. How nice for you to be on a proper steamer, instead of a horrid old tub like the *Caliph*.”

The mate’s face, red from much soaping—he had dived below hurriedly when he saw her boat leave the jetty—grew, if possible, even redder as he took her outstretched hand. “I thought you would have forgotten me, Miss Westley.”

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“Oh, no,” she answered cheerfully. “I remember how very cross you were when I said the *Caliph* was dirty—she was dirty, you know that now—and you said something about a silly little girl, and I called you a fat, rude boy.”

The skipper burst out laughing, then came to his subordinate's rescue. “I think tea is ready now, Miss Westley. Will you come in? Afterwards, I will show you round the ship, and you shall see how well Mr. Morgan has remembered your scolding.”

Clare examined every part of the vessel, except the engine-room, and there she declined to go. “I know it's awfully interesting to see all those hot, whirling things, Mr. Munro,” she said, in answer to the chief's invitation; “but it's so stuffy and so oily, and—” she looked down at her dainty white dress and laughed.

She evinced special interest in the skipper's cabin. “Some of your things are nice, but some are not—those, for instance,” nodding towards a group of photos of prominent actresses. “I like those life-buoys with pictures of ships in them and those little Hindu gods, and—oh, Captain Wilson, where did you get that lovely silk? I am sure you never bought it or you wouldn't use it like that, just for a curtain.” She walked across to his bookcase. “I always like to see people's books, they tell you so much about the owner.” She ran over the titles rapidly. “You do read some rubbish—that woman's stories—half of them are quite horrid. Ah, what's this? ‘At the Gate of India’!” She took the book down, opened

it at the title-page, and read something which was written there. "Why, Mr. North, this is your book? I shall take it along and read it. Captain Wilson, please put it with my sunshade, so that I shan't forget it."

She handed the volume to the skipper, who obeyed after throwing a helpless glance in the direction of Derek. A few minutes later, the ship's bell clanged out four times. Clare started.

"Six o'clock? I must be off. I have lots of things to do before dinner. You are both coming up, of course? Oh, but you must. I always make my friends dine with us every night they are in Calbayog. It keeps them out of mischief, you know," with a quick nod at the skipper.

Derek accompanied her into the boat. "I will see you home, if I may," he said.

She gave a queer little laugh. "I am always about alone. It will only be wasting your time?"

"I am afraid my time is not very valuable," he answered gravely.

She looked at him as though about to make some retort, then seemed to change her mind, and neither spoke again until their boat drew up alongside the jetty, a crazy little wooden structure, which had been begun years ago by some unusually energetic presidente, and never touched since his death. It was a favorite lounging place for the natives—perhaps because the flies were less aggressive than on shore—and as Derek helped his companion on to the shaky lower staging, half a dozen native soldiers

slouched to the top of the steps, and hung over the rail, watching the new arrivals.

Derek turned to Clare with a question in his eyes. She read it instantly. "Constabulary," she answered. "At least, the four with the red braid are; the others are scouts. Cheeky wretches, all of them. They never make way for you."

But, somehow, they did make way. She saw Derek's tall figure stiffen up, whilst an expression quite different to anything she had seen there before came into his face, an expression which seemed to disconcert the soldiers, for they fell back with a kind of sullen respect, and, contrary to their custom, came to attention and saluted. Derek returned the salute in a way which drew a wise little nod from the girl; but she made no remark about the incident, and they talked of indifferent things, until they were half across the plaza, when she gave a smothered exclamation of disgust.

"There is the governor, my pet aversion, coming this way."

Derek took the measure of the mestizo at a single glance—the stout figure, the heavy jowl, the sensual eyes, the self-conscious swagger.

"Don't speak to him," he said suddenly.

Clare flushed, then laughed uneasily. "I—I can't help it," she answered.

The governor lifted his hat with the elaborate flourish dear to his kind. "Good-evening, señorita," he began, then looked inquiringly at the Englishman.

Clare muttered the words of introduction in a

voice curiously unlike her usually distinct tones. The governor murmured his pleasure, but Derek merely raised his topee. He was not accustomed to seeing the women of his own color talking to half-breeds, and he listened with barely concealed impatience to the governor's inquiries after Clare's health. Anũgar, on his part, seemed to read the Englishman's feelings, for he made no attempt to prolong the interview; but, after begging Clare to convey his compliments to her father, raised his hat again, and turned towards his office.

"I escaped lightly that time," Clare remarked, with a sigh of relief. "Father says it's prejudice, but I am sure I am right in distrusting him."

"Do you often see him, Miss Westley?"

Clare shook her head. "Thank goodness, no. I wouldn't let him speak to me, only, of course, it's so awkward. The Americans have made him governor, and we can't ignore him altogether. But he gives me a kind of creepy feeling, like a dead toad, all mestizos do."

Derek bit his mustache savagely. "Do you know his women-folk—his wife?"

"He isn't married. I know his sister, a pretty little mestiza, but not as the Americans in Manila do. We don't ask them to dinner. We belong to the old régime," she added, with a proud little laugh.

At the gate of the Westleys' house Derek stopped. "I had better get back now," he said.

She held out her hand. "You will be up to din-

ner, you and the skipper? Thank you, Mr. North. I'm—I'm rather glad you came with me."

. . . . .

"Mr. North!"

Clare and Derek were sitting alone on the veranda after dinner. Mr. Westley had gone back to his office to interview a strange native who wished to see him on urgent business, whilst the skipper was still in the dining-room, looking through some newly-arrived papers.

"Mr. North!"

"Yes, Miss Westley."

"You have been a soldier, an officer in a British native regiment." She did not ask it; she asserted it.

He laughed. "Yes. Did Wilson tell you?"

She shook her head. "No, no. I saw it this afternoon by the way you looked at those dirty soldiers, and made them straighten up and salute against their will. They were afraid of you."

He laughed again. "You are a keen observer."

"Yes," she answered simply; "I notice most things. You see, I have always lived amongst men; all my friends are men, and one learns. What was your regiment?"

"Sikhs," he answered, rather curtly.

"Ah!" she looked at him a moment with a curious expression, then turned the conversation on to local subjects, asking no more questions.

A few minutes later, Robert Westley came out, ac-

accompanied by the skipper. The merchant looked tired and worried, as Clare was quick to notice.

"What is it, father?" she asked.

Westley glanced round to see that the windows behind him were closed, then drew up a chair beside hers.

"It was a messenger from your friend, Enrique de la Cruz. The old brigand asks me to take charge of twenty thousand pesos of his. He wants them in a place of safety. Papa Pablo is in the hills again."

For a moment there was silence, then Derek spoke. "How does he know? Is there any proof? Has any one seen this pulajan pope?"

Westley opened his pocket-book and took out a slip of yellowish paper. "Some of Enrique's men came on a pulajan boloman in full uniform. This was his passport. That is the pulajan seal in the corner, and the scrawl is Pablo's own signature, dated only ten days ago.—Yes," as Derek turned it over and looked at a dark red stain on the back, "that was the seal Enrique's men put on it. There is no quarter in the hills of Lamu."

Clare had been sitting very still, listening intently. Once or twice Derek had glanced at her to see how she took the news. He had been surprised that Westley should have mentioned it before her, and he fancied that her face had grown a little pale at the sight of the passport; but now she spoke, and her voice was perfectly cool and even.

"Father, did he say he was afraid of the pulajanes getting the money? No? I thought not." She

laughed softly. "He is going to attack them himself, and does not want to be hampered with the money, or to leave it behind. He couldn't be afraid of them; for they say his own hills are absolutely impregnable. When is the money coming?"

"Within a fortnight," answered Westley. "That was all the old messenger would tell me on that point; though he declares that, whatever happens, Calbayog will not be attacked. He would give no reason, but the sending of the money proves he believes it."

"I suppose it does," said Derek slowly. "Still, I don't think the story of the chance discovery of Papa Pablo's reappearance rings quite true, does it?"

"Oh, it isn't true," Clare answered promptly. "They are just like any other Asiatics, Mr. North. They must tell a lie, even when they are letting you know the truth after all. You understand what I mean, don't you?"

Derek laughed, and then for the next hour the girl and he discussed the matter in all its bearings. Robert Westley had grown rather silent and thoughtful, but Clare was thoroughly roused, whilst Derek was more alert and interested than Wilson had known him to be for many months past. The girl had a very real knowledge of native feuds, and the man had that grasp of the Asiatic character, which is a kind of hereditary instinct with a few Anglo-Indian families; consequently, when Derek got up reluctantly to take his leave, there was a bond of mutual interest between them.

It was a dark, oppressive night. "There are

earthquakes about," Clare said, as she shook hands. "Don't lose your way," she added. "Two turns, you know, before you come to the plaza."

Calbayog had already gone to bed. There was hardly a light showing from the shacks, whilst the only things moving in the streets were some mangy curs, which slunk away as the Englishmen approached.

"Cheerful, isn't it?" muttered the skipper, as he splashed through a pool of mud. "That should be the turning." But a few yards farther on they found their way barred by a stout bamboo fence.

Wilson growled out an oath. "Wrong road. Look here, I know where we must be. We can get through behind that shack." He led the way down a narrow lane, past a number of evil-smelling inclosures, obviously tenanted by pigs, then suddenly he stopped. "Do you hear that?" he exclaimed. "It's the mate's voice."

From the shack they were passing came a hoarse laugh, and the sound of a man singing in English. For a full minute, Wilson stood still, listening and peering through the darkness, then he made his way cautiously towards the building, followed closely by Derek.

It was a large place for a nipa shack, with three or four rooms and a broad veranda running all round it, whilst, contrary to the custom of Calbayog, the space beneath the floor was not occupied by the household swine. Despite the closeness of the night, the openings which served for windows were covered with

rough wooden shutters, through a crack in one of which a ray of yellow light streamed out, showing that a lamp was burning within.

As the two Englishmen climbed on to the veranda, the man in the shack ceased his singing, and began talking thickly and loudly, apparently to some companion, whose voice was barely audible outside. Wilson crept forward and put his eye to the hole in the shutter, then swore to himself very softly.

Inside the room, sprawling in a big bamboo chair, was the mate, obviously very drunk, whilst seated beside him, pressing him with questions, the sense of which she was trying to force on his muddled comprehension, was a dainty little half-caste woman. At first, the skipper saw but these two; then, as his eyes grew accustomed to the light, he made out a third, the figure of a man standing well back in the inner room, behind the mate.

"Guyal, Guyal," the mate was saying. "Oh, I know.—Funny little island—big bats there, ugly as the presidente; bats with silly faces and claws," and he laughed foolishly.

"But did you not ever go there?" The woman spoke slowly, clearly, in the stilted English of one unaccustomed to the language.

"Go where?" asked the mate vaguely. "Guyal? Oh yes.—Give me another drink, you little yellow girl."

She disregarded his request. "When did you go to Guyal, tell me."

"It's a silly place, Guyal," he answered peevishly.

“Go there? Years and years ago, in the old *Caliph*, dirty *Caliph*—years and years ago.”

“Have you not been there just now?” the woman persisted.

The mate looked at her with sudden suspicion. “What d’you want to know for? Nothing to do with you anyway. Your business is to give me a drink, you little brown sister—American’s sister, not mine.”

“Did you land some guns there, or have you still got them?” The question was uttered sharply, and to Wilson it seemed that the vaguely seen form in the inner room leaned forward to catch the answer.

The skipper stepped back quickly.

“North, we must get this fool away,” and he lit a match to look for the latch of the door. An instant later, a dark mass, which Derek had taken for a pile of fishing nets lying beside the wall, sprang to life, and the flare of the light revealed a square-built, elderly native, clad in a suit of blue jean, with a big, spreading hat and a heavy wooden-sheathed bolo hanging by his side, a typical old tao, save for his gleaming eyes and strong, intelligent face. Obviously, he too had been listening to the conversation inside.

The skipper started back and his match went out. “Well, I’m damned!” he said.

The old man gave a short laugh, jumped lightly off the veranda, and disappeared behind the next shack.

“Well, I’m damned!” repeated the skipper, then

lit a fresh match, discovered the latch of the door, and went in—to find the mate alone. The other inmates had disappeared, apparently through a door at the back.

“Regular hide-and-see game, North,” growled Wilson, after a hurried look round. “There were two in here just now, besides our friend outside, and now the lot are gone.—Get up, Morgan. Can’t you stand, man? Ah, that’s better.—Catch hold of his arm, North, and look out for bolomen as we go down. There’s some queer game on.”

They took the mate on board and put him into his bunk, where he went to sleep immediately.

“What do you think of it?” asked Derek, as he followed the skipper into his own cabin.

Wilson shrugged his shoulders. “Morgan is doped, drugged with some of those infernal native spirits. It was done to make him talk about those guns, though the devil only knows how they found out about them in Calbayog. I’m sure they were never intended for Lamu.”

“Unless they were for the pulajanes,” suggested Derek quietly.

Wilson started. “Good heavens! For those devils! It’s hardly possible; they’ve got no outside organization like the insurrectos, who have agencies in Hong-Kong and Paris, and even Washington. No; I can’t think that. What worries me is how the people here found out we had brought the guns.”

“Perhaps they heard it from one of your Chinese crew.”

The skipper shook his head. "None of them have been ashore yet, and, anyway, the Chino doesn't waste much breath on the native. I wish I could have seen who the man inside was. And then there was the old fellow on the veranda who laughed, and slipped away so mighty quick. He belonged to another gang; perhaps he was a pulajan agent."

"Didn't you recognize him then?" asked Derek.

The skipper put his glass down so suddenly that he spilled half the contents.

"Recognize him? No! Did you?"

Derek nodded. "Yes; he was the messenger who came to see Westley. Enrique de la Cruz's counsellor."

## CHAPTER VIII

THE next ten days passed quickly. The *Cingalee* was waiting for some cargo which was coming round to Calbayog in one of the innumerable Spanish coasters, those quaint little maritime curiosities, which dodge in and out amongst the coral reefs with extraordinary luck, which no one will insure, and which, none the less, never seem to get lost, despite their utterly unseaworthy condition and the enormous risks they run. Ill-found, ungainly crocks, with rust-streaked sides and funnels, off which all the paint has long since blistered, they wheeze from one tiny port to the other, fortunate if they do six knots an hour, leaving behind them a streak of garlic-scented air and many empty vinho bottles bobbing up and down in the blue-green water.

Wilson took the delay very philosophically. In any case, he would have had no time for another trip before his next cargo was ready in Manila, and his expenses in the capital would have been much higher than in Calbayog. So, all day long, he and Derek lounged on deck in wicker chairs, and every evening they went to dinner at the Westleys'. At first, Derek had been rather doubtful about taking the general invitation too literally; but after one attempt at excuse, Clare had put the matter beyond further question.

“It is our custom,” she had said. “You can’t be comfortable in that hot, stuffy saloon on the *Cingalee*, and there is nowhere you can go on shore. If you don’t come here, it will mean you don’t like us. Won’t it, father?” and Robert Westley had assented, laughing.

Although Clare showed no inclination to treat Derek with the lighthearted frankness she displayed towards the skipper, who had known her since she was a mere child, the two had become very good friends. What she called “outdoor things”—an elastic phrase which included a variety of subjects, from tennis to the slaying of bolomen—interested them both, and on the occasions when they were alone together, the conversation ran chiefly on these; although, by leading him on to talk of India, she learnt incidentally a good deal of his character and his past, for she shrewdly conjectured that many of the stories he related in an impersonal sort of way were really his own experiences.

The skipper watched Derek anxiously. He had noticed that, since coming to Calbayog, he had been less restless, that he was content to turn in when he got back on board, instead of sitting up half the night, taking peg after peg of whisky; but whether the change was due to the entirely new surroundings, to the frank, unquestioning cordiality of the Westleys, or to the keenly professional interest he took in the pulajanes and their doings, the sailor was unable to determine. Clare, on her part, had only spoken to him about Derek on one

occasion, two or three days after her visit to the *Cingalee*.

"Captain Wilson," she had said suddenly, "I have found him."

"Found whom?" he had asked.

"Mr. North, in an Army List of three years ago—Derek Wallas North, captain in the 70th Sikhs—Why did he leave? He isn't in any later list. And why isn't he 'Captain North'?"

The skipper had shifted uneasily and mumbled an indistinct reply.

"What did you say?" she had demanded. "He resigned suddenly? Even then, why did he drop the 'captain'?"

"There was some unpleasantness, I think," he had muttered, and then she had turned on him furiously.

"You mean he had to resign? How dare you? And you call yourself his friend! I'll never believe it," and she had got up and walked away scornfully, whisking her skirts to one side, so that they should not even touch his chair, and carrying her head very high.

Wilson had looked after her ruefully. "Well, I'm hanged. I shouldn't wonder if she went and asked him herself." But there he had been wrong, and when he had met her an hour later, she had seemed to have forgotten the whole incident.

The mate had been able to throw no light on the affair in the shack. He admitted shamefacedly having gone in at the woman's invitation and having accepted a drink of native spirits, but, after that, he

remembered nothing, till he awoke in his own cabin with a most appalling headache. Wilson had attempted to lecture him, as became the master of a vessel and an older man; but, as he had confessed to Derek, he had failed to make it very impressive. "I have done much the same thing myself too many times," he had said, whereat Derek had laughed.

Little news came in from the interior during the ten days. Everything appeared to be peaceful; although, from his agents in the other coast towns, Westley received more than one report of pulajanes having been seen wearing the red-cross, openly and boldly.

"But how is it they are not arrested? I understood that a pulajan could be killed on sight. Is there no law in the hills?" Derek asked.

Robert Westley smiled. "The law of the bolo, that is all; the code with one clause—that the spoils go to the man with the longest reach. Lamu is at peace, because the unpeaceful elements are left alone; but we have not the slightest idea of what goes on twenty miles away, ten miles even. Anũgar's authority stretches just as far as the foot of that hill, where the jungle begins. If you ventured beyond there, you would take your life in your hands."

In Calbayog itself, things went on in the usual dreamy way, although Westley noticed that an unwonted number of strange tao came in to see the governor, solemn-eyed little men in broad-brimmed hats, who sat for hours in the shade of the belfry, waiting for their audience, smoking innumerable cigarettes

until their turn came, speaking to no one; and then, after a few minutes in the office, departing even more solemn-eyed than before. It was rather a curious sight, yet though the Englishman made cautious inquiries through his servants, he failed to glean any information, save that they were deputations from the little coast towns and villages, deputations which sometimes included the local presidente or teniente, but which were far more often unofficial. What did they come for? His informant shrugged his shoulders—to see the governor on some business, he supposed. The nature of the business? Another shrug. They told no one. It was not wise to talk too much in Calbayog. Was not Anũgar the law? Had not the Americanos made him absolute, to deal with all men as he would? Whilst there were cigarettes and rice and fish and a cockfight on Sundays, why should wise men trouble themselves about what strange tao did? So Robert Westley shrugged his shoulders too, and asked no more questions. It was the eternal apathy of the East, the negation of to-morrow, the desire to ignore unpleasant things in the hope that something might occur to avert them at the last moment. There was trouble coming; every native in Calbayog knew that. In the hills, men were sharpening their bolos, and red-crosses were being stitched on to white shirts; in the other towns the tao were shuddering and talking of Papa Pablo under their breath. But Calbayog was safe. Calbayog had always been protected in some inexplicable way; and, even if it were in danger, there would surely be

ample warning—moreover, there was a cockfight on Sunday.

It was not until the day before the *Cingalee* was to sail that definite news arrived, and Derek only heard it when he and the skipper came up to dinner for the last time, or, as Clare insisted it should be called, the last time before the next time. The meal was rather a silent one; but as soon as the servants had left the room finally, Westley got up and closed the windows, then turned to his guests.

“I have something rather important to tell you. Papa Pablo is making a move at last. In a fortnight’s time, every town in Northern Lamu is to be burned.” And then he explained how he had heard; how, long before dawn that morning, a score or more of Enrique’s men had filed down the hillside carrying the bags of coin, twenty thousand pesos in silver, and, unknown to any one except Westley’s personal servant, had entered the house and stowed the money in the cellar, afterwards departing as silently as they had come. The first intimation the Englishman had received about the matter was from an impassive old tao, whom he had found waiting outside his office. The man had refused to take any sort of receipt. It did not matter, he said. Enrique de la Cruz knew the Señor Westley—knew all Englishmen. Their word was enough. Then he had produced a short piece of thin, well-dried bamboo, broken it across his knee, and held out one piece to the astonished merchant.

“Take it, señor, keep it carefully, and deliver the

money only to the man who can produce this other piece which fits into the jagged end of yours. It is the one safe thing. Writing is nothing—any fool can write. A word is nothing—any one can lie. But no man can forge that broken stick. Give the money to any one who delivers you this piece—any one,” he had added meaningly, “even to an Americano.”

Then, as calmly as though he were talking of the hemp crop or a deal in copra, he had gone on to state that the pulajan plans were complete; and that, this time, instead of merely harrying the unbelievers in the interior, Papa Pablo intended to take advantage of the withdrawal of the troops and declare himself ruler of the whole island. Already, messengers had been sent to every town and village with orders that the inhabitants must hold themselves in readiness to burn their dwellings at a given signal and retire with their families to the hills, where the timid ones amongst the men could plant the rich, black soil and raise crops for the warriors, whilst the bolder could don the red-cross and fight in the sacred ranks of the hillmen. Refusal to obey was to be followed by massacre, swift and remorseless.

“That was why all those tao came in, to tell Anũgar, to beg for protection; and he, it seems, like a blind fool, refused to believe them. God help the poor devils! The start is to be made on the northern coast, and the first town, Catarman, is to be burned a fortnight hence.—Do I believe it? Yes? Enrique never sent me false information yet, and it confirms

my own suspicions. The object of it, you ask, Wilson? Fanaticism on the part of the rank and file; sheer blackguardism on that of the leaders. They know how weak the government is; they know the insurrectos came off very well in the end; and they reckon they can have months, years perhaps, of loot and murder, and then be tolerably sure of an amnesty. Oh, if only one could lay hands on that brute Pablo!"

Derek, who had been listening in silence, leaned forward eagerly. "Can nothing be done? If one went up, to Catarman, for instance, and organized the tao, wouldn't they resist?" he asked.

"Oh, Mr. North!" It was Clare, who had suddenly gone very pale, and was looking at him with flashing eyes. "Oh, Mr. North—" Then she stopped in confusion, but only the skipper had noticed her exclamation.

Robert Westley replied to the question. "No. You would simply be throwing away your life. The coast tao never have, and never will, face the hillmen. They won't even defend a stockade."

"Why not cable to Manila?"

"It would be no use. I should be referred to Anūgar, and you see what his attitude is. He must understand the situation; but evidently he has got his instructions, and he won't see the danger. He is denying it, hoping, praying it won't come, or, if it does come, that he can suppress the news; and the commissioners will be with him, for he is their pet man. The whole brown brother system stands or falls with

him, and, with the presidential election so near, they dare not admit failure. If Calbayog were the only unburned town in Lamu, the government would still declare the island to be at peace. For that reason, the pulajanes will never touch it. They know the destruction of the place would compel the Commission to send regular troops, and they don't want that. Besides, they must have some base for stores and information, and they can get both in through Calbayog."

"So nothing can be done?" Derek asked again.

Westley shook his head. "I am afraid not, unless you would go and see the general. I can give you introductions. You will be in Manila in a few days. He might be able to do something. Will you try?"

Derek hesitated a moment, just a moment, and glanced, half-unconsciously, towards Clare, who smiled and gave him a quick little nod of encouragement; then he turned back to his host.

"All right," he said; "I'll do my best."

The *Cingalee* was sailing with the afternoon tide, and the skipper, who had a very busy morning before him, had bidden farewell to Clare overnight; but Derek had promised to come up for breakfast.

"I expect it will be messy on board," Clare had remarked; "and, besides, father can give you those letters."

The girl, who was sitting alone on the veranda, nodded cheerfully to Derek as he drew up a chair beside hers; but beyond a mere greeting, she said noth-

ing for a minute or two, then suddenly she turned to him.

“You are going to do this, Mr. North?”

He looked up with a smile. “To do what, Miss Westley?”

“Why, see if you can get anything done for these poor tao; try and rouse that horrible government in Manila; make those idiots of commissioners see that, whilst they are talking of liberty, and equality, and their little brown brothers, these helpless people are being murdered.” She spoke vehemently, almost fiercely.

“Yes, I will try. But I don’t expect I can do much.” He sighed a little wearily.

“Thank you,” she replied simply. “I am glad. You may not succeed as far as the tao are concerned; but still, if you will only try, it will be a good thing—good for you yourself.”

He laughed rather awkwardly. “Will it? Why?”

She flushed quickly as she answered. “Why? Because it will give you something to do, some interest. What do you do usually?” The question came sharply, abruptly.

This time he did not laugh. “You have seen my useful career for the last fortnight.”

Her flush deepened. “I know. And at other times?” He stared in front of him for a moment, stared out into the bay as though seeking an answer from the sea, then turned to find her watching him intently.

“I am afraid it is much the same at other times, too. I loaf and—and just kill time.”

An instant later, he would have given anything to have been able to answer differently, for he saw the tears start to her eyes.

“I understand,” she said, and her voice was very low. “I know what you mean. I saw it myself, and—and, oh, Mr. North, it hurts me so. You ought to do something. All my friends must be men who do something, who are of some use. That’s why I hate most girls I meet, because they don’t seem to care about that; but I do, very, very, very much. You see what I mean, don’t you?”

“Yes,” he answered gently, “I understand;” then for a time there was silence. It was Clare who broke it.

“Mr. North,” she began at last, with an obvious nervousness very unlike her usual manner, “Mr. North, I know you must have left the army against your will, and I think there was some trouble. I don’t know anything about it,” she went on hastily. “I don’t want to hear, but I know, I feel sure, it wasn’t your fault, whatever it was,” she ended bravely and illogically.

“Thank you,” he said gravely. “There was some trouble; but I’m afraid it was my fault, or at least my folly.”

“Can’t you put it right, at any rate with your friends?”

He smiled bitterly. “Why should I? They were ready enough to believe it.”

She tossed her head scornfully. "Then they were not friends at all, and you can ignore them. And your brother officers?"

"I think they were sorry."

"Ah!" Then after a long pause: "Can't you, won't you, put it right?"

He smiled at her persistence. "I am afraid not. It is too late now."

She gave him a long, searching look. "You could, if you liked. I believe you are—" she stopped abruptly; then: "We shall see," she added wisely, as though she were talking to some one younger than herself, instead of to a man fifteen years her senior. "Some day, you will want to, and then you will rouse yourself. Even now, you care very much, only you won't admit it, and you let it spoil your life. Isn't that so, Mr. North?"

Derek had been staring out into the bay again, but now he turned to her once more with an unusual softness in his somber eyes. "Where did you learn so much?" he asked.

She laughed with one of her quick changes of mood. "You mean so much about men? Oh, all my friends are men, nice men, and I watch them. When they are not nice I tell them so."

"And do they reform?"

"Yes, of course." There was a challenge in her voice. "Those who are really nice at heart always do—always." She emphasized the last word, then got up quickly. "There's something I forgot to give to Captain Wilson. I won't be a minute." She went

into the house and returned with a small parcel. "It's your book; his copy that I borrowed. Will you give it to him? I don't know, though.—No, I'll come down and give it to him myself, and say good-by again. Mr. North, I liked the book so much. Why don't you write another?"

"What should I write about?" he asked with a smile.

"About these islands," she answered promptly. "Go round and see everything, see it properly, and then write and tell the American people the truth. They don't know; they have never heard; they can't foresee what must happen, all the horrors. Those hateful politicians won't let them know, and the army can say nothing. Oh, it would be worth doing!" Her eyes flashed with enthusiasm. "Do try it, Mr. North—do. You could, you ought to, instead of drifting and—and loafing. Will you promise?" and she looked at him with an eager expectancy on her bright young face.

He did not answer her at once, but sat abstractedly watching a tiny lizard crawling along the veranda.

"You want me to do it, very much?" he asked at last.

"Yes, very much indeed." Her voice was a little unsteady.

He tossed away his cigar stump and stood up suddenly. "Very well. It's a big thing, and I expect I shall make a mess of it; but I will try what I can do."

Clare jumped up too, and held out her hand impulsively. "Thank you. And you won't make a mess of it. I am not afraid of that."

"There is a letter of introduction to Major Flint," said Westley, handing an envelope to Derek. "He knows Lamu well, and can take you straight to the general. I hope it will do some good, but I am very doubtful. They are so sure of Lamu's peacefulness that they are already sending school-teachers to replace the soldiers. The coastguard boat brought the first consignment to-day."

Derek nodded. "I saw them; a dozen long-haired youths, apparently fresh from the States, though two had been out long enough to marry native women."

Clare gave a little cry of disgust. "To marry them! Oh, father, you mustn't bring any of them to the house—any, do you hear?"

"I am not likely to, my dear," he answered dryly. "Besides, only two are staying in Calbayog, the rest are going to the other coast towns."

"Really! With this pulajan business in the air?" It was Derek who spoke.

Westley sighed. "Yes. Everything is peaceful in Lamu—officially; though I wouldn't give much for those fellows' chances when the thing breaks out."

Clare got up suddenly. "You must tell them, father. They mustn't go away not knowing. Poor boys! Oh, these hateful people in Manila! Mr. North, you must be very quick. You must rouse

them to do something before it's too late. It all rests with you."

As Clare and her father walked down to the quay with their guest, the governor happened to emerge from his office, and they met him face to face. He stopped to speak to them, greeting the Westleys with his usual florid courtesy, then he turned to Derek—

"So the Señor North leaves us to-day? Lamu will be the poorer. I hope he carries away a good impression of Calbayog."

"Lamu will see me back before long," Derek answered coldly; then he contrived to walk on with Clare, leaving Westley talking to the governor.

"Anūgar was telling me about his budget," Westley explained when he overtook the others. "He has cut down innumerable expenses, and will have a surplus—if Papa Pablo doesn't collect the taxes first. I suppose he wants to make me think he isn't worried about the hillmen. I can't help feeling sorry for him, because Furber hasn't given him much chance, after all. Did you mean what you said about coming back, Mr. North?"

"Yes, I am staying in the islands," answered Derek, glancing towards Clare, who rewarded him with a quick nod of approval. "Probably I shall be about for a good many months. I think of studying American methods, and writing a book on the question."

The merchant gave him a keen look, but said nothing, except: "When you come to Calbayog, you must make our house your home."

Wilson was waiting for them on the quay, and Clare, who was carrying her little parcel containing the book, immediately took him on one side, spoke to him earnestly for a minute, apparently overbore some objection on his part, then rejoined the others with a radiant face.

“*Au revoir*,” she said, as she shook hands with Derek. “*Au revoir*. I never say good-by to my friends. You won’t forget your promise?”

“No,” he answered gravely; “I shall not forget—anything.”

As the *Cingalee* steamed round the point into the open water the skipper left the bridge and joined Derek, who was leaning against the rail, looking back at the gloomy, jungle-clad hills of Lamu.

“You will have to give me a new copy of the ‘Gate of India,’” Wilson said; “Miss Westley insisted on keeping mine.”

Derek answered nothing. The skipper gave him a sidelong glance, then went on: “By the way, I heard from the mate of that coastguard in Calbayog that the *Palapog* is not back in Manila yet.”

Derek looked at him absently. “The *Palapog*? What is she?”

Wilson raised his eyebrows in surprise. “Surely you remember her? Old Pete Jansen’s vessel.”

## CHAPTER IX

MANILA is the City of Yesterday, will always be the City of Yesterday, for it was builded by the Spaniards, the people of Yesterday, and what was Spanish once, remains Spanish to the end.

Wherever the Spaniard has been in the tropics he has left his marks, graven too deeply ever to be effaced, marks on the country and marks on the people. Other nations come and go again and are forgotten by what were once their subjects, but the Spanish influence endures, probably because Spanish civilization, Spanish customs and ideals, are peculiarly adapted to tropical peoples.

The Spaniard suited the East. He was restful, impressive, haughty, with a supreme contempt for the weaker side, and a perfect disregard for political ethics, qualities which the Oriental considers the natural attributes of rulers, and, consequently, admires. He was never in a hurry. When he built, he built after due reflection, solidly and well, built things which would endure. He might be unsympathetic, unprogressive, cruel even; but he could never be cheap. He believed in himself, and, if only for that reason, he succeeded. He did in the Philippines what no other Christian nation has done elsewhere—he forced his religion on the people, his religion as well as his law; and if, in the end, he did lose his grip on

the islands, it was because he had grown too poor, too much weakened at home, to maintain the armed force which, as he knew well, alone could compel the Filipino to respect the first principles of decency and good conduct.

To-day, many people, not knowing or not understanding, are prone to sneer at the Spanish colonial empire; but wise men, white men to whom the ideals of the West are sacred, should raise their hats when it is mentioned, for, with all its faults, it was a very wonderful thing, a great civilizing influence, and, most wonderful of all, in that it lasted so long after Spain herself had declined. It was a white man's rule, almost to the end, the rule of those who knew the difference between black and white, East and West, who understood that the Oriental is not an individual at all, but merely a part of a vast, unwieldy mass, which is incapable of guiding itself, incapable of thinking for itself, needing all the time a firm, strong hand to steer it into the right course, to force it along that course, a mass which, if it leave the track, must be driven back with lead and bayonets and high explosives, before it has time to disintegrate and perish miserably.

The Spaniards knew when to hang a man, and acted on that knowledge, being untroubled by a squeamish press or a neurotic public conscience. If a mestizo went to Europe, obtained a so-called education, and returned home crammed with theories which found their outlet in sedition, the government might feel a grave compassion for him, because he

had foolishly been told things which no Asiatic can really understand; but it hanged him none the less, for it very rightly considered it better that one man should die than many. The Spaniards provided the Tagalogs of Luzon with several most excellent martyrs, who have been officially recognized as such by the Americans, or rather by the American government, and whose portraits you can see on the dollar notes; but they also protected the tao from these same martyrs and their followers, with the result that the two flourished exceedingly under their rule, and had cockfights every day of the week.

Manila is Spanish—nothing will ever change that. The Pasig—the sluggish, barge-laden, foul-smelling stream which divides the Walled City, that masterpiece of the old Spanish engineers, from the newer business and native quarters—might rise in flood and sweep every building off that low-lying stretch of plain, and the Americans might build up a fresh Manila of sky-scrapers and blocks and numbered avenues; but, somehow, it would still be Spanish. The very air reeks of Spain. The waves of the great, land-locked bay whisper in Spanish as they break in tiny ripples on the shore. One can almost see the ghosts of armor-clad hidalgos sallying out of the frowning gateways of the old city, across that broad moat, which to-day has come down to be a mere wallowing ground for carabao, sallying forth at the head of the terrible infantry of Spain, the conquerors of half Europe, of half the known world, to give battle to Chinese invaders or British freebooters, or

to drive back to the hills the ancestors of those native troops, who are now lounging in ungraceful indolence outside their barracks, watching their new rulers with ill-concealed scorn, impatiently waiting for the day when the signal shall be given for them to turn their arms against those white officers whose only fault has been a too great kindness.

It is probably the peculiarly Spanish character of Manila which has led so many British to picture the Filipino as a kind of Spaniard, a half-breed, a cross between the countrymen of Cervantes and Heaven knows what; a man of Western civilization, almost of Western birth, instead of as an unmitigated Asiatic, who really, in the mass, is not one whit higher than the Dyaks of the neighboring island of Borneo, and is countless generations behind the Jap, whom he so closely resembles in appearance.

There are half-breeds, of course, too many of them, and in Manila they appear at first sight to form a very large portion of the population; whilst whenever there is trouble or sedition, or crime which requires careful planning, they are sure to be the leaders; but outside the capital they are not important numerically. As a whole, the Filipinos are essentially tropical Asiatics, in their apathy, their cruelty, their hatred of work; the only things which distinguish them from other Malays being their passion for disorder and brigandage, a passion rendered doubly dangerous by the smattering of civilized vices they have picked up from their white rulers.

. . . . .

Derek North went ashore with the skipper as soon as the *Cingalee* was safely moored. Wilson had much business to transact with his agents; but, first, he paid a visit to a certain famous little bar, just off one of those many ditches of oozing slime, called by courtesy canals, which run crosswise from the Pasig, and make Manila a city of narrow bridges and awe-inspiring stenches.

Every British master-mariner goes to that bar, to drink British drinks, and criticise the consul-general, and say unprintable things about the customs. It is dedicated to the British mercantile marine, and it is not etiquette for a mere landsman to enter it without valid reasons, such as being stranded or in trouble with the authorities, and wanting a free passage to Hong-Kong or Singapore.

Wilson was greeted with a shout of delight, and Derek, as his friend, was at once made free of the place by being invited to imbibe much liquor. For a few minutes, the skipper of the *Cingalee* was too busy answering questions and refusing drinks to ask anything himself; but, as soon as he had a chance, he turned to the proprietor—an ex-skipper, and, some said, an ex-pirate—in the hope of learning something about a matter which had been worrying him all the way from Calbayog.

“Have you seen Pete Jansen, Mac, Squareface Peter?”

The other shook his head. “No. The old sinner has been away a long time now. I expect he has lost his propeller. One or two of the coast-

guards have done it lately—sort of disease amongst them.”

Wilson laughed rather uneasily. “I saw him on the east coast of Luzon three weeks or more ago; and he said then he was on his way up, and that he and Jack Lefevre were going to have drinks here, and put them down to me. I think I ought to reverse the process.”

The proprietor breathed heavily. “I am sorry, captain,” he said. “Peter Jansen’s credit here is dead off; and as for Jack Lefevre, the consul bundled him out of it. He kicked a brown brother, who happened to be a big man in the customs, off the boat deck; said he didn’t let niggers come into his cabin with their hats on. Commissioner Furber wanted to put Jack in jail—he would have got five years if he had been a free and independent citizen of the States—but he cleared to Hong-Kong, and waited there till the mate brought the *Maltese Cross* up. No, captain, Pete don’t pay, and Jack can’t come back; but,” as a brilliant thought struck him, “I’ll stand the drinks myself.”

Derek left the skipper at the agent’s office, and strolled up the Escolta, the principal street of modern Manila, which is connected with old Manila, the Walled City, the town within a fortress—which was considered impregnable till the elder Pitt sent a British fleet to disprove the theory—by the splendid Bridge of Spain.

The Escolta is not an impressive thoroughfare. Compared with Queen’s Road Central, it is a mere

lane; but Derek looked at it with interest, for it was there that the American had begun his campaign against the conservatism of the East.

Nowadays trams, the Juggernauts of modern civilization, rumble down the narrow street with an infinite clanging of bells and screeching of trolley wires; but when Derek saw it first these were still horrors of the future, although there was already a candy and ice-cream stall at the lower corner, and soda fountains in the chemist's higher up, and truculent-looking policemen swinging great clubs and letting the traffic manage itself. There was a certain amount of noise, a certain amount of hustling, a certain Americanization of the surface; but behind it all was, and still is, the languor of the Spaniard and the dull apathy of the Asiatic, forces against which the new-comers will strive in vain, wearing themselves out, fretting their lives away, until they learn, as we learned long ago, in the days of Clive and Hastings, that nothing can change the East.

Derek had come ashore intending to go straight to headquarters, to inquire where Major Flint might be found, and he looked round with the idea of taking some conveyance; but there were no rickshas, and he noticed that the carromatos, the local libels on a cab, were used indiscriminately by white men and natives, so, with a shrug of half-amused disgust, he started to walk. A policeman, of whom he inquired the way, ignored him entirely; a young government clerk, with long hair escaping from under his black felt hat and the collar of his khaki coat stained with

stale perspiration, advised him curtly to ask a soldier, and hurried on; a Sikh watchman, who had saluted him by reason of his obviously British topee, and who came smartly to attention at the first word in his own language, deplored his inability to say—these were not Sahibs who knew the ordering of things, he explained. Derek laughed, and turned to an officer who was passing.

“Can you tell me where the headquarters are? Or, perhaps, better than that, you can tell me where Major Flint is to be found?”

The officer, a tall, rawboned infantry captain, smiled. “I guess I can,” he said. “It so happens we are in the same regiment. He’s on staff duty just now, up at the fort. I am going up there, right away!”

Derek thanked him, and they walked on a few yards in silence, then the American ran his eye over his companion’s figure. “Just come?” he asked.

Derek nodded. “Yes; I landed this morning.”

“From Hong-Kong?”

“No, from the south, from Calbayog.”

“Calbayog?” The captain looked up sharply. “Ah, I know it well; I was down there two years with Major Flint, making good Filipinos.—Calbayog!—and you only landed this morning—and you want the old major.” He spoke as though to himself, then turned to the other suddenly. “Pulajanes?” he asked.

Derek smiled at the man’s directness. “Yes; pulajanes,” he answered.

The captain laughed harshly. "I thought so. Oh, my God, if they'll only give us the chance, now we have plenty of men to spare! Well, here it is, first door on the left. My name is Rawson. Will you come and dine with me to-night at the club—seven-thirty?"

Derek looked at him in astonishment; but, before he could speak, the American added simply, as if in explanation, "I want to hear your news. The insurgents burnt my brother alive in Luzon, so I've an account to settle, and I want to be wherever there's fighting."

Derek held out his hand in quick sympathy. "Of course I'll come. Thanks very much."

. . . . .

The general was a big man with a double chin, who lay back rather limply in his chair and smoked a huge cigar, whilst Derek outlined, briefly and concisely, the state of affairs in Lamu. Now and again, the general nodded his head, as though certain points agreed with his own ideas; and once he raised himself and pushed his cigar-case over to the Englishman, whose own cheroot was burning badly; but, beyond that, he made no move, and a casual observer, looking at the heavy, inert figure and the half-closed eyes, might have thought him barely interested. But Derek knew otherwise, for he had caught several very significant flashes from under those dark, weary eyelids; and, at the end of his recital, half a dozen curt, pointed questions showed him he was dealing with a

man who was an administrator as well as a thorough soldier.

“It is just as you said it would be, major,” the general sighed and turned to Major Flint, “just what I expected. I am glad to know—we are supposed to get this sort of thing from the civil authorities, Mr. North—glad to know, though I can do nothing, except speak privately to the governor-general. He understands, for he’s an old soldier himself; but he can make no move without the Commission, and they—” he broke off abruptly. “Major Flint will tell you. I must be discreet.—Still, you might go across to the palace and see the governor-general himself.”

He got up to bid them good-by, and looked keenly at Derek.

“Why are you taking this trouble?” he asked.

Derek laughed, rather awkwardly. “I—I was asked to, and, you know, I like to see the game played straight.”

The general nodded, and looked him over once more.

“British Service?” he asked suddenly.

Derek flushed. “I was in it once. I had to send in my papers,” he answered curtly.

The general’s heavy face relaxed into a kindly smile, and he laid a big hand almost tenderly on the Englishman’s shoulder.

“Good boy,” he said. “I like a square answer. Bring him up to dinner to-morrow night, major. Where are you staying, Mr. North?”

It was the major who answered.

“He is staying with me, sir.”

As the door closed behind them, Derek turned to his conductor. “It’s awfully good of you,” he said. “But I—well, I’m a perfect stranger, and all you know of me is what you heard just now.”

The major smiled. “It’s our custom in the army to make a man welcome when he is helping us. And, besides, Robert Westley’s friends are mine. So that’s settled.” He dropped the subject abruptly. “Are you going to see the governor-general? You would find him at the palace now. Oh, just send your card in, and ask for him. We have very little red-tape, at least of that sort.”

Derek was conscious of an uncomfortable feeling as he walked up the magnificent staircase of the old Spanish palace. In meeting the general it had been different. Then, he had been talking to a soldier of military things, telling him what, otherwise, he would have had no chance of knowing. But with the civil authorities he had no standing, save the unpleasant rôle of a meddler. They were supposed to be aware of the situation. Still, he had promised Clare to do his best, and though, like most Englishmen, he had an absolute horror of putting himself in a false position, he was determined to go through with his task.

The offices of the governor-general and the Philippine Commissioners were along a broad corridor on the first floor of the palace, each man’s name and rank being blazoned forth in big gold letters on a

splendid mahogany door, a striking contrast to the bare simplicity of the army headquarters.

The governor's doorkeeper took Derek's card in to the secretary; and, after a few minutes' delay, a spectated young native came out.

"Your business, señor?" he asked in a rude voice.

Derek looked at the youth as a man who has commanded a company in a crack native regiment usually does look at an insolent Asiatic. The Filipino's face fell, and he began to fidget with the card.

"Can you tell me your business, señor?" The tone was very different now.

"My business is private," answered the Englishman shortly.

The native retreated into the office, conferred with some one there, then returned.

"This way, señor," he said, and led Derek through an ante-room on the right, into a large and expensively furnished office, where, seated at a big, paper-littered table, was a man of about forty, rather over average height, with clean-shaven features, prematurely bald head, and fishy eyes which seemed always to be engaged in an attempt to avoid meeting those of others. He made no remark when Derek came in, nor did he offer him a seat, but merely glanced at him sideways and went on with his writing for several minutes. Then he laid down his pen.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded.

Derek's face was white with rage, but his voice was perfectly steady as he replied—

“I am afraid there is some mistake. I came to see the governor-general.”

“I know.” The tone was as unpleasant as the words. “I know, but I will see you instead. Please be brief. I am busy.”

Derek took a step forward, so quickly that the official recoiled in his chair.

“And who may you be?” asked the Englishman; though he had already guessed the answer.

“I am Commissioner Furber. I was expecting you.”

## CHAPTER X

“I AM Commissioner Furber. I was expecting you, as I had been advised that you were coming to Manila to try and cause trouble.”

Derek's calmness returned instantly. “I see,” he said, coolly settling himself down in one of the big leather chairs. “I see. And am I to take it that the rudeness is premeditated, or do you always have it ready for visitors?”

The commissioner's face grew livid. “I would have you know who I am,” he snarled. “I am the Commissioner of Trade and Justice, and it is part of my business to deal with all who come here to embarrass the government. I am aware of your opinions on the subject of our brown brothers, and if you had been an American, I would have had you imprisoned and then deported. As it is, I warn you to go by the next boat.”

Derek looked at the man in amazement. He had already heard of him as a fanatical pro-native, bitterly detested by the better class of Americans; but he had never imagined that any one could carry his prejudices to the extent of insulting a perfect stranger, merely because he suspected the other of holding opinions different to his own. He knew the British pro-native. He had stood in Hyde Park and listened

with a half-pitying contempt to some professional agitator, who had never seen a dozen colored men in his life, and who had not the vaguest conception of what the British Empire meant, holding forth on the subject of racial equality, protesting his love for his dusky brother in India and Africa, and foaming at the mouth over the fancied tyranny of some British proconsul, who probably was absolutely indifferent to the praise or censure of the mob. But the whole thing had always seemed too foolish to arouse any one's wrath, and he had usually ended by laughing and throwing a few coppers into the speaker's eagerly extended collecting box. The case of Commissioner Furber was, however, very different, for he was a high official of a great nation, and he had the power, and apparently the will, to put into practice the theories which even the seedy spouter of the Park knew to be absurd.

Furber's apparent knowledge of himself, and of his object in coming to the palace, did not surprise Derek greatly, for he had already heard of the hateful system of espionage, the so-called "Secret Service," which was carried on by the Commission with the object of crushing any opposition to its policy, and driving any possible critics out of the islands. He had heard, too, stories of trumped-up charges, of clean-bred American citizens brought to trial and sentenced on native evidence; and though, hitherto, he had frankly declined to credit them, a few minutes of Mr. Furber's conversation had served to modify his opinion. Consequently he watched

the official curiously, in much the same cool, dispassionate way a doctor examines a new species of disease.

The other shifted in his seat rather uneasily. "I warn you to leave by the next boat," he repeated, though with less assurance.

Derek laughed, and got up. "My dear good man, you are not the Law, or even the Prophets," he drawled. "Besides, I came to see your chief, not you."

"The governor-general will not see you?" again it was a snarl.

"Won't he?" retorted the Englishman. "Well, I can find out by trying."

As he spoke, the door was opened and a man entered hurriedly. Derek recognized him instantly—the close-cropped white hair, the heavy white mustache, the air of clean, transparent honesty. It was undoubtedly the governor-general; although there was a weariness in his eyes which the camera had failed to catch.

The new-comer gave Derek a quick glance, then handed some papers to Furber. "See to this, commissioner; that affair must be stopped. It is a gross miscarriage of justice."

The commissioner flushed angrily; and, for a moment, Derek thought he was going to make a hot reply, but he seemed to curb himself with an effort. "Very well," he answered sullenly. "It shall be as you wish, although I disagree with you."

The governor nodded and turned towards the door,

where Derek was waiting. "Did you want to speak to me?" he asked courteously.

Derek shot a quick glance at Furber as he answered, "Yes. I sent in my card, but this gentleman had me shown in here instead."

The governor's eyes flashed. "Again, commissioner? Must I repeat that I see my visitors myself—always? Is it Mr. North? The general telephoned to me about your coming an hour or so ago."

The commissioner had risen to his feet, his white face, if possible, even whiter than before. "I saw this man because I was sure he had nothing to say," he muttered, "because I knew he would only waste your time."

"How did you know?" asked the governor gravely. The commissioner mumbled something almost inaudible.

"You suspected it?" There was a world of wrath and scorn in the quiet voice. "Mr. North, I must apologize. It was a mistake. Will you come with me now, if you still have time to spare?"

An hour later, when Derek passed out of the huge, cool hall of the palace into the blazing sunlight of the plaza, he knew that he had failed, that he must write and tell Clare that, after all, the pulajanes would be allowed to do as they listed in Lamu, not because the governor disbelieved his story, but because in some way his hands were tied.

"I will look into the matter and do what I can," the old man had said. "I had been told nothing of

it—in fact, I had barely heard of the pulajanes. I must thank you for the trouble you have taken; and if any action of mine can avert the danger, you may rest assured I shall spare no pains, only—” and he sighed, “I am not absolute, you know. I have colleagues.”

And Derek had left him almost wishing he had never gone to the palace, for the weary face seemed to have grown perceptibly older, and he felt he had only added to a burden of sorrow and anxiety which was already too heavy for the brave old man to bear.

It was Captain Rawson who explained matters, as he and Derek sat in the court of the Service Club, smoking the first of many after-dinner cigars.

“Yes,” he said. “The governor-general is a gentleman, not a politician, so he doesn’t count. He was just sent out as a figure-head, because the last man went too far. But in the council he has only one vote against half a dozen, so he is always overruled. It’s just breaking his heart, but he’s a real tough fighter, and he won’t give the grafters rest. He’s Uncle Sam’s man, not merely a party’s, and he don’t care whether they get votes or no.”

“And Furber?” asked Derek.

The captain expectorated at a small lizard before answering. “Commissioner Furber, sir? He belongs to my native city, where his father owns the street railroads and a few other trifles. He’s a great man is Harrison B. Furber, and this is his only son, who was shoved in here because he happened to be a particular friend of parties in power. We have theories

and culture and the Higher Life in our city, and he is supposed to represent them all and to teach them to the Filipinos, who, I hope, feel better for them."

Derek laughed. "I am afraid you don't sympathize with your fellow citizens."

Rawson shook his head. "I'm a United States soldier," he said simply. "We've no theories, and we have got some little accounts to settle with our brown relations."

"So you don't think they'll take any steps with regard to the pulajanes?" asked Derek, reverting to the original subject.

"I'm sure," answered the other. "The constabulary can't put the thing down, and if they call in the army they are acknowledging their own failure. Anūgar has been cited as the ideal of their system, the type of a perfect native governor; and, from the President downwards, they're bound to keep up this fiction. No, Lamu may be devastated and half those tao may die of sheer wretchedness, but the American nation is still going to be told that all is beautiful and peaceful and joyous."

"And if it found out the truth?"

The captain shrugged his shoulders. "It won't; but if it did, it would fire this party clean out, and——" He paused.

"Yes, and what?" asked Derek.

"And elect a fresh lot of sweeps, I suppose," replied Rawson. "Still, though I hate all politicians, I will admit the change must be for the better. Ah, here's a man you would like to meet—George Soley,

the editor of the *Manila Herald*. George, I want to introduce you to Mr. North, a Britisher—a British officer, I guess,” with a keen glance at Derek; “at any rate a Britisher who has come to these glorious isles to see the great American eagle suckling its little brown lambs.”

The new-comer laughed. “Mixed metaphors generally mean mixed drinks, captain. Pleased to meet you, Mr. North.”

George Soley was a good specimen of the traveled American, a man who, though born in a little town in the Middle West, had risen above all provincial prejudices and made of himself a citizen of the world, without in any way losing his nationality. Nature had intended him to be a statesman; Fate, in the form of the political machine, had made that impossible, so he had taken to journalism as the natural alternative; and now, after a checkered career, in which his own honesty and independence had always stood in his light, he had drifted into the position of editor of the opposition paper in Manila. He disapproved of the government policy, and he said so, squarely and unequivocally, and paid for his courage by being struck off the list of those who received official news and advertisements, and by being snubbed and cold-shouldered by the high gods of the administration; though, on the other hand, he could derive a certain amount of consolation from the fact that he was one of the very few civilians who had been invited to join the Service Club—a distinction which even commissioners had sought in vain.

The *Manila Herald*, like its editor, was intensely American, and yet by no means typical of America. It had scare-heads and crude cartoons, and jokes of a recondite character, and stories supplied by a syndicate in the States, in the form of papier-mâché molds, the sort of stuff you can cut up into lengths as you need it, and which is equally interesting whether you use a fragment to fill in an odd space, or squander the whole on the day after the advertisement canvasser has been spending his month's check. The *Herald* had all these; but it had, too, thoughtful, moderate articles characterized by a wholesome good sense and utterly devoid of personalities. Soley was a good journalist, and he published what would sell; but he was also a gentleman, and though he hit hard and straight blows, his blows were always above the belt.

"Bring up that chair, George, and order what your thirst seems most to require," said Rawson. "Mr. North wants to hear things."

The editor obeyed with a laugh, and for the next hour Derek listened to a cool, critical analysis of the whole situation. Whenever Soley paused the captain carried on the tale in his shrewd, dry Yankee manner, mercilessly sarcastic, and yet obviously just, despite the natural prejudice of the soldier against the politicians who had taken the authority out of the hands of the army.

It was the story of a great experiment, which was foredoomed to failure from the very start, because it was founded on an entirely false assumption, and

because the men to whom it was intrusted were wholly unfitted for their work and wholly unworthy of the nation which employed them. Some day, when the question has been settled finally, and the passions which it has aroused have been stilled, America will look back at those early days in the islands with mingled amusement, regret, and pride—amusement at the extraordinary mistakes which were made, regret for the good men sacrificed needlessly, and pride in the great and generous, though deplorably short-sighted impulse which prompted the attempt. No policy could have been more ill-advised than that of the Americans in the Philippines; but no nation was ever more unselfish than were the people of the United States in this matter. They did not know—that was all. They did not realize, and their leaders would not tell them, that the difference between East and West is far more than that of geographical position, that legislation and text-book formulæ are powerless to change the Oriental; that education is not civilization; that the brotherhood of man is a theory, the color-line a fact.

Derek said but little—he was there to learn—but he listened very attentively, and it was almost midnight before he took his leave. “I am staying with Major Flint,” he said. “And I see he has just come in, looking as though he wondered when I was going back with him.”

“It’s early for him, still,” answered Soley. “Well, if you must go, good-night. Come and see me tomorrow at the office, will you? I want to hear more

of those pulajanes. There's good copy in them," he added frankly.

The *Manila Herald* office was a grimy old Spanish building, in what had once been the aristocratic quarter of the Walled City. Great soldiers and high-bred ladies had walked up and down its broad mahogany staircase in bygone days, and Princes of the Church had been guests within its walls; but now the ground floor was devoted to printers and all their works; in the old hall ragged little native newsboys lounged about, waiting for the first copies of the evening edition; whilst upstairs, where a couple of the reception rooms had been thrown into one, the white members of the staff toiled in their shirt-sleeves, writing up copy, correcting proofs, or callously snipping paragraphs out of other papers, apparently oblivious of the heat, the stifling smell from the machinery below, or the rattling of passing carromatos on the cobbled road outside.

Soley, coatless and perspiring, with a big, well-chewed cigar in the corner of his mouth, was just finishing his leader when Derek was shown into the room.

"Excuse me a moment, Mr. North," he said. "I am going for them again over the Summer Capital scheme; the biggest attempted steal we have had here yet. Take that chair, will you?"

He scrawled a couple of sheets rapidly, glanced through them once, made a few alterations, and tossed them across to a waiting boy; then swung round in his seat and faced Derek. "Now, Mr. North,

about this pulajan story. Will you let me have it? I want a good sensation, and I know you've got one there."

Derek nodded. "Yes, it is a good sensation, I suppose, and I should like to give it you, but—" he paused and stared out of the window a moment. "It doesn't seem quite the game so far as the governor-general is concerned. It might embarrass him. Look here, I'll do this—let you have the story, and you can keep it, either until I hear that the governor can't do anything, or until this business flares up in Lamu. It will be just as good then."

The editor assented readily. "That will do. I want you to write it up yourself, of course. Take as much space as you want. I know what you write is to the point."

Derek looked at him in surprise. "What makes you think so?"

Soley reached back and took a volume from a shelf above his desk. "'The Gate of India,'" he said. "I was in Simla when that came out, and I happened to hear who wrote it. I recognized your name at once last night. Only a week, you say, before Papa Pablo goes on the war-path? It does not leave the Commission much time to act, even if it did want to do so. Did I tell you the governor-general called a special meeting to-day?—I suppose you are going to wait and see what happens."

"Yes. I am thinking of staying some time; in fact, I am going to try my hand at another book, with the Philippines as its subject."

Soley looked up quickly from some notes he was making. "Is that really so? You haven't told any one, have you? I should keep it quiet if I were you, especially as you already have Furber for an enemy. Manila isn't a very healthy place for critics."

## CHAPTER XI

MAJOR FLINT laid down the volume from which he had been reading aloud, and looked over his glasses at Derek, who was lounging in a hammock a few feet away.

“That, sir,” he said, “was a great achievement. It makes us feel small, doesn’t it?”

The book was “Marbot’s Memoirs,” a great favorite with the veteran, who was a keen student of history, and who had been delighted to find in his guest a man of similar tastes. That afternoon the conversation had drifted to the subject of Napoleon, and the major had just been looking up a passage which bore on the question under discussion.

Derek had found a week in Manila pass very pleasantly. The major believed in keeping up the Southern traditions of hospitality; and though his quarters contained but the barest necessaries, his servants were perfectly trained, and his table—there is no regimental mess in the American service—was excellent. The old soldier’s greatest pride was, however, in his cocktails. With him, the mixing of those mysterious drinks was an art, a thing to be undertaken solemnly, almost reverently, not left to some soulless native or rash white amateur. He had cocktails for every portion of the day, an apparently interminable

variety of them, ranging from the one he brought with his own hands to Derek's bedside soon after sunrise, to the night-cap he prepared long after the Last Post had wailed out from the neighboring barracks; and beyond these, there were special cocktails suitable for special occasions.

Derek was taking life very easily. He was still determined to fulfil his promise to Clare and collect material for a book, despite a growing disinclination for the immense amount of work it would entail; but at the moment, he had resolved to put the whole matter on one side until he saw what steps the pulajanes were going to take. He wanted to return to Lamu, and he did not attempt to disguise the fact from himself; but he understood Clare too well to think of going back on the strength of a mere excuse—the girl would require a reason, a perfectly sound one, to account for his revisiting Calbayog before he worked round there again in fulfilling the task she had set him. However, no fresh news had arrived from the island, and no notice appeared to have been taken of the warning brought by himself. He had heard nothing from the governor-general, nor had the military headquarters received any requests for troops. On the other hand, the officially-supported journal had come out with a rather ostentatious statement about the peace and prosperity of Lamu, and had published a lengthy interview with Mr. Commissioner Furber, in which that gentleman had expressed his complete confidence in Anũgar, and his unqualified delight at the mestizo's success.

Once or twice, whilst driving with his host at the evening band parade, Derek had seen the commissioner sitting very upright in his carriage, in which, in addition to his pale and depressed little wife, were always two natives, sometimes men, sometimes women; but beyond a vicious scowl from the official, no sign of recognition passed between him and the Englishman; nor, to the surprise of the latter, did the major take any notice of Furber, although he had spoken of him as a man whom he met occasionally in the course of duty. However, after the second occasion on which this happened, the old soldier had explained matters to his guest.

“You have seen me cut Furber?” he had remarked, looking up from the cocktails he was mixing. “Well, he’s not the only one I do it to, not by a long way. It came about like this—when the brown brother nonsense was brought forward, a lot of us agreed we would recognize no man in public who had a native with him.—A row?” he laughed; “of course there was; but we stuck to it, as you see. No, sir, color is color, as I guess you feel too. I’m a United States soldier, and the United States is a white republic, thank God, and we’re going to keep it white, despite all the politicians.”

The weather was terribly hot, the air heavy with that detestable, clammy heat peculiar to low-lying and ill-drained spots like Manila; and, more than once, Derek had glanced upwards as he thought of the punkah which should have been there, but was

not; for, curiously enough, punkahs are almost unknown among the Americans in the East, possibly because their democratic ideas do not permit them to have a man and a brother squatting on the veranda, smoking innumerable cigarettes and pulling a string for hours at a stretch, but more likely because they have yet to learn to appreciate the beauties of the institution.

“Yes, sir, it makes us feel small,” repeated the major. “Napoleon waged real war; but then he himself was the party, both parties. He knew, too, when an editor needed hanging, and acted on the knowledge, good and prompt.”

Derek laughed. “Isn’t that treason, major?—Ah, talking about editors, here comes one. Mr. Soley, you are just in time to hear Major Flint holding forth on the ‘Influence of hanging on the Fourth Estate.’”

The major got up quickly. “We should let Soley go. We have tamed him at the club.” He pulled up another chair beside the little bamboo table, on which stood the inevitable boxes of cigars and a small jug of iced water, that most deadly of drinks in the tropics. “Sit down, Soley. It’s seldom any of your friends see you about at this time of day. Is anything wrong? You look worried.”

Soley took a cigar and bit off the end rather savagely before replying; then: “I am worried,” he answered. “Mr. North, I have got to use that article of yours to-night. Papa Pablo started burning the towns in Northern Lamu last night.”

Derek, who was sitting on the edge of his hammock, lazily swinging his legs, looked up with eager interest.

"Is that so?" he asked. "How did you hear? Are there any details through yet?"

The editor shook his head. "No, only a brief cable from a Spanish skipper, who just got out of Catarman in time. It breaks off suddenly; but I hope to get the rest soon. He's a man I can trust. I expect they have fuller news at the palace; but I shan't get it, as you know, major."

The soldier was listening with a grave face. "What else is it, Soley?" he asked. "You didn't leave your work just to tell us this, when you could have sent McCulloch down with the news."

Soley nodded. "Yes, there is more—at least I wanted to see Mr. North personally. No, don't go, major," as the soldier got up to leave them. "It's this, Mr. North—I want some one to go down to Lamu for the paper, to collect any news there may be going, but, above all, to get at the bottom of this Papa Pablo mystery, to find out who the brute really is. I have an idea from something I picked up that there's a lot behind this business, that it's more than the old fanaticism breaking out again. Now, the men I could get here are all sick of jungle fighting, and, of course, they also have local prejudices. I can't spare any of my own staff. It's an ugly job—rain, mud, hunger, and a big risk from bolomen all the time; whilst any one who did fathom the Pablo mystery would do well to wear a mail shirt, even in Manila. Moreover, the paper isn't a rich one; so,

taken all round, it's a rotten proposition in many ways; but they say 'Where there's a row there's an Englishman.' Will you be that Englishman?"

Derek leaped lightly to the ground. "Of course I will," he answered eagerly. "It's awfully good of you to give me the chance. When can I start?" and then he laughed, happily, almost boyishly, without a trace of his usual weary cynicism.

It was the major who replied to his question. "You can get down with me to-morrow. One of the little transports will go out before midday. Yes," in answer to Soley's look of surprise, "the general fixed it up some days ago. He is sending Rawson and young Rayne with thirty men to Calbayog, to guard the army ice-plant and stores there. He has a perfect right to do it; and I am going on leave, to stay with Robert Westley.—The governor-general? Yes, he knows; privately.—The commissioners? Hardly. They can cable the President when they find we have gone; it won't matter then. But, tell me, what is it you've picked up; what makes you think there's so much in the business?"

"I'm afraid I can't tell you just yet," replied the editor. "There are several queer things I know; but the only one I can mention is this—within half an hour of the break-up of every Council meeting, a long cipher message is always sent off to one or other of the larger ports in Lamu."

The major shook his head. "Mere coincidence, possibly."

"I think not," answered Soley; "in fact, I'm

sure it's not, because the same man always sends them."

"Who is he?" asked Derek.

The editor waited until a passing *muchacho* was out of hearing; then: "Cinicio Gomez, the brother of the native secretary to the Commission," he said.

. . . . .

That night Derek dined at the club with the major, Rawson, and Rayne. They sat long over their meal, and longer still in the courtyard, smoking, and discussing the possibilities of actually getting to the front in Lamu; or, at least, the elder men discussed them, but the subaltern, though full of suppressed eagerness at the idea of returning to Calbayog, seemed by no means anxious to go any farther.

Towards midnight, Soley came up and dropped into a chair beside the major. He was very tired, but intensely satisfied; for he had just sent his paper to press with the absolute certainty that it contained a great scoop, exclusive news which no other journal would have, news which on the morrow would be cabled to the States and be reproduced with huge and alliterative headlines in the opposition papers. In Manila, the commissioners would say unprintable things; in Washington, the President would want to say the same, but would be restrained by the party bosses; official denials would come thick and fast; the *Manila Herald* would be boycotted and frowned upon and reviled more than ever by officialdom—but what matter? The scoop would remain a fact.

The whole front page of the morning issue would be devoted to Lamu. There was Derek's article—terse, crisply written, carrying conviction by reason of its obvious sincerity; there was a leader from Soley's own pen, fearlessly outspoken, full of fierce, patriotic hatred of the government policy; there were these, and there were pictures of Calbayog and Catarman, and Anũgar; but the most important thing of all was a long cable from the Spanish skipper, giving a full account of the sacking of Catarman by four hundred red-cross bolomen, who had come in dancing, a bolo in each hand, shouting their terrible war-cry, "*Tad-tad*," "Kill, kill," paralyzing the tao with fright. There had been no resistance, no hint of defence; but the pulajanes had slaughtered a hundred or so, just to get into practice; then they had looted the stores, and after burning the whole place, driven the remainder of the inhabitants into the hills. Soley's informant, who, in some mysterious way, had got his message through on one of the military lines, had been on shore when the pulajanes attacked; but he had managed to make good his escape, and had wheezed away from his anchorage, leaving his only good anchor and cable behind him, just as half a dozen large canoes laden with bolomen put out from the shore. Steaming down the coast, he had seen a score of small villages blazing, and had met several boat-loads of refugees, who had shouted to him that Locilocan, a town almost as large as Catarman, had also gone up in flames. Papa Pablo had fulfilled his threat to the letter, and had taught the wretched tao

the utter futility of trusting to the government for protection.

Soley was also publishing, in large type, without comment, the official account of the situation, a curt paragraph, stating that a slight local disturbance had occurred, a mere ladrone raid with which the constabulary would be able to deal, and that three columns of that force were being despatched to the scene of the trouble. Neither Papa Pablo nor the pulajanés were even mentioned.

The rest of the party listened in silence whilst Soley briefly outlined the latest news; but, as he finished, the major got up suddenly. "It is murder, absolute murder," he growled. "It was bad enough sacrificing those wretched peasants just to save a few paltry political reputations; but to send those half-starved, ill-armed native troops against these ghastly fanatics is, if possible, worse. Better by far have done nothing at all, and have let the tao make their submission to Papa Pablo. It could not have damaged our prestige any more than this will do.—I wonder what you must think of our government, Mr. North?" he added with a bitter smile.

Derek shrugged his shoulders. "We have a class in England as bad, or, rather, worse, for they are unpatriotic as well as utterly foolish, only they have never got into power yet, and I trust they never will."

The major sighed. "One can never tell. Nations seem to go mad just as individuals do. Twenty years ago, I should have scouted the very idea of such a business as this; but now—" he broke off

abruptly. "Well, gentlemen, it is late, and we have to make an early start. I think we should be getting home. Are you walking, Soley? So are we. We had better keep together, as I have no fancy for being shot by a native policeman."

"Is there really any danger from the police?" Derek asked, as they walked down the narrow, cobbled streets of the Walled City.

Soley nodded. "I don't trust them. They have shot one or two white men recently, on the ground that they were resisting arrest, but there were no white witnesses."

Derek looked at him in amazement. "But aren't they tried and punished? It gives unlimited chances of murder if you allow natives to shoot white men like that."

"I know it does," answered the editor, "but none of them have been punished for it yet. They are supposed to represent the majesty of the law."

"And the Sikhs, what are they doing here?" asked the Englishman.

Soley laughed. "They are government watchmen. We can trust our little brother to be a judge of the High Court, but we can't trust him to watch arms and ammunition, so we send to India for honest men. It is a truly wonderful system."

On the following morning, Wilson was waiting on the quay to see Derek embark.

"You will soon get sick of it, North," he said. "Then you will come for another cruise with me."

Don't forget. I shall be in Calbayog soon, and will ask Miss Westley all about you, how you like the mud and the mountains and the bolomen. By the way, I've a bit of startling news—you remember the *Palapog*? Well, she's piled up on a reef on the Lamu coast, right up, high and dry at low-water, only it's an impossible place to get to till the monsoon changes. The news came in this morning by a Spanish coaster."

"And Pete Jansen and the crew?" asked Derek.

"Clean disappeared, not a sign of them. If they got ashore, God help them! for it's just near Catarman where the pulajanes are in possession. I wonder if old Pete suspected anything that time we met him, and has been all this time trying to trace out where our guns went to, instead of coming to Manila."

An hour later, up at the palace, his secretary brought the news of the wreck to Mr. Commissioner Furber.

"Yes, sir," he said, "the vessel seems all right, and they can salve her later in the year, they say; but Captain Jansen and the crew have vanished. It has made quite a sensation on the water-front."

But Mr. Commissioner Furber never heard the last remark, for—perhaps because the day was oppressively hot—Mr. Commissioner Furber had fainted.

## CHAPTER XII

CLARE dropped a half-smoked cigarette into her own especial ash-tray, and heaved rather a big sigh.

"Mr. North, you have not kept your promise to me," she said, breaking what had been an unusually long silence.

Derek, who was leaning with his back against the rail of the veranda, smoking his eternal cigar, watching her with a kind of half-unconscious appreciation, started at her voice.

"How is that, Miss Westley? I thought you were quite satisfied."

"Perhaps when you and the major and the rest of them landed last night I might have seemed so. We didn't expect you, you see—the cable the major sent us from Manila never got through; and I was pleased, because I thought you were traveling round, getting material for your book. But now father tells me you are going up into the northern jungle with Captain Cochrane and his constabulary, fighting pulajanes. Is that true?"

"Yes. It's true I'm going, but not necessarily to fight. I've promised to try and find out certain things and there's no news to be got here, in Calbayog."

"What things?" she demanded.

Derek lowered his voice. "I want to discover who

Papa Pablo really is, and what there is behind this outbreak.”

For a moment she gazed at him in surprise. “You won’t succeed,” she said with conviction; “no one ever will. They hide it too well. Otherwise, we should have heard it from Enrique, long ago. And, anyway, why should you be the one to undertake it? You promised me to give your whole time to the book.”

“But I haven’t abandoned the book idea. My experience in the hills will all come in useful,” he remonstrated.

“It’s not essential,” she retorted. “I meant you to write about the main question, not on what happens in a corner of one of the smaller islands. I don’t see why you should go up there at all.”

“I thought it was the kind of thing you would approve of,” he answered half-apologetically.

She rested her chin on her hand, and stared into the twilight. “I hate the hills,” she said at last. “I always turn my back towards them when I can, and look out over the sea. They’re so gloomy and silent and heavy, and when one knows what I know of the things that happen there—” She broke off with a sigh, then after a pause: “Yes, I hate them,” she resumed; “and I hate to have my friends go up there. They—they don’t always come back,” she added in a low voice.

Derek drew rather fiercely at his cigar, then tossed it away as though it had suddenly become rank.

“I shall come back,” he said. “My luck has al-

ways held good so far. It's the men who can't be spared who get cut up."

Clare turned on him indignantly. "You've no right to say that, Mr. North. I thought better of you. No good man—I mean no man who can do useful work—can be spared, and you know it."

Derek flushed. "I am sorry. I didn't quite mean it that way. Only, you know, I'm quite alone, and I've always noticed it's the married men and those who've got some one to care about them who are killed."

Clare did not answer him for a minute; then: "There are people who care about you," she said slowly. "You know how father and the major and I would feel about it, especially if it were those hateful, despicable pulajanes."

Derek crossed the veranda and sat down on the chair next to hers. "Do you really mean you would like me to give it up?" he asked quietly.

She laughed, with one of her sudden changes of mood. "No; at least I'm not sure, and you couldn't do so now. These Americans would say horrid things if you drew back; and, after all, it's rather sportsmanlike of you. I would give anything to go myself," she added simply.

Derek smiled. "But it is even less your concern than mine, and—there are the risks."

The girl ignored the first part of his remark. "I shouldn't mind the risks, if I were there; it would be too exciting and interesting! It's when other people are in the hills and you don't know what has

become of them, that it's so hard. One wonders and worries, and it's often so dreadfully long before any news comes. I'm sure it's always the worst for those who are left behind."

The short tropical twilight had already come to an end. Derek could barely make out her face in the gathering darkness, but her tone was unmistakable; there was a frank friendliness in it, an unaffected anxiety for his safety, and nothing more—at least nothing more of which she herself was conscious.

A minute later, the dressing-bell rang. Clare jumped up quickly. "I didn't know it was so late. I've several things to see about, and there will be Mr. Rayne, as well as the major, to-night."

. . . . .

Derek had found Calbayog much the same as ever—peaceful, drowsy, apparently undisturbed by the outbreak in the north. No fresh news had come in, or, if it had, Anūgar had kept it to himself. Under their breath, men whispered that the whole of the Catarman district had been laid waste, that Papa Pablo had fulfilled his threats to the letter, and that everywhere the tao had been abandoned and betrayed by the Americans; but, officially, the island was still at peace, and wise men accepted the official view. It was safer not to question what the governor said. A few parties of constabulary had gone out, and as nothing more had been heard of them, presumably they had conquered the pulajanes. At any rate, the people of Calbayog hoped so, and from hoping grew

to believing, and, consequently, went to the Sunday cockfights with light hearts. Papa Pablo was a long way off, and Calbayog had always been safe.

Rawson and Rayne, with their thirty men, had established themselves in some huts belonging to the ice-making plant, whilst the major and Derek were staying with the Westleys. To his host, the old soldier had been perfectly outspoken.

“I am down here to get news for the general,” he had said. “He is terribly worried about the outbreak; and, if it becomes too bad, I believe he will defy the Commission and land a brigade, trusting to the good sense of the nation to back him up. He’s afraid this thing may spread right through the islands. He would have sent a couple of companies with me, but that can’t be managed—yet. Still, thirty white soldiers are a good deal better than nothing.”

Derek had lost no time in making the arrangements which had roused Clare’s wrath. A very little inquiry had convinced him that he could do nothing for Soley by remaining in Calbayog, so he had decided to accompany a party of constabulary which was marching northwards in a day or two, under the command of Captain Cochrane. The latter, a tattered and energetic soldier of fortune, had been very ready to take him.

“There are no non-combatants in this game, as I guess you know,” he had said frankly, “but a white man with a Winchester shot-gun is worth a dozen of my fellows, who have only got old Springfield

carbines. It's kill or be killed—generally the latter. I shall give no quarter, as I know I should get none. I fought the Leyte ladrones all last year. It was only a little show compared to this, of course; but I've no illusions left on the matter. You'll hate the job after a week or two, I expect; but you'll learn two things—how bad a country can be, and what that old Hebrew meant when he wrote about the Abomination of Desolation. Personally, I reckon the knowledge isn't worth having, especially at the risk of being boloed; but if you think it is, come along by all means. I've got a lieutenant who'll go sick, and a hundred native soldiers who don't possess one whole uniform or one sound pair of shoes amongst them, who can't shoot, and who have a fixed belief that the proper way to repel a bolo rush is to club your rifle. Then I've only a dozen cargadores—carriers, you know—and of course no commissariat, so it's a rotten proposition all round."

And Derek had laughed and said he would go.

"I thought you would," commented the captain. "I guess it's what you Britishers call 'sport.' You wouldn't do it if any one offered to pay you for it, I suppose. We're a more practical nation; we go after the dollar," and then he had started off to spend the whole of his last meagre pay-check in buying meat and cigarettes for his men.

During dinner, Clare devoted herself mainly to the subaltern, cross-examining the boy as to his doings in Manila, until he blushed and stammered and com-

mitted himself to a host of wild theories, greatly to the delight of his tormentor.

“Mr. Rayne,” she said at last, “if your brown brother asked you to dinner, to share a roast dog with him and his family, would you go?”

“It all depends on who the native was,” he answered.

“Oh no,” she retorted; “they are all your brothers, and, of course, all equal with you, so it wouldn’t make any difference. Still, supposing the governor asked you, would you go?”

The subaltern fidgeted with his wine-glass. “Yes,” he said reluctantly, “I should—in fact, the governor has asked me to go to-morrow.”

Clare’s eyes flashed dangerously. “Are you going? Yes? Oh, how can you! Why do you allow it, major? Or perhaps you and Captain Rawson are going as well?” she added scornfully.

The major had grown very red at the youngster’s admission, but he answered quietly: “I am afraid we have not been asked, Clare. Mr. Rayne is the only one honored so far.” Then he changed the subject abruptly. “Have you heard anything of the *Palapog*’s crew, Westley?”

“Not a word. One of my skippers got as near as he dared to the wreck the other day, and he says the falls are hanging down on all but one pair of davits, so they evidently lowered the boats, and I can only suppose they landed, and were immediately massacred by the pulajanes. It will be possible to save the vessel herself when the monsoon changes. I can’t

imagine how old Pete got her there, or what he was doing inside the reef. If he had piled her up on the outer side, I could have understood it better."

"Do you get any news of Enrique de la Cruz now?" asked the major.

"No. He has made no sign since he sent the warning. In fact, we seem cut off altogether. Calbayog might be an island by itself, for all we hear. The hemp season is over, and no one comes in from the interior; whilst the tao seem to have stopped paddling round the coast. The whole thing looks very bad. I believe the island is rotten with pulajanism, and Anũgar is utterly helpless. I have shut my branches; and I think we shall leave here ourselves as soon as I have got all my hemp shipped."

Derek, who had said very little during the meal, looked up quickly from the orange he was peeling—looked, not at the speaker but at Clare, who had suddenly turned pale, and was regarding her father with an expression which was anything but dutiful. For a moment, the guest thought she was going to utter a passionate remonstrance; then she caught his glance, smiled and shook her head, unnoticed by either her father or the major.

"We shall not go," she said a little later to Derek, as they sat smoking on the veranda.

"What makes you think so?" he asked.

She smiled. "When father tells me things in that indirect way—things he knows I shan't like—it means he will give in to me in the end. We can't leave Calbayog now. It would be like running away.

We three, father and you and myself, are the only English I know of in the island, and it would be too dreadful to go on account of these miserable pulajanes, wouldn't it? We must stay, Mr. North; you know we must. Besides, I want to be where I can hear all about what is going on, not up in Manila, where one only gets lies."

Derek nodded. "You wouldn't like the Americans to think we had been scared off?"

"No, of course not; nor would you. And it's not only the Americans, but those hateful mestizos too. We are civilization," she went on proudly. "We three and the major and Captain Rawson, and—and Mr. Rayne."

"So you have forgiven him?" Derek asked.

"He is very young," she answered wisely. "He will soon learn. Don't you think so, Mr. North?"

The major, who had just strolled up, caught the remark. "I think you were very unkind to him, Clare," he said.

"Nonsense! It will do him good. Why do you let him have such silly ideas, major? If he does go to the governor's, I shan't forgive him, at least for a long time. He must not come near me whilst he has mestiza friends. Will you tell him so? I am too angry to speak to him again to-night."

It was an awkward, nervous subaltern who rang the governor's bell on the following evening. Despite what he had told Clare, his sojourn in Manila had cured him of many of his pro-native opinions, for

his Yankee shrewdness enabled him to detect the rank dishonesty which underlay much of the vaunted philanthropy; whilst contact with his brother officers, most of whom were thorough men of the world, had given him a view of life infinitely wider and more wholesome than that to which he had been accustomed in his petty provincial town. He had accepted the mestizo's invitation chiefly because he was too shy to refuse; but he went to keep his engagement reluctantly, with an uncomfortable feeling that he had not only annoyed the major, but had incurred Clare's scorn, and the latter, as he told himself sorrowfully, was by far the more serious.

Anūgar lived in one of the few stone buildings of Calbayog. It was a large house, well furnished in the Spanish style, or, rather, it had been well furnished by its former owner, a wealthy Spanish merchant; but he had been murdered by the insurrectos, and now the mestizo's Oriental love of display had led him to spoil the whole effect by much gilding and many garish ornaments.

The governor welcomed his guest warmly, and yet, at first, Rayne was far from comfortable. He had met mestizos before in Manila, had sat down to table with them in the houses of his civilian friends, and thought nothing of it; but, somehow, this was different. Now, his host was colored, and he himself was the only white man present. Insensibly, too, he contrasted it with the dinner of the evening before, and grew hot at the idea of what Clare might be saying.

Consequently, for a few minutes, he answered the governor's inquiries in rather random fashion; but Anúgar was no mean diplomat, and as he had managed to overcome, at least in part, Major Flint's far stronger prejudices, so he now broke down the boy's reserve, with the result that, by the time dinner was announced, Rayne was almost at his ease.

They dined alone, the women-folk of the house, whatever they might be, keeping out of sight. The dinner was a good one, well cooked, well served, and strictly American in style.

"I have broken away from all the old Spanish traditions, señor," his host observed with a laugh. "Why not? If we are to be Americans in some things, we had better be Americans right through. I know you agree with me. Yes," in answer to the subaltern's look of surprise; "I heard it from the commissioner. He knows, I believe, the opinions of every officer in the islands, and he asked me to show you any hospitality within my poor means. I know you come from civil life and have not the same prejudices as some of your brother officers here, and I want to make friends with them through you. You see, señor, I am perfectly frank."

If the governor's dinner was good, his wine was even better. Rayne was a very moderate drinker. He knew he had no head for liquor, and a certain stubborn good sense had led him to fix a limit, which nothing had ever induced him to pass. Ordinarily, he could reach that limit with perfect safety; but, on

this occasion, the first glass of sherry seemed to mount to his head, driving away the remaining traces of his shyness, and making him unusually bright and talkative. With the second glass, he threw off all reserve and grew confidential. He was aware that he was being asked a number of questions, about the army first, then about the major and Derek North, and finally about Enrique de la Cruz and the Westleys. He was aware, too, that he was answering very freely; but, somehow, it seemed the natural thing to do. Despite his dark skin, Anũgar was a gentleman, and, of course, as a high official, he had a right to know how matters stood. Once, for an instant, after he had been explaining that Westley obtained news direct from the ladrone chieftain, it struck him that he had said too much, and that the wine had got the better of him, but he rejected the idea immediately. He had taken twice as much at the Westleys', without any ill effects. At the same time, however, he decided to drink no more.

"It is too hot, you know," he said, when the governor passed the decanter of port.

The mestizo assented readily. "Yes, you are right, señor. I am glad to see you are one of the wise ones. I need not tell you to take a warning from the Señor North."

"What do you mean?" asked the boy quickly.

The governor shrugged his shoulders. "Did you not know? He had to leave the Indian army through being drunk at the Viceroy's ball."

Rayne frowned. "Are you sure?"

Anūgar laughed gently. "Commissioner Furber's Secret Service is never at fault."

Rayne awoke next morning with a splitting headache, an almost unprecedented thing with him. He had arrived back in good time, perfectly sober—he was sure of that, because he remembered noticing how steady his own walk was, and how clearly he had answered both to the sentry's challenge and to Rawson's questions. Yet he was uncomfortably conscious that something had been wrong. He recalled the last conversation, that about Derek North, but he could not recollect how much he had said during dinner, especially on the subject of Enrique. The thought of it worried him a good deal, and he was made even more uneasy at breakfast, when his captain ran his eye over him critically and drawled—

"What did your brown brother give you to drink, youngster? You've got a properly dopy look this morning. I guess you had better not let Miss Clare see you for a bit."

Rayne flushed. "I was all right when I came in last night."

"So you were very careful to tell me," replied the other dryly; then his tone changed. "Look here, boy," he went on kindly, "you are no match for these yellow-skinned devils. You can't do any harm, because I don't suppose you know anything to tell them; but they can harm you, by giving you doped wine, for instance. What particular line did the conversation take?"

Rayne replied vaguely and rather sulkily, giving details only where Derek was concerned.

Captain Rawson made no remark till he had finished; then: "I guess that's a pretty poisonous sort of reptile," he said. "As for this Britisher, I won't say anything about his having been my guest, but he's been the major's guest, and the general's too. Isn't that enough for you? You know the commissioner and his spies are just a lot of low-down grafters. The best thing you can do is to forget that story, especially when Miss Clare is about. She wouldn't thank you for even hinting at it. I'm going down now to see North and Cochrane off, and I'll say you're sorry you can't come," and he got up from the table, leaving behind him a very angry subaltern.

"I'm afraid it's time I went, Miss Westley," said Derek reluctantly.

The girl looked at him in surprise. "But you're not going like that—going out into the mud of the jungle in a white suit?"

Derek smiled. "No; I was going to change at Cochrane's quarters. I hate walking about the town like a wild man."

"How silly you are! I want to see you, though. I have never seen you in anything like a uniform. Go up and change now."

When he came back a quarter of an hour later in well-worn khaki, with canvas leggings, a shot-cartridge bandolier, and a short Winchester shot-gun, her eyes sparkled with appreciation. "You look very

nice," she said. "It suits you well. But why haven't you got a revolver?"

"I think these shot-guns are better," he answered.

The girl knit her brows. "Yes," she said slowly; "I suppose they are, and revolvers are awfully heavy, clumsy things. Still I think you should carry one, too. Will you?"

"If you say so," he replied gravely, then he held out his hand. "Good-by."

"It's not good-by," she answered. "I wouldn't let you say it before, and you see you came back."

"I shall come back again," he said. "*Au revoir.*"

She looked at him with a sudden softness in her eyes. "*Au revoir*, Mr. North. Be very careful, won't you; as careful as you can."

## CHAPTER XIII

CAPTAIN COCHRANE of the Constabulary kicked his dilapidated boot rather viciously against a charred log in a vain attempt to free it from its clinging load of mud. "There, Mr. North," he said, pointing with the stump of a well-chewed cigar, "that's San Ramon, those burned poles sticking about in every direction, and those heaps of blackened masonry. Yet last time I was here, just before this pulajan business began, there were a couple of thousand tao in the place. Now, I reckon that yellow dog slinking away behind the ruins of the church is about the only citizen left, unless you include those images under the palm-tree and the ghosts of some eighty tao—though I'm not too sure that a Filipino has any soul to make a ghost out of. It was here they killed those two school-teachers, youngsters just fresh from the States—a ghastly shame to send them out at all, when the Government knew well that this business was coming on."

Derek glanced round at the scene of desolation, and shrugged his shoulders. Two months of campaigning in Lamu had taught him exactly what to expect, and San Ramon was but the same as a score of other burned towns they had seen, the same as half the towns in the island perhaps, for the outbreak

was spreading southwards with ever-increasing speed.

The strip of level ground, a hundred yards or so in width from the white beach to the line of marshy jungle which formed its inshore limit, had once been covered with nipa shacks, but of most of these nothing now remained, save so many heaps of ashes; although one or two of the larger houses—the school, the Spanish trader's, and the court-house—had been built with frameworks of heavy timber which would not fire easily; but, in their case, the pulajanes had completed the task of destruction by carefully burning away the lower parts of the main supports, leaving the blackened skeletons leaning over drunkenly, ready to collapse whenever the change of the monsoon should expose them to the force of the wind.

Nothing had been spared. Of the church only the shell remained, though some one, possibly in a spirit of derision at their failure to protect the town, had fetched out a couple of gaudy plaster images, once the pride of the tao, and had placed them in front of the porch, where they now stood in the drenching rain, cracked and discolored, yet still smiling inanely at the ruin and desecration. The tall cocoanut palms dotted about the clearing had been scorched and withered by the blaze; whilst ten weeks of almost incessant downpour had produced a rank tangle of weeds and creepers, practically obliterating every trace of the roads and pathways, the only exception being a paved landing-place, which was

now further marked by a couple of skulls stuck aloft on charred posts, perhaps the handiwork of the same grim humorist who had saved those obviously impotent saints.

Everything which could possibly be of use either to the tao or the Americans had been destroyed. The canoes on the beach were staved in, the fish-traps broken down. The Spaniard's store had been gutted and then fired; but the owner's private stock of tinned meats, being of no use to the victors, had been deliberately tossed back into the flames, as was evident from the burst cans lying amongst the ashes of the office. The few pitiful possessions which the tao had tried to save from their blazing homes had been treated in the same way, the pulajanes having lighted an enormous bonfire at the landing-place, where, amongst half-burned chair legs and table tops, could be seen the now rusted remains of scores of cooking utensils, and twisted lumps of metal which had once been the cheap sewing-machines beloved of the Filipino women.

The inhabitants had disappeared completely. The living were either in the hills, raising crops for Papa Pablo, or were hiding in the densest patches of jungle—wet, starving, and unspeakably wretched, equally terrified of both pulajanes and Americans, praying, perhaps, that death would come quickly and put an end to their misery. Of the dead, most of whom had been slain in the town itself, there remained only the skulls, over which you stumbled in the rank grass; the dogs and the pigs had seen to the rest.

It was, as Captain Cochrane had said, the very abomination of desolation.

The long string of native soldiers filed in wearily, —tattered, mud-stained, and footsore. It had rained all day, and the path had been more than usually bad, yet now, though the sun was already low, it was necessary to arrange a camp with some rough defense to break the first force of a bolo rush from that dangerously silent jungle; besides which, there was firewood to be collected, fresh water to be fetched from the creek, guards to be mounted, and, even then, there would be no proper rest, but only a long, anxious night in wet clothes with the prospect of another heart-breaking, futile march on the morrow.

Cochrane ran his eye over the men as they formed up, then turned to Derek with a sigh. "They look done," he said. "Poor devils! the last square meal they had was when you shot that carabao at Igut, a week ago; though I think what they feel most is having no cigarettes."

Derek nodded sympathetically, for he had grown to have a very real regard for the cheerful, ragged little men, who were so totally unlike either the insolent brown brothers of the towns or the apathetic tao of the coast. Recruited by Cochrane himself in one of the hill districts of Luzon, where every man was a ladrone by instinct if not actually so by profession, they were splendid material in the hands of any one who understood them, though they would have been perfectly useless under a weak or an un-

popular officer. They were not loyal to the Government, for they despised every form of constituted authority, but they followed Cochrane with a dog-like fidelity, accepting everything, hunger, wet, discomfort, the constant chances of death, in a spirit of grim cheerfulness, reckoning all these as nothing compared to the delirious joy of repelling an occasional bolo rush, and of sending their mortal foes, the pulajanes, who were equally hateful both as schismatics and as members of another tribe, to test Papa Pablo's doctrine of resurrection in three days.

If a constabulary-man were wounded slightly, he merely wrapped an old rag round the place and went on; if he were seriously injured, he lay down to die, bowing to the inevitable with uncomplaining philosophy. It was part of the luck of the game; and, as an inveterate gambler, he knew that the time must come when he would hold a losing hand. He entered the service from a kind of savage sporting instinct, for the sake of the excitement he might get, not for the sake of his pay, which was pitifully small, and which he invariably lost at monte as soon as he received it. His uniform was of the shoddiest khaki twill, with red facings; his shoes were soled with brown paper; his only weapon was a ponderous carbine made in the early seventies, and half his cartridges would not fire; yet, somehow, he got through—at least, so long as he had a white officer who always charged ahead of him.

Cochrane's force had started from Calbayog a

hundred strong, including three white men—Derek, the captain, and a lieutenant; but the latter had been shot in the first fight and had died a week later from blood-poisoning, whilst a dozen of the men had either fallen in bolo rushes or had been stabbed on sentry duty. As was but natural with men of such similar tastes, a strong friendship had sprung up between Cochrane and the Englishman, and, almost unconsciously, the latter had taken on himself the dead lieutenant's duties, more than filling the place of that unfortunate boy, who had been new to the country, and, consequently, of no assistance to his commander.

“Yes, Mr. North, this is the flourishing town of San Ramon,” the captain said, giving another disgusted glance at the scene. “What do you think? We might use that bit of a roof there to keep the rain off us to-night,” pointing to a little palm-leaf shelter stuck up on some poles close to the beach. “It has been a pulajan look-out, but Mister Boloman has evidently found a new place. . . . Ah, there you are, up on the hill. He's just lighted his signal-fire. Do you see the column of smoke? I wonder if he's worth a cartridge. Sergeant Reyes, let me have your rifle; it's the only decently true one we've got. . . . Seven hundred yards, Mr. North?”

“Nearer eight—a good eight,” answered Derek, who was searching the hillside with his field-glasses. “I think—” he paused, and looked again. “Yes, I'm sure there's something white just to the right

of the smoke, beside the banana palm. Can you see it?—By Jove, you've shifted him!"

The captain ejected the cartridge and handed the rifle back to its owner. "It's a hundred to one against a hit with these worn-out old Springfields at that range. Still, it does you good just to see something to shoot at for a change. I'm darned if I like this place, Mr. North; the jungle is too near altogether. I think we had better use what's left of the church. If we fetch that shelter inside and barricade the door we might get some sleep for once. I'm growing a bit sick of never knowing if I'll see the dawn; aren't you?"

Derek, who was carefully unwinding the waterproof wrappings of his cigar-case, nodded grimly. Many times lately, as he had sat up with Cochrane through an unutterably long night, cold, hungry, worn-out, waiting for an attack which never came, listening to invisible bolomen calling to one another but a few score yards away, occasionally catching the gleam of a torch but never seeing enough to aim at, he had cursed his own folly in undertaking a seemingly hopeless task. Once, only two or three months ago, he would have said he cared little whether he were killed or no; but now, with the constant chance of losing it, and losing it in another nation's quarrel, a wholly inglorious campaign against savages, life seemed to have become very dear. He did not want to die in the jungle; he loathed the very idea of being hacked to pieces by a boloman, or rotting away slowly from a poisoned gun-shot

wound. The whole thing was not worth one white man's life. He wanted to get back again to civilization, to sleep in a bed, to have enough to eat and drink, and a roof over his head, to be able to lie down dry and warm, without the prospect of being awakened by an enemy who asked no quarter and gave none; but, above all, he wanted to see Clare Westley again.

Derek and Cochrane both had the common quality of courage, and the far rarer quality of grit; but they had stood side by side through the horror and madness of more than one bolo rush, looking Death straight in the face, and, consequently, they had got beyond the point of pretending they liked the service. There was something indescribably ghastly and repulsive about the whole business. It was not in any sense a war, but simply a destroying of men. There was no honor, no chivalry, no mercy. The only rule in the game was the elemental one—kill or be killed. The Geneva Convention had never reached the jungles of Lamu, and, even if it had, in such a country neither side could afford to hamper itself with the enemy's wounded. The dead remained where they fell, unburied, and when the victors marched off the field they left none but dead—headless dead—behind them. In other campaigns there are flags of truce and armistices and prisoners of war; but these were unknown in Lamu. To kill—that was the one aim of both sides; to take life whenever and wherever possible, to destroy the one thing which cannot be replaced. Never for one

moment was the strain relaxed. None but a fool would say, "I will do this to-morrow"; though the wise man thanked his God every time he saw a new day dawn, and at the same time wondered vaguely what great secrets he might learn before the sun set. It was brutal, nerve-shattering, altogether abominable. It turned the civilized man into a savage, the savage into a fiend.

It had not taken Derek long to realize how well Lamu deserved its evil reputation. Nature never intended that civilized man should travel in the island. She meant him to see the fringe of it and no more. True, here and there along the coast, she had fashioned perfect little bays, where a light-draught steamer could crawl in over the coral reefs and land her cargo at the sleepy, nipa-thatched town, which, in the days before the outbreak, usually straggled along the beach just above high-water mark; but in the background was always the same barrier of gloomy hills, whilst the great mangrove beds forbade landing elsewhere.

Lamu was a country where wheeled traffic was impossible, and, consequently, it was a country entirely without roads, its only tracks of any sort being narrow, ill-defined footpaths winding in and out amongst the bush with maddening indecision. In time of peace, the coast tao did most of their journeying by canoe, paddling round the edge of the swamps from one village to another, caring little how long they spent over the going, or how many days their return might be delayed by bad

weather; for was not To-morrow just as good as To-day? Their business never led them far inland; whilst the hillmen on their part seldom came down, save to loot and burn, on which occasions they took the most direct route, straight through the jungle. When the island was at war, no native dare use the paths, which were quickly overgrown, almost obliterated in a few weeks by the encroaching vegetation; then, too, the frail little bridges over the creeks were either destroyed purposely or allowed to decay, and the canoes were hidden in the bush, or, more often, burned by the enemy. Consequently, the American forces found themselves in what might almost have been an unexplored land, a country of virgin forests and trackless bogs.

Nature seemed to have omitted nothing which could render traveling a misery. There were the innumerable hills, range after range, each seemingly steeper, longer, more slippery than the last, covered with giant forest trees around whose roots flourished a rank undergrowth of ferns and grass and intertwining creepers; there was the unending, heart-breaking mud, never less than ankle deep, always vile, always evil-smelling, clinging, and treacherous; there was stiff, spiky, twelve-foot-high grass, eternally wet, even on those rare occasions when no rain had fallen all day; there were alligator-infested creeks which you crossed on insecure hemp-rafts, and coral bottomed bays where the great sharks followed your patched-up canoe with disquieting patience; there were fish which stung you in the water, and insects

which stung you on land, and leeches in thousands which crawled up your legs as you slept on the wet ground and sucked away the blood you could ill spare, leaving holes where the mud worked in next day, and set up festering sores; there was the rain which came down in sheets and chilled you to the bone, and the blazing sun which brought out the perspiration till the very cigars in your pockets grew flabby and salt and unsmokable; there were all these, and they were very, very bad, but the worst were the mangrove swamps, those unspeakable salt-water forests, where foul trees with tangles of black, snaky roots grew out of an even fouler bottomless gray slime, where there was no sound save the eternal lapping of the tide, no breath of wind to carry away the reek of that never-dying ooze, where bestial, many-legged crabs stared at you with pivoted eyes, and obscene sea-reptiles scurried away at your approach, as though suddenly grown aware of their own abominable hideousness.

In such a country, all the advantages lay with the natives, who knew every swamp, every patch of jungle, whilst the constabulary could only grope their way blindly, with nothing to aid them but the contemptible Spanish maps, for no Filipino guide could be trusted. As a consequence, the enemy could choose their own time and place for an attack, or, if they did not wish to fight, could disappear completely. The pulajan scouting was perfect. You might march for days, for weeks even, without catching a glimpse of a native—that is, without fir-

ing a shot—and yet you knew all the time that your every movement was watched, that nothing you did was secret, that there was always some one lurking in the nearest patch of jungle to count your men, and, if the chance should occur, to bolo a straggler.

At dawn, as the column crawled away from its overnight camp, the first signal boomed out, perhaps only a few yards from the path—a long, deep note which went growling up the valley, to be repeated again and again, each time fainter and farther away, until it crossed the hills into the stillness beyond. It was the boudjon, the alarm horn, the only music of Lamu, warning the bolomen to prepare their ambush, bidding the wretched tao to creep yet farther into the undergrowth, telling all men that the Americans were on the march, telling them, too, by a wonderful code of signals, which road was being taken and how strong was the force.

One never saw the boudjon-blower. He seemed to sound his warning and then to vanish utterly. At first, when you were new to the jungle, you loathed him because he ruined all your plans, because he gave you a hopeless sense of impotence, because he knew and you did not, because he could see and you could not; you hated him with a savage, personal venom; you would have put a bullet through him, and have watched him come tumbling from his perch in the tree with a keen delight; but after a while your point of view changed; you got accustomed to him, as you got

accustomed to everything else—the mud, the rain, the unspeakable desolation; you ceased to think of him as having any actual, destructible being; his identity became merged in that of his horn; he was merely part of the gloom and misery of Lamu. So you cursed him and tramped forward into the ambush, trusting that when you had driven off the enemy, the balance of dead would be on their side—which was what you called a victory, though the pulajanes could spare the men and you could not.

“There’s one piece of that salt carabao meat left; shall we have it to-night, or reserve it for to-morrow’s feast?” said Derek, as Cochrane crawled in under the little bit of nipa roofing, which had been set up in one corner of the ruined church, where it just sufficed to keep off the worst of the rain.

“Let’s have it to-night,” answered the captain promptly. “I’m deadly hungry, and something may turn up to-morrow. It’s time we had some luck. I knew the country would be pretty bare, but I never thought it would be as bad as this. Not that it would have made any difference if I had known, for we couldn’t have carried any more stores, and, of course, I reckoned on getting rations when we met the steamer at Laguan.”

“It was a pretty rotten thing to do, sending that miserable little launch instead of a coastguard boat,” remarked Derek.

The captain growled. “It was. I suppose it was some one’s way of paying me out for something, unless,” he paused and looked curiously at the

Englishman, "unless it was meant as a hit at you."

Derek flushed quickly. "Oh, I say, I hope not. I should hate to think you have had to go short on my account."

"That's all right," the captain laughed. "I learnt as a small boy what it was not to have enough to eat, and I've had to practise it, off and on, ever since. Besides, I knew before we left Calbayog that they had got you marked, and that I should not earn Furber's love by taking you; but then, you see, I'm leaving in a couple of months and going into the Chinese service, where, at least, I shall be reckoned a soldier, and not called a policeman and set to do soldier's work." His voice suddenly grew very bitter, but he checked himself abruptly, and then, after a moment's pause, went on in his usual drawl: "The men have got nothing to-night except boiled bats and rice; and I can see ourselves back on the same diet to-morrow."

Derek made a wry face. The great fruit-bat of the islands, a full three feet across the wings, is not an attractive thing in life, whilst its grayish-white, leathery flesh needs actual starvation to make it even eatable. The captain noticed the Englishman's expression and laughed; then: "I don't think we'll go on to-morrow," he continued. "The men are deadly tired, and they will be practically without shelter in this rain to-night, poor little devils! That reminds me—I should have a pair of dry breeches somewhere. I think I'll try and crawl

into them, though it's not so easy to change under a four-foot-high roof with a pool of mud for a floor. Didn't you get your things dried last night?"

Derek shook his head. "They're not dry now, as Emilio dropped the basket into that last river we waded. No, no, I won't take yours. I've got a dry jacket on and I'm quite warm. So you will stay here to-morrow?"

The captain nodded. "Yes. We might get some fish in those pools at low-water, and some clams in the mud, and even a bird or two—you know, those big-billed brutes. Besides, I've got an idea there are tao in the jungle, and it's just possible if we caught a youngster or a woman we might get some information. I would give a lot to find a pulajan cuartel and have a real fight. We are doing no earthly good like this. The pulajanes don't mind our tramping about the wilderness they've made, when they can avoid us or attack us just as the fit takes them. We might go on to the Day of Judgment, and we shouldn't put down the insurrection with this handful of constabulary. I believe the only reason Papa Pablo doesn't wipe us all out is because he's afraid of going too far and bringing the army down on himself."

"If you want a good fight, there's always this mysterious camp they call Maslog to attack," suggested Derek.

Cochrane smiled. "No, thanks! In the first place, I'm not at all sure where it is, and, secondly, there are four or five hundred bolomen always there;

whilst, as it's their main storehouse, it's pretty sure to be stockaded. No, sir, when we go to Maslog, we want a couple of companies of American infantry to back us up."

"And get there to find the place evacuated?"

The captain sighed a little wearily. "Yes, that's so. Oh, I'm getting so sick of it all! I wouldn't mind if it was any good, but this infernal business—Well, let's have our grub, such as it is."

As soon as supper, which consisted of boiled rice, half-dried carabao meat and sugarless coffee, was over, Cochrane unrolled his blanket.

"I'm going to turn in," he announced. "I mean to have a long night's sleep, for once. They can't rush us, and they can't bolo our sentries, who are both sitting on top of the wall, so I'm going to pretend to myself that I'm not stiff and hungry, and that my blanket isn't wet, and that my mattress isn't a layer of mud, and that there's no one waiting to cut off my head if I go fifty yards from the camp—in short, I'm going to try and bluff that I'm not in Lamu."

Derek laughed as he rolled himself up in his rug and lay down by the American's side, striving to keep the whole of his long frame under the shelter of the roof. "I shall sleep, whether I imagine things or no," he said. "Ah, there they go," as an alarm-horn brayed out from the jungle a stone's throw away. "I suppose he will keep that up all night now. If I wasn't so tired, I would crawl out and see if I could get him."

“Let them blow,” growled the captain. “They can’t get in here. . . . Sergeant of the guard, tell your sentries not to trouble about that boudjon-blower. It’s not worth while disturbing the whole party for the sake of killing him, or, rather, of trying to kill him; for, if he did happen to show himself, they would be sure to miss. Good-night, Mr. North. Oh, by the way, I forgot the wreck. I wonder if we could find a canoe and paddle off to her in the morning. There is just a possibility of discovering some stores on board.”

“What wreck?” asked Derek.

“Why, the *Palapog*, the coastguard boat old Pete Jansen piled up. She lies about a mile out from the westerly point of this bay.”

## CHAPTER XIV

MORNING broke fair and cloudless over San Ramon bay, the rain having ceased soon after midnight.

“What a blessed relief!” said Cochrane, as he looked out from underneath the shelter. “It will give the men a chance to dry all their kit. As soon as we have had some coffee, we’ll take twenty of them and see what we can find. . . . I notice Emilio has two nice bat’s legs for our breakfast. Are you having one?”

Derek shook his head. “No! I’ll wait on the chance of something else turning up. The coffee will do me for the present.”

“Could you eat some ham and eggs or a nice trout, or—or—” began the captain, but the Englishman cut him short.

“Don’t be a brute. I was just trying to persuade myself I wasn’t hungry, and now you’ve spoilt it all.”

A couple of hours later, the two white men were standing at the end of the low point which formed the western arm of San Ramon bay. A mile away, separated from them by a stretch of broken water, lay the white hull of the coastguard boat, almost high and dry on the reef, resting on a practically even keel.

“We couldn’t reach her, even if we had canoes,”

sighed the captain. "You don't realize how strong the monsoon is blowing until you get out of the lee of the headland. It's low-water now, to be sure, but it would be almost as dangerous at high-tide. She is safe enough, of course. The reef itself protects her; though how the devil she came to be inside it—" He shrugged his shoulders and turned to a corporal who had just hurried up from the beach. "Well, corporal, what is it?"

The man saluted stiffly. "A white man, señor, in a little hut hidden amongst the bushes. I found him in chasing an iguana."

"Is he alive?" the question came sharply.

"No, señor, and there are more dead besides, two pulajanes, and—and one other. . . . This way, señor, round the banana clump; but be careful, it is not—nice."

Derek, who was following closely, gave a low whistle. "Phew! I shouldn't think it was nice.—Oh, good heavens! How ghastly!"

The corporal's "hut" was the roughest affair, a few broken boughs with palm leaves twisted into them, forming a kind of arched shelter, obviously the work of some one in a hurry, or of some one who had not expected to remain long. In front of it, lying close together in some short grass, were the remains of what had once been two pulajanes, the red-crosses still showing on their hideously discolored tunics; inside, was another heap which had also been a native, though his blue jean shirt and broad-brimmed hat were both innocent of Papa Pa-

blo's symbol. But it was not the sight of these that made Derek and Cochrane halt abruptly and stare in horror; it was the squatting figure of a huge white man, propped up against the tree-trunk which formed the main support of the shelter, a figure clad in once-white duck, with a heavy revolver still grasped in its hand.

Cochrane clutched his companion's arm almost nervously. "Do you know who it is—who it was?" he whispered.

Derek unconsciously wetted his lips before answering. "Yes. It must have been Pete Jansen. What—what are you going to do?"

Cochrane puffed fiercely at his cigar stump, inhaled a huge mouthful of smoke, tossed away the weed, then, with set teeth, stepped over the pulajanes, and hurriedly searched the dead man's clothing, transferring the contents of the pockets to his own. That task finished, he unbuckled the cartridge-belt from the waist, and tossed it outside, then, taking the revolver by the muzzle, wrenched it out of the hand which held it and threw it after the belt. One glance round the hut served to show that there was nothing more in it, except a few empty meat tins, a bag of mud-sodden biscuits, and that jean-clad body, which was lying face downwards, close beside the *Palapog's* skipper. Cochrane looked at it curiously, and tried to move it with the butt of his shot-gun, then, finding that impossible, called to the corporal, "Corporal, come here with that other man and turn this over. I have had enough. Bring

anything you find outside.—Give me a cigar, quick, Mr. North. Let's get a bit farther away."

A minute later, the corporal came up, saluted, and handed his commander a much-rusted, though richly ornamented, bolo and a couple more revolvers.

"The bolo is from the man inside, señor," he explained; "the revolvers were in the grass beside the pulajanes."

Cochrane glanced at the pistols, nodded to himself, then examined the bolo carefully.

"That belonged to an important man," he remarked. "No common tao would have had such a weapon. All right, corporal. Take care of the revolvers, and get them cleaned to-night. What are you going to do with the bolo?"

The man laughed softly, and buckled the great knife on to his own belt. "I will clean that, too, señor, and sharpen it. The man who forged it intended it to kill pulajanes."

"What do you mean?" asked Cochrane sharply.

"Nothing, señor, except that it was made by Enrique de la Cruz's own smith. I know his marks well."

"What do you make of it all? Can you read the story?" asked Derek, as they walked back to where they had left the other men.

"No, I don't think I can," answered the captain slowly. "No. I can see that they were two against two, and that Pete died last. Probably the pulajanes got their revolvers, which were Government ones, off two of the *Palapog's* men; but how Pete

came to be separated from the rest of his men, and to be living there with that native, is more than I can understand. How long do you think they have been dead?"

Derek thought a moment. "Three weeks," he suggested. Cochrane nodded. "No more, and the *Palapog* was wrecked almost three months ago. Well, these papers may tell us something. There are a few letters and a long thin package. We'll dry them to-night, and then go through them. . . . Now, I think we had better go on a bit farther to where the next village, San Polycarpio, used to be. We might find tao, or, better still, a carabao there. Even after what we've seen, I'm still ravenously hungry. Anywhere else it would make you sick, but here I suppose we're so used to horrors—" he broke off abruptly, and fell to trying the action of his Winchester shot-gun whilst the men finished eating some cocoanuts they had gathered; then, with a curt word of command, he started off at their head along a path which led to the next bay.

San Polycarpio stood—or rather had stood, for the pulajanes had dealt with it as they had dealt with San Ramon—on the shore of a long arm of the sea, which ran inland for some ten miles, the greater part of the length being visible from the rise behind the burned court-house.

"We'll stay quiet a bit amongst those bananas," said Cochrane, after a glance round had shown that the place was swept bare. "There's not much chance of being rushed ourselves, and we might see some

tao paddling about. I haven't heard a boudjon since the one they sounded when we left, and I very much doubt if they have many look-outs up this point. There's no reason for them."

The men gladly obeyed the order to lie down, whilst Cochrane and Derek crawled forward to a clump of grass, whence they could get an uninterrupted view. For an hour they sat and smoked, then suddenly the Englishman gripped his companion's arm. "Look there," he said, "there, on that patch of sand.—Oh, for a Maxim!"

Cochrane glanced in the direction indicated, and then swore savagely. Opposite them, but a bare half-mile away, in actual distance, yet a full day's tramp for any one without a canoe, the head of a column of white-clad men was just coming out of a palm grove on to a long stretch of open beach. In front, was a standard-bearer with the red pulajan flag, whilst through their glasses the watchers in San Polycarpio could see that every man bore the abominable red cross on both breast and hat. They had evidently come round the lower end of the inlet, probably from the country at the back of San Ramon, and were making towards the westward.

Cochrane groaned. "Oh, if I only had rifles which would reach them and cartridges to spare, or, better still, if I could meet them fairly in the open. . . . What a crowd! Still they come. . . . Yes, and there are more yet. . . . Ah, there's the end. Three hundred at least, and, by their uniforms, one of the picked bands, perhaps part of the Maslog lot. Oh,

the infernal luck!" and he jumped up with an oath, intending to order the men to fall in for the return to San Ramon; but before he could speak again there was a sharp challenge from the sentry, followed immediately by the crack of his rifle, and a little blue-shirted man, who, all unconscious of the presence of the constabulary, had been toiling up the other slope of rise with a big basket strapped on his back, threw up his hands suddenly, then collapsed into an inert heap across his load. At the same time, two or three more heavily-laden figures dashed for the cover of some long grass, followed by a volley from the now awakened soldiers.

Derek, who had scrambled to his feet at the first alarm, shot-gun in hand, uncocked his weapon again as he saw the last man disappear into the bush.

"That's soon over," he said.

Cochrane nodded, and strode forward to where the blue-shirted man lay, quite still.

"Stone-dead," he muttered, touching the body with the butt of his gun. "A good shot that;" then, as he wrenched open the dead man's basket, his face brightened suddenly. "Clams!" he exclaimed almost boyishly. "Clams! what luck! And there will be more food in those other baskets. But we mustn't get these spoilt by his blood soaking into them," and he bent down and pulled away the load. "Corporal, what have you got there? Sweet potatoes, and more clams and fish? Good. Get a fire lighted, quick. We'll have something to eat at last, Mr. North."

Derek, who was standing by, gave a laugh which

was almost like a sob. "It's a bit ghastly," he said.

The captain looked at him in surprise. "I'm hungry," he answered simply.

"We have found a wounded one, a muchacho. He is there at the foot of the palm." It was the sergeant who spoke.

Cochrane and Derek walked over to where the boy lay, wild-eyed and panting, a bullet through his hip.

The captain looked at him gloomily, with a sudden revulsion of feeling. "They were only tao, after all. The men shouldn't have fired; but still, here every one is an enemy, and we're far too weak to take any risks."

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Derek, who had knelt down and was trying to stop the flow of blood with his handkerchief.

The sergeant heard the question, and drew near with a bolo in his hand, awaiting orders. The boy noticed the motion, gave a scornful little smile, and closed his eyes. Derek looked up quickly. "No, no, Cochrane," he said; "not that. He's not a pulajan. Give him a chance. His people may come for him when we've gone. I'll tie him up."

Cochrane nodded and turned away. "Yes, do," he said huskily. "I'll get the grub cooked. I—I'm sorry. Sergeant, see if you can get any information out of him, as soon as Mr. North has finished."

When Derek rejoined the others, he found a huge fire blazing on the beach and some roast sweet pota-

toes just ready. Cochrane silently handed him a couple of the roots, which he ate ravenously.

“Heavens, I didn’t know I was so hungry!” he said as he finished them. “It seems days since we had anything eatable.”

“It is,” answered the captain grimly. “Unless you call moldy rice and stinking carabao flesh eatable?”

The clams were boiled in a couple of pots which the men had discovered amongst the ruins, and the rest of the potatoes baked in the embers; then, when there was nothing left, save the fish, which Cochrane reserved for the use of several sick whom he had at San Ramon, the sergeant came up to make his report.

“They were tao belonging to the place, señor. The pulajanes killed some of the people and drove others into the hills to plant crops for them; but the muchacho thinks that most escaped into the jungle. How many are left now he does not know, for each family hides by itself; but, of his house, the pulajanes carried off his two sisters, his mother and her baby died from the rain and the hunger, and now we have killed his father. He says they are all very, very hungry, and that they dare not stay more than a day or two in one place, for fear of making tracks by which they might be traced. To-day, they had come down to try and get some food, thinking it was safe, as they knew there were no pulajanes about.” The recital was made in the most matter-of-fact manner, as though such things were but to be expected in Lamu.

Cochrane dismissed the sergeant, and sat for a while staring at the dying fire; then, with a sigh, he got up and walked over to where the blue-shirted man lay.

“It’s not my fault,” he muttered. “Lord God, you know it’s not my fault;” then he stooped down and reverently covered the face with his own handkerchief. “Damn them!” he went on fiercely, turning to Derek, who had just joined him. “Damn the politicians! This is their work, and theirs alone. They allowed all this to begin, they allow it to go on, for the sake of votes, so that they may continue to collar the spoils of office. It’s their fault if we becomes brutes from the hunger and the mud and the rest of it. Damn them!” He strode up and down for a moment, then: “How’s your patient?” he demanded.

“He has gone,” answered Derek.

The captain looked at him blankly. “Gone?”

Derek nodded. “Yes. Apparently they came down and carried him off whilst we were feeding.”

Cochrane bit his mustache. “It shows what good our sentries are, how these little devils can crawl down on us if they like. Still, I am glad of it in this case. Now I think we’ll go back to San Ramon.”

The return journey did not take long, for the food had given the men new strength, whilst they knew that, not only would there be dry clothes awaiting them, but that the sergeant who had been left in charge would certainly have fixed up some sort of shelter for the night. Moreover, they had found

a packet of cigarettes on the dead man and another in one of the baskets, and these alone were enough to give them fresh heart, and to make them chatter gaily as they stumbled through the mud. Cochrane, however, stalked ahead in silence, barely uttering a word until they breasted the last rise and came in view of San Ramon bay, when he halted abruptly and turned to Derek, who was a few yards behind. "Here's a coastguard at last," he said.

The little vessel was anchored but a few hundred yards from the shore, and as Derek and Cochrane came out of the palm grove on to the beach, one of the boats was lowered away and headed towards them.

"I shall go off at once. Are you coming?" asked the captain.

Derek assented readily, and, ten minutes later, they were clambering up the side of the vessel, where, besides the skipper, a yellow-faced little man in the uniform of a major of constabulary was awaiting them. The stranger, whom Cochrane introduced as "Major Dale, our inspector-general," shook hands with the captain, but only vouchsafed the Englishman a curt nod and a rude stare; then: "Come into the saloon, Captain Cochrane," he said, in a thin, squeaky voice; "I want to speak to you."

Derek flushed slightly and turned to the skipper, who was an old acquaintance, and who immediately carried him off to his own cabin to have a drink and a smoke.

"Rude little beggar that," the sailor remarked, as he fetched out the whisky bottle.

Derek settled down into a big chair with a peculiar satisfaction, due perhaps to the sudden sense of security, the feeling that, for the moment at least, the pulajanes and the mud and the rain were things of the past, that there was at hand enough food for to-day and to-morrow and many days after to-morrow.

The skipper, a keen-faced Yankee, seemed to read some of his thoughts, for he laughed as he pushed over the cigar-box.

“Have you had enough of Lamu, Mr. North? I guess it has been a rough time since the launch left you, and, even before that, it was not all pure joy, judging by those articles of yours I saw in the *Manila Herald*.” He lowered his voice suddenly: “Have you any more to send? If so, I’ll take them along myself. Don’t trust the post. I know they won’t arrive if you do.”

Derek gave him a quick look of comprehension. “I see. Thanks very much. I suppose you’ll be staying here till the morning, and I’ll give you a pile then.—By the way, have you any letters for me?”

The skipper swung round in his chair and opened his desk. “Here’s a big one Miss Westley gave me. Well, I’ve got several things to see to. Make yourself at home, won’t you? You’ll stay to dinner. Dale don’t want you about, I know, for he’s one of Furber’s men, but I’m boss on my own boat. So long! Help yourself.”

Derek opened his letter carefully. It was the first he had ever received from Clare, and he felt,

almost unconsciously, that he would like to keep all of it, even the envelope. The greater part of the contents proved, however, to be a couple of letters from Soley, evidently forwarded under cover to Robert Westley, though there was also a note in Clare's firm, distinct hand.

"Father has asked me to write to you," Clare wrote, "because he is very busy himself, and the coastguard is just going. Mr. Soley sent these letters addressed to us, because he is afraid of trusting the post. I hope you will get them soon, although Captain Soames says they cannot be sure of meeting you, as, like everything else in the constabulary, it is all left to chance. We were so glad to hear from you by that horrid little launch, though the skipper said that he was told to take no stores for you, and that you were already short. I am sure it was done on purpose. There is not much news here, except that the Commission has got our thirty soldiers taken away, or at least most of them, only Mr. Rayne and six men being left, although the major is still here. The Government still denies there is any revolt, only a little brigandage, and they are perfectly furious with you and Mr. Soley for showing them up. We hear the pulajanes have burnt everything in the north and east and that they are now pushing south, leaving only the Calbayog side. We have had no word from Enrique, only—would you believe it?—two tao have come in with forged sticks—I mean broken sticks that don't fit—to try and get the money from father. So some one

else knows about it. I think it is delightfully exciting, though father seems very worried about it all.

“The governor is more like a toad than ever, and, they say, more in favor in Manila. I wish I could stop him speaking to me. I hope you are not having too dreadful a time. I am sure you will never find out anything about Papa Pablo, and I wish very much you would give it up and go on with your book. There is one thing I nearly forgot, which I heard from my maid. There is rumor that a strange native, not a Lamu man at all, said in the canteen that he knew where there were a tremendous lot of guns hidden, a whole cargo; but he disappeared that night, and every one is afraid to speak about it now. I wonder if you have heard of it?”

Derek put the letter down and stared out through the open door. “A cargo of guns,” he muttered. “I wonder what mischief Wilson did—we did—then. Still, I can’t think it’s the same lot, after all this time. They would have been in use long ago. I wish it hadn’t happened, though.” He sighed, lit a fresh cigar, then proceeded to read Soley’s letters.

The editor of the *Herald* could tell him little more than could Clare. The official lies about Lamu were still upheld, and Soley, his paper, and Derek, had come in for a torrent of abuse from the Government journals. One or two of the opposition leaders in the States had taken up the question; but the fact that the commissioners could declare truthfully that they were employing no Regular troops had done much towards restoring confidence; and it was

tolerably certain that at the presidential election, which was coming on in a few days, men would go to the polling booths believing that all was peaceful in the Philippines, that the official policy had been an unqualified success.

But although the commissioners had triumphed so far, Soley did not intend to abandon the fight. He was on the track of some new information concerning Papa Pablo; and was now much more hopeful of solving the mystemy.

"Meanwhile, look out for yourself," he wrote. "You know the pulajanes have got you marked, and that the Commission wouldn't weep if you were boload. If you are still with the constabulary, leave them as soon as you can and go back to Calbayog. I think the main threads of the conspiracy are to be picked up there, not in the field. Besides, I don't want you to come to harm over this. When I hear you are in Calbayog, I will send McCullogh, my sub, down to tell you what I suspect; but I dare not write it just now, too many letters are being opened."

Derek folded up the letter and put it in his pocket, then he read Clare's letter again, and after that he sat a full hour, smoking quietly, gazing out through the open cabin door towards the reef, where he could see the wreck of the *Palapog* lying in apparently calm water, with a line of huge breakers lashing themselves into fury on the outer edge of the coral a hundred yards beyond her.

"I wonder," he muttered to himself at last, "I wonder what Pete Jansen could have told us?"

Then he got up and went on deck to look for the skipper, and, under the guise of obtaining general Calbayog gossip, learn the latest news concerning Clare Westley.

Meanwhile Cochrane, with a red flush on his lean face, was listening impatiently to the squeaky voice of his superior officer.

“I tell you we have absolutely reliable information, both from Commissioner Furber and Governor Anũgar, that this Pablo is merely an ignorant old ladrone, and that there are only three hundred pulajanes in all,” the major was saying.

The captain’s eyes flashed. “And I tell you, sir, that the whole thing is splendidly organized, that Papa Pablo is probably some native you can meet every day in Manila or Hong-Kong, and that there are a full two thousand pulajan bolomen, and five thousand, ten thousand—the devil only knows how many thousand—boudjon-blowers and lookout men. I saw three hundred uniformed bolomen myself but four hours ago.”

The major laughed. “My dear captain, I’m afraid your friend, Mr. North, has infected you with his imagination. You can’t have seen that number, as we know where all the three hundred are—a hundred at Maslog, with whom you must deal; fifty in the Catarman district; fifty at San José de Buan; and the rest in little wandering bands. I have just landed Lieutenant Hoyt and forty-six men at Dolores to drive out a small band there.”

Cochrane jumped up with an oath of astonish-

ment. "At Dolores, sir? That's where the crowd I saw to-day must have been going. Take my men on board, sir, and steam round there at once. We shall be in time. Hoyt is only a boy, and his men are absolutely raw, but between us we could drive them off. They won't attack before dawn; but if we delay, they will wipe out Hoyt and his whole lot, and get their guns and all. Shall I go and get my men, right away? You must do it, sir, you must." His voice was almost painful in its earnestness.

It was the major's turn to flush. "You forget yourself," he snarled. "I am your superior officer, and it is for me to decide. I tell you there are only three hundred pulajanes in all—both the commissioner and the governor say so. Lieutenant Hoyt will be quite capable of dealing with the handful at Dolores. . . . Now, as to your orders—you will march from here to Oras, where you will find Lieutenant Coote with eighty Scouts. You will join forces with him, and proceed in canoes up the Tubig River to the burnt village of Concepcion. There you will disembark and march two miles to the camp of Maslog, which you will destroy, with any stores you find in it. Then you will return to Oras, where I will meet you in ten days' time."

Cochrane crammed on his hat and saluted. "Very well, sir. I presume you will give me those orders in writing?"

"Why?" demanded the major.

"Because I want some justification for throwing away my men's lives. We can't take Maslog with

that force. I know Coote's Scouts won't face the pulajanes, and my own command is much too small."

The major gave an ugly sneering laugh. "You mean you are afraid?" he suggested.

Cochrane's face grew livid, and for a moment he seemed about to choke, then he saluted again. "I will march to Oras at dawn," he said in a very low voice, "and I will go with the Scouts to Maslog, according to your orders. If I get through, I will see you at Oras in ten days' time—and I hope to see you once again after that, in two months, when my resignation has taken effect."

The major laughed again, this time rather feebly. "Don't be foolish, Cochrane," he said, with an attempt at affability; "I was only joking. You have got this totally wrong idea of the pulajan strength in your head, and it ruins your judgment."

But Cochrane did not laugh; he merely turned on his heel and left the cabin.

That night Cochrane and Derek dined with the skipper in the latter's cabin. "We won't go down to the saloon," remarked the sailor. "The little beast was rude to Mr. North this afternoon, and I can see he has been rubbing you up the wrong way, Cochrane. Still, you can both console yourselves with a good dinner. We do nothing but potter in and out of Calbayog, so I've always got fresh meat. Do you know, Dale hasn't been ashore in one of these burned towns yet. He fancies there's a boloman waiting for him behind every bush."

“One of the three hundred,” suggested Cochrane grimly.

The skipper laughed. “So you have had that? I thought so. It’s a regular parrot cry with them all. Furber and Anūgar started it. Young Hoyt had it drummed into him till he believed it absolutely.”

Cochrane had his glass raised to his lips, but he put it down quickly, as though its contents had suddenly become distasteful. “If that is so, Hoyt will be killed about dawn to-morrow,” he said very quietly; and then, in answer to their exclamations of surprise, he told them of what had passed on the matter between Major Dale and himself, appealing to Derek for confirmation as to the number of bolomen they had seen from San Polycarpio.

The skipper poured himself out a glass of whisky, and gulped it down neat. “My God!” he growled; “that poor little girl! Hoyt was only married two months ago. She came to see him off in Manila when I brought her husband and this mean little skunk away. So Dale will do nothing?”

Cochrane shook his head. “Nothing, except practically call me a liar and a coward.”

“So you think they will wipe him out?” continued the sailor. “Why haven’t they done it to you?”

“Because I have nearly twice as many men, all of whom are seasoned, and five years’ experience of bolomen has taught me how to meet them. It would cost them too much; but in Hoyt’s case they will get forty or fifty rifles very easily, for his soldiers

are just coast tao from Luzon, who enlisted because they thought they were merely going to do police duty round Manila. The first rush will scatter them. I can see it all—somewhere about the time your boy will be bringing you your morning coffee, Soames.” He picked up a cigar, bit off the end savagely, and began to smoke.

After a while: “What is the next move?” Derek asked.

The captain gave a short laugh. “I myself am going to march at dawn for Oras, and I’m going to leave you here for Soames to take back to Calbayog.”

Derek looked at him in quick surprise. “What do you mean?” he asked, a shade of anger in his voice.

Cochrane laid his hand on the Englishman’s arm. “I didn’t mean to offend you, old man,” he said, “but I’m sure you will never solve the Pablo mystery this way; and I’m sure, too, you’ve had more than enough of constabulary campaigning. Besides, it’s no use your chucking away your life by going with me on this next fool’s errand.”

“What is that?” demanded Derek.

“Maslog,” answered the captain curtly; then, after a pause: “We are to take Maslog with my eighty leg-weary, half-starved constabulary and eighty of the poorest Scouts in the islands.”

“Do you expect to do it?” asked the skipper.

“We’ve got to try,” answered Cochrane grimly.

Derek said nothing, but sat very still, watching the smoke curling up from a cigar-stump in the ash-tray. He had intended to return to Calbayog,

as both Clare and Soley had urged. He was sick of the jungle, sick of the constant risk of having Death stalking at his elbow by day, and sitting beside his blankets at night. He was tired of it all. It was not his nation's quarrel, not even the just quarrel of another nation, not a war at all, but merely a mutual butchery, futile, debasing, abominable.

He had already told the skipper he was going, and had been waiting for a chance to tell Cochrane. No one could suspect his courage if he drew back from the Maslog expedition. He knew he had done enough to vindicate his own reputation, his nation's honor, all Clare had wished him to do. Yes, he would go to Calbayog with Soames. He looked up suddenly, saw Cochrane's eyes fixed on him with a kind of wistful anxiety, and his resolution wavered. "You will have no other white man, no lieutenant?" he asked.

The captain shook his head. "Only Coote and his lieutenant, who are about as useful as the men."

"Then I shall go with you."

"You're a damned fool!" growled Cochrane, but as he said it he held out his hand and took the Englishman's fingers in a grasp of iron.

The skipper turned away, and called rather loudly for the steward to bring a fresh bottle of whisky.

Later that evening, as they sat in the ruined church, Derek finishing off an article for Soley, Cochrane checking the list of stores he had drawn,

the American suddenly put down his note-book with an exclamation of annoyance.

“We have forgotten to dry poor old Pete’s papers. Still, we may be able to do it now. Emilio, bring that blue shirt of mine. They’re in the pocket.”

Derek nodded, and went on with his writing, until a low whistle from the American made him look up.

“Well, I’m damned!” said Cochrane. “Here’s a queer thing to wrap up so carefully and carry in your inside pocket—just a broken piece of bamboo with a jagged end.”

Derek held out his hand eagerly. “Let me see it.” Then, after he had examined it, he looked at Cochrane with a curious expression. “You don’t know, of course, all that means. It’s not my secret; but still, I can’t ask you to let me have it without an explanation. That jagged stick represents twenty thousand pesos,” and he told him the story of Enrique’s treasure.

When he had finished, Cochrane heaved a deep sigh. “It’s a big temptation for a man who has always been broke, isn’t it? Still, the money wasn’t meant for me any more than, I expect, it was meant for old Pete. Better send it back to Westley, Mr. North, or—wait a moment—send it to Miss Clare. It’ll just delight her. Lucky, I mentioned nothing about it to Dale. He can have the letters, which don’t amount to anything; but the stick shall go to Calbayog.”

And so, when the coastguard steamed out on the following morning, the skipper not only had a packet of manuscript for Soley, but he also had a long, thin

parcel which he had promised to deliver into Miss Westley's own hands.

On the rise above San Ramon, Captain Cochrane paused a moment to glance back at the departing vessel.

“There goes the only chance I ever had of possessing a bank balance,” he drawled. “Oh, well, it didn't bring Pete much luck, and I expect the old sinner killed the man he took it from, so perhaps we're well rid of it. And now we'll strike out for Oras, Maslog, and a muddy sort of glory.”

## CHAPTER XV

THE sun was already setting when Cochrane's force filed out of the jungle on to the beach just below Oras. The march had been a long and weary one, unmarked by any special incident, though at every stage boudjons had boomed out with maddening regularity.

"Oras was a big place of some ten thousand people," remarked the captain. "You will see in a moment how much of it the pulajanes left. That's Coote's camp, in the old court-house.—Halt!—Lend me your glasses, Mr. North. We must go carefully, or they may shoot at us. There are a lot of them round the gateway, playing cards or something, but I don't see a sentry. Ah, there he is, on that bit of a platform—with a chair to sit on! He's smoking, too, I think, and hasn't seen us yet.—Now he has.—Bugler.—Lie down, men, lie down," he shouted suddenly, as a bullet whistled overhead. "They are all scurrying in. We shall have a volley next, before we know where we are. I'll flag them," and he jumped on to a small mound, waving his handkerchief vigorously, just as a ragged volley squibbed out from the building. Fortunately, however, the shooting was very wild, and a moment later the "Cease fire" on a bugle showed that his signal had been seen. He turned to Derek with a wry smile.

“It’s a good beginning. They are fairly rattled already. We shall have a lively trip. Neither Coote nor I can command the other, as we belong to entirely different services, and, even if we don’t squabble, our soldiers will do so all the time;” then he ordered the men to fall in again, and strode at their head towards the Scouts’ quarters.

Three white men came forward to meet them, two in regulation field kit, the other, a short, powerfully-built youngster, in a white canvas shirt and corduroy breeches, with bare legs showing where the gaiters should have been.

Cochrane ran his eye over them. “That’s Coote, with the Browning pistol and the absurd bolo; the little man’s Blenkarn, his lieutenant; whilst the last one,” his face lighted up into one of his rare smiles, “the last one is the Boy, an Englishman who was with me in Leyte. He’s in most of these scraps, just for the sport of the thing.”

The greeting between Cochrane and the Scout officers was a little strained. “I’m sorry we fired at you,” said Coote; “but one cannot be too careful.”

Cochrane raised his eyebrows. “No, one can hardly be careful enough,” he answered dryly, then turned and shook hands heartily with the youngster. “I didn’t expect you here. All right?” he asked.

The Boy laughed. “All right. I say, don’t think I was one of those who fired. I shouted to them that I was sure it was your outfit.”

The captain nodded. “I knew you didn’t fire, be-

cause none of the shots went within ten yards of me. Here's a fellow-countryman of yours—Mr. North."

The Boy held out a strong, brown hand. "I've heard of you," he said. "Come and have a drink. Here, in the mess," leading the way to a small tent pitched just within the gate of the court building, of which latter, as Derek now saw, only the outer walls remained, though some twelve feet up was a rough platform from which the guard had fired. "Cochrane will have to go and gas with Coote, I suppose. . . . We've got old Kentucky rye and Scotch. Which'll you have? Scotch, I suppose. . . . It's a long trek from San Ramon, isn't it? I came round with this crowd ten days ago, to watch them pacify Oras."

Derek glanced out through the gateway. "It looks as if the pulajanes had done that fairly effectively already."

"They have," answered the other. "We only discovered a hamstringed horse and two hideously wounded girls, slashed in a ghastly way—how they survived, why they survived, God only knows. The presidente crawled in after dark, however, and went off to see Dale on the coastguard. It was through what he told him about Maslog that we are going up there now. Dale was quite taken with him."

Derek gave him a quick glance. "You yourself don't seem enthusiastic."

The Boy shrugged his shoulders. "I've known a few native officials," he laughed softly, as if at some recollection. "Ask Cochrane about the teniente he

hanged in Leyte. . . . This is the first time you've seen Scouts? You won't like them after Cochrane's lot."

"What is the difference between them, except that the Scouts are better dressed and fed?" asked Derek.

"That is just the difference," answered the Boy. "They are too well dressed, too well paid and fed. You see, nominally, they are part of the army and are rationed and clothed like white troops, regular brown brother style, with the natural result that they imitate Jeshurun, waxing fat and kicking. Some companies, where the officers do the kicking, are all right; but when you get a man like Coote, who is an awful good chap in himself but knows nothing of niggers, and who coddles them and pampers them and flatters them, it's a hopeless business. They're lazy, and they're insubordinate, and they're cowardly—you'll see for yourself when we get near Maslog. They've got cots and mosquito nets and boat-loads of gear, yet, a few months ago, they were ragged tao, with their shirts outside their trousers."

Derek smiled. "What's the idea of the two forces?"

"Graft. They're a sickening lot of bounders, aren't they?—Oh, I say, we put into Calbayog coming round, and I dined at the Westleys'. Miss Westley told me you were a great friend of theirs. She's ripping, isn't she?"

Meanwhile Cochrane was discussing the plans for the expedition with the Scout officer.

"Most of these rivers are tidal for thirty miles, so

we ought to get up the Tubig to Concepcion on one tide," said the captain. "It will be right for us just before sundown to-morrow. You have the canoes ready, I suppose?"

"Yes," answered Coote; "but I don't think I could start till the following day. There's all the packing up to do, and I promised the men they should wash their clothes to-morrow."

Cochrane fidgeted impatiently with his revolver holster. "You can't take all this gear along," he said scornfully. "And I guess your men will be lucky enough to get through in the clothes they have, without wanting a change."

The Scout looked at him hopelessly. "But they will insist on a certain amount of baggage, and if I leave it behind, the pulajanes may come in and get it."

"Then burn it," rejoined the captain grimly. "It will only be a nuisance to you all along."

Coote flushed angrily. "You know I can't do that. No, I shall leave Blenkarn and half the men here and take the other half."

Cochrane shrugged his shoulders. "As you like," he said indifferently. "Well, then—the evening of the day after to-morrow. Only remember, every hour makes our job harder, gives them more time to prepare."

"How are they to know we are going?" retorted the other. "And if you are in such a hurry, why wait till the evening? Why not go on the morning tide that day?"

Cochrane laughed harshly. "Because I'm not particularly anxious to offer myself as a target if I can help it."

"The presidente says there are only half a dozen guns amongst the whole Maslog outfit," replied Coote.

The captain laughed again, not a pleasant laugh, and seemed about to make a bitter reply, but checked himself; then, after a moment's pause: "You are sure the river is clear; that there are no shoals or anything?" he asked quietly.

The Scout nodded. "The presidente says we could go up at dead low-water."

Cochrane got up from his seat. "All right. If you can't go to-morrow, I suppose I must wait. I'll see about getting my chaps fixed up. They are only policemen, you see, not soldiers, so they haven't got much kit."

Under the circumstances, dinner promised to be rather an uncomfortable meal, but somehow the Boy's influence seemed to smooth over most of the difficulties. His high spirits and ever-ready laugh were wonderfully infectious, and, when he set himself to reconcile Cochrane and the Scout, he quickly made them forget, at least for the moment, their mutual grievances.

As soon as the meal was over, Cochrane turned to the youngster: "Have you still got the banjo?"

For answer, the Boy dived into a big mess-box and produced a piccolo-banjo with a body formed of a huge cocoanut shell, tuned it with a few quick

touches, and for the next hour hardly a word was spoken, as the deft fingers picked out tune after tune, now some wailing melody of the South, then some catchy chorus the barrel-organs of London had been grinding out a few months before, and after that, again, a march which made the soldiers stiffen up and beat time with their fingers. A little group of constabulary and Scouts gathered round the entrance to the tent, listening eagerly; the pulajan outposts on the rise above the ruined towns just caught the louder notes, borne to them faintly on the evening breeze, and crept as near as they dared, perhaps only to listen themselves, perhaps because they thought they might also get a chance to knife a listening sentry. Derek, lying back in the shadow against a pile of meal bags, watched the bright young face with something almost akin to envy—it seemed so long since he himself had been that age, either in temperament or in actual fact; but with the envy was blended a curious restfulness, a feeling that, after all, there was much that was very good in the world, much that was worth striving after, a sense of satisfaction for which he vaguely tried to find a explanation, until, suddenly, it came home to him that the Boy reminded him of Clare, was, in fact, almost the male counterpart of Clare, with the same cleanness, the same wholesome optimism, the same fearless determination to do what seemed the right thing.

Derek was hardly awake on the following morning when he heard a sudden commotion amongst the

Scouts who formed the guard. Jumping up quickly, shot-gun in hand, he found that the sole cause of alarm was a tiny canoe, which had just come out from behind the headland and was being paddled in leisurely fashion towards the jetty. Cochrane and the Boy were already up, sitting on the top of the ruined wall, where Derek joined them.

“Some sort of a messenger,” said the Boy. “See his white flag? Hullo, Cochrane, you’ll be short of a brown brother if he isn’t careful; the pulajanes have spotted him,” as a boudjon growled out from the hillside, followed, a moment later, by the crack of a rifle.

Cochrane shook his head. “Look where the shot went. Fifty yards short of him. The little devil is jeering at them. See him waving his paddle? Let’s go down and meet him.”

Two or three more shots which were fired all fell wide, and a few minutes later the occupant of the canoe was standing in front of Cochrane, holding out a letter.

“From the illustrious Señor de la Cruz,” he said.

Cochrane showed no outward surprise, but merely nodded and tore open the envelope, whose sole contents were a small slip of paper which he read over twice, then handed without a word to Coote, who had just joined him; and after that he turned to where the messenger was standing, calmly puffing a cigarette.

“Where did that come from?” he asked.

“From Calbayog, señor,” answered the man.

“I know that—I mean where did the illustrious Señor Enrique get it?”

“From a pulajan runner, between Maslog and Dolores.”

Cochrane frowned. “Oh, so it had been to Maslog! And how did you chance to meet the runner?”

The man’s face grew suddenly blank. “We were down looking for some carabao the pulajanes had stolen, and the runner, being mad like all his kind, attacked us. He should rise again to-morrow, señor, according to their creed,” and he laughed softly to himself; then, without waiting for any further acknowledgment, raised his hat in salute, strolled down to his canoe, and began to paddle away.

Coote, who had been trying to decipher the note, looked up in vexation. “Oh, you should have kept him, Cochrane. We might have got some more information.”

Cochrane shrugged his shoulders. “It is all there—at least he would have told us no more. Besides, he came in under a flag of truce.”

Coote bit his lip and handed back the paper. “I can’t quite get the meaning of this. What is it?”

The captain smiled a little unkindly. “It’s dated at Calbayog six days ago, the day after that coast-guard left there, and it says that the President is re-elected.”

Coote gave a nod of satisfaction. “I win ten dollars over that,” he said.

Cochrane grunted. “Not off me. I’ve been too long away to have any politics, except killing bolo-

men. Well," he went on, "the President is re-elected, this says, and that same morning the governor-general told the commissioners that he had resigned, because he had received a message from Washington forbidding him, in any case, to send regular troops to Lamu."

Coote looked puzzled. "I don't quite understand. How did they know in Calbayog? Why was this sent on to us?"

"I should like to find out how they knew," retorted Cochrane. "Mr. North, it just strengthens my opinion that, if you want to find Papa Pablo, you ought to go and look for him in Manila, probably in the palace itself. It's obvious why it was sent us—to show us the amount of treason there is. It shows us another thing, too—that old Enrique is somewhere in the neighborhood. They must have killed that messenger not very far from San Ramon, about the time we were camped there. How lively for the tao, three forces in the field—ourselves, the pulajanes, and Enrique's ladrones."

"How will the governor-general's resignation affect things?" asked Derek.

Cochrane shook his head. "It will be bad for everything. It means the absolute triumph of the brown brother brigade. I fancy it was a pre-arranged thing to drive the old man out as soon as the election was over. They want the billet for some faithful party man."

"Why should it interest the pulajanes, Cochrane?" demanded the Boy.

“Why? Because, as Mr. North could tell you, the old man would have made short work of them at the outset, had he been allowed. But now,” and his face grew very grave, “now they know they can do just as they like, and they will attack us to wipe us out, not just to harry us. Still, I and my men are all non-voters, so I suppose we are not worth much. It is evident they are going on with the lie about Lamu. I suppose they think it the easiest policy.”

At sunset, on the following evening, Cochrane's men were all squatting on the shingle, each beside the canoe in which he was to travel; but it was an hour later before the Scouts came down to the landing-place.

“Look at their kit,” growled the captain, as he watched them stowing their baggage by the light of huge torches. “I'm surprised they don't bring their cots. How can Coote expect them to march, hung round with pots and pans and mess-kits like—like——”

“Like the White Knight in ‘Alice in Wonderland,’” suggested the Boy, who had appropriated a place in Cochrane's big dug-out. “I wonder when we are going to get away. What's on now?”

The captain growled something incoherent and walked over to the Scout officer. “Aren't you nearly ready, Coote? Remember, the tide began to flow at five-thirty, and it's six-thirty now.”

“In a few minutes,” answered the other. “I'm sorry to delay you, but the men said they would like

some coffee before they started, and I told Blenkarn to send it down."

Cochran sighed with a kind of resigned hopelessness, and went back to his own boat. "We shall miss the tide," he said. "The babes want their bottles."

The Boy, who had curled himself up on the blankets in the stern of the boat, nodded cheerfully. "There's another nice tide to-morrow," he remarked.

At last, the Scouts were ready, and with a sigh of relief Cochrane gave the word to push off.

"We are to pick up the presidente, who is going to guide us, at the first bend on the right bank, where there's a big banana patch," shouted Coote, as Cochrane's big canoe shot ahead.

"All right," answered the captain; "I'll wait there. Better keep well up. . . . Mr. North," to Derek, whom he had placed in command of three boats, "mid-stream—remember that; and try, above all things, to keep them from shooting if they are shot at. Never mind if the Scouts shoot; don't let your men do it. All we have to think about is paddling ahead."

At the banana patch, Cochrane slowed down and waited for Coote.

"Will you go and find your tame presidente?" he said.

The canoe drew in under the bank, and the Scout officer blew his whistle, gently at first, then receiving no response, louder, and finally as loudly as he could. But there was no sign of the promised guide. The minutes flew past and became a quarter of an

hour, but not a soul appeared on the bank. At first, the other canoes had drifted slowly up-stream with the tide, then they paddled backwards abreast of the banana clump, where Coote still waited, whistling at intervals. At last Cochrane lost all patience.

“It’s no good, Coote,” he exclaimed; “he has been bolloed or has run away, or something like that. We must do without him. One way or another, we have wasted nearly half the tide already, and shall have it against us for the last few miles. If we find him when we come back, we can hang him then. I expect he deserves it—most presidentes do.”

For the next three hours, the expedition paddled steadily up the river, which, from being half a mile wide at the mouth, had dwindled to a stream a bare hundred yards across, running between low banks overhung by thickly-foliaged trees. At first, the canoes, eleven in all, had kept well together; but, as soon as the tide ceased to help them, the four containing the Scouts gradually dropped astern, until Derek, happening to look back, saw that they were all out of sight round a bend. Immediately the word was passed forward to Cochrane, who ordered his men to stop paddling. Five minutes later, Coote came up alongside, awkwardly apologetic.

“I’m afraid my fellows are done, Cochrane,” he said; “they are not in training like your men. How far do you think we have come?”

“Sixteen or seventeen miles,” answered the other.

The Scout gave a little sigh of satisfaction. “Then we are about four miles from Concepcion.

What do you say to resting a couple of hours? We should land before dawn then."

Cochrane assented rather unwillingly. "I would sooner go on, of course; but if your men can't, there's nothing more to be said. We had better tie up to those trees."

The soldiers lay down as best they could in the canoes, and were quickly asleep, an example which Coote and the Boy were not long in following; but Derek drew his boat up beside Cochrane's, where he stayed for a time, smoking in silence.

At last: "No boudjons?" he remarked.

Cochrane turned quickly. "No; I expected you would notice it. Coote said it meant we were going to surprise them; but I know it means they were perfectly well aware we were coming, and so are not worrying about look-outs. Of course, their outposts at Oras saw us, probably counted us as we left, and sent off a runner."

Derek tossed an empty match-box into the stream, and watched it a moment. "The tide is slack still; but another hour and a half here and then four miles against the ebb—it will be dawn before we get there. If they are waiting for us—" he shrugged his shoulders expressively. Cochrane bent over suddenly and laid a hand on the Englishman's shoulder. "North," he said, in a low voice—"North, I've got an idea this business is going wrong; and I wish I had made you leave me at San Ramon. It's not your affair, nor is it the Boy's. I want you to be in the last canoe when we land. It's my nation's fight, and I'm paid for

it; but there's no reason why you two should get cut up in a miserable show like this."

"Thanks, Cochrane, but I am not going to be left out of the fun." It was the Boy who spoke. He had been lying on a blanket at the captain's feet, but had awakened when the other leaned over to touch Derek. "What a bit of luck it isn't raining! I say, it's jolly bad for you two to be sitting up whispering at this ghostly time of night. Do you know there's a bottle of whisky in the box behind you, Cochrane? You are a rotten host! The corkscrew's there too; I packed it myself. . . . After all, we have the best of it. Wouldn't you sooner be here with some good whisky and a good cigar, than be one of those poor bolomen who are squatting in the wet grass at Concepcion, wondering why we don't come? You ought to think of your brothers—your dear little brown brothers!—and not of yourself, Captain Cochrane," and he laughed, and tenderly wiped some moisture off his shot-gun, whilst he hummed the air of the Manila song, "He may be a brother of the governor, but he ain't no brother of mine."

Cochrane's momentary depression vanished as quickly as it had come; he laughed too, poured out the whisky, and settled himself down to listen to a dissertation on the correct treatment of all brothers whose color happened to be anything but pure white.

The tide was already running out strongly when the canoes started off again. Progress was very

slow. At the end of an hour the boats had covered a bare two miles. Cochrane swore feelingly.

“I wish we hadn’t wasted all that time at the start,” he growled to the Boy. “I wish—what the blazes is that?” as the bottom of his canoe grated heavily on some obstruction, without, however, entirely losing way. He bent down quickly and plunged his arm into the water to the shoulder, keeping it there till, with a jar, the canoe cleared herself once more. “Another half-hour and we couldn’t have done it,” he said, ruefully squeezing his dripping sleeve. “It’s one of those confounded walls they built across most of these rivers, to stop the Moro pirates who used to come looting from Mindanao.” He glanced back at the other boats. “They are all clear. Luckily, ours has the most draught. So this is the river where there are no obstructions? I shall certainly hang that presidente—if I get back.”

With each mile the speed of the canoes became slower, even the wiry little constabulary showing signs of fatigue, and Cochrane began to strain his eyes anxiously for any sign of the burned town. At last, just as the gray in the East became tinged with pink, he ordered his men to stop, and waited for the Scout officer.

“Coote,” he said, “I don’t like this at all. We have come a good four miles beyond where the place was supposed to be, and this confounded river is narrowing down all the time. It’s a bare fifty yards now. What shall we do?”

The Scout shook his head. "You know more about the game than I do. I'll leave it to you."

Cochrane nodded. "Thanks!" he answered simply. "Well, it's no use thinking we can push right through to Maslog now, even if the pulajanes would let us. I propose we stop as soon as we can see a decent spot, and let the men feed and rest. We can decide afterwards what is the best course."

Coote assented readily and the paddles were dipped again; but the boats had hardly reached the next bend before a rifle cracked out from the bank, the bullet striking the water between the two leading canoes. Instantly, the men grabbed at their carbines, but Cochrane checked them sternly. "Steady, men, steady! It's nothing! He hasn't hit!" Though he added in an undertone to the Boy: "It's coming now. That was a signal. In five minutes they will be able to see to aim."

The Boy quietly reached out for a Martini carbine, his own private property, which he had brought up in addition to his shot-gun.

"Sergeant, make that man put down his rifle." Derek's clear, level voice floated across the water. "Bend to your paddles, men. It's nothing."

The pulajan did not fire again, and for ten minutes the boats crept ahead, into an unusually straight reach; then suddenly, from both banks, the fire came—not a volley, but a rapid succession of shots from a dozen hidden riflemen, none of whom could have been forty yards from the boats. The light was still

uncertain and the shooting bad, but, out of the first discharge, two bullets buried themselves in the side of Cochrane's canoe, whilst another took Derek's steersman square in the throat. Yet the only order the captain gave was: "Stick to your paddles, men!" though he nodded to the Boy to be ready with his rifle.

Two more constabulary, both in the sixth canoe, went down, whilst one of Derek's paddles was shattered by a bullet; but still the weary, ragged little men stuck grimly to their task, although their hands were itching to pick up their carbines. Then the Scouts caught the fire, three going down within the first minute.

"They've got their range better," growled Cochrane, who was standing up in the stern of his canoe. "There's another down! Oh, come on! That's better, now!—Oh, the fools! the fools!" He broke off with an oath, as the men in the three last boats suddenly drew in their paddles, seized their rifles, and began to fire wildly at the invisible enemy.

At the first shot from his men, Coote, whose canoe was only just behind Derek's, sprang to his feet and bellowed to them to come on; but the words were barely out of his mouth before he clapped his hand to his side, and collapsed in a heap in the bottom of the dug-out.

Cochrane groaned. "Coote's down!" he cried to the Boy, who, carbine in hand, was calmly scanning the bank. "Coote's down; though, thank God, his canoe is coming on. I can't see the others for the

smoke. Where?—where? Oh, my God, they've turned tail!"

It was only too true. While the Scouts had been firing their futile volleys, the tide had swept them down well below the ambush, with the result that, to rejoin their comrades, they would have had to pass right through the fire again; and seeing this, seeing, too, that their officer had fallen, they had been seized with sudden panic, and were now heading down-stream as quickly as their paddles and the current could carry them.

The Boy did not even look around. "Is that so?" he asked. "Is that so?—Ah! there he is!" The Martini came to his shoulder like a flash, boomed out its deep report, and an instant later a white-clad body slid out of an overhanging bough and disappeared in the water.

"I thought I saw some one up there," remarked the Boy, coolly ejecting his cartridge-case and reloading. "I wonder why they wear white." Then he glanced after the retreating Scouts. "Poor old Cote! It'll break his heart. What's the next move, Cochrane?"

The shooting had now ceased, perhaps because the riflemen found it impossible to fire without exposing themselves.

Cochrane pointed up-stream. "They are not going to drive me back; but we must land and see to these wounded, although I expect the banks are swarming with bolomen. We'll see what's round this bend.—Good heavens! it's practically the end of the

river! It just splits up into those marshy creeks. What a trap!" He jumped to his feet, signaling to the other canoes to stop, and as he did so, twenty or thirty rifles rang out from the bank.

Derek, who was now bringing up the rear, took in the situation at a glance—the half-exposed mud-flats ahead, the impossibility of landing. Retreat was the only course, and, without an instant's hesitation, he had his boat swung round and headed down-stream, an example which the other canoes followed immediately, though, before they could get back to the bend, there were a dozen more dead and wounded in them.

As they drew within range of the first ambush again, Derek gave a curt order, and all his men, with the exception of the steersman and two in the bow, took out their paddles, picked up their rifles, and began firing rapidly into the jungle, disconcerting the aim of the pulajanes, and allowing the canoe to drift down almost hidden in a cloud of smoke. The men in the other boats were quick to see the ruse, and, when the danger-point had been passed finally, there was only one man added to the list of wounded.

Half a mile farther down, Cochrane called a halt. He had found time to notice that Coote was still alive, and was being attended to by an ambulance man; but he wished to see how badly he was hurt, and what was the full extent of the other casualties.

Coote was lying in the bottom of the canoe very white and still, but he smiled faintly as the captain bent over him. "I've got my pass-out check, old

man," he whispered. "So they have driven us back. Are my men all right? Many of them hit? Those other canoes came on, didn't they?"

Cochrane gulped at something in his throat, and—he had noticed where the wound was—lied bravely. "Yes, they are all right. My men caught it worst. You will have them all on parade again in a week. Won't he?" to the Boy, who was looking on with suspiciously quivering lips.

The Boy nodded and tried to laugh. "Of course he will; and then Dale will send you all back to Maslog. I'll get into his canoe, Cochrane, and sit with him. You go and see to the others."

As Cochrane was going, Coote raised his hand. "This is all my fault, I know," he said. "If I hadn't delayed you, it wouldn't have happened; but—I've paid for it."

"Nonsense!" answered the captain, with an attempt at cheerfulness. "It would have been much worse if we had been earlier, because then they would have let us land, and we should have had both bolomen and riflemen. It was a trap, and we were lucky to get out at all. It was no one's fault; and, with that mud ahead, we had no course but to retreat."

Coote sighed. "I am glad he says so," he whispered to the Boy. "I was afraid it was worse—that all my men hadn't come on. You say they did well and only one or two were hit? Sometimes, I thought that perhaps I was too easy—not enough discipline—but I was awfully fond of them—I'm so glad they—did—well," and he sank back, dead.

The Boy gave a big sob and began to pray.

Meanwhile, Cochrane was passing from boat to boat, counting his losses.

“One dead and three wounded in your boat, Mr. North,” he called out. “A bad business, isn’t it? That makes seven killed and nineteen wounded, as well as poor Coote.” Then he suddenly noticed that Derek’s left arm was roughly bound up. “Good heavens! are you hit too? When was it?”

Derek flushed slightly. “It’s nothing, really. I got it just after they hit my steersman, as I was taking his paddle. Never mind me now. See to the others.—There, the Boy’s calling you. What does he say? Coote is dead? Poor chap! But it is better than if he had lingered. I’ve seen men shot in that place before, and I know what it means.”

“Do you suppose those Scouts got down safely?” asked Derek an hour later, when, the wounded having been given first aid, the boats were once more on their way down-stream.

Cochrane shook his head. “They didn’t know about the wall across the stream,” he said meaningly; “they would have got there practically at low-water.”

The captain’s fears proved well founded. As they rounded the bend above the wall, the first thing they saw was one of the big canoes, water-logged, lying broadside on against the obstruction, whilst the other two were close to the bank, being baled out, not by Scouts, but by red-cross holomen, who were working

under the instructions of an officer with a large red sash over his shoulder. Cochrane turned quickly to the Boy. "Can you get him?" he began; but almost before the words were out of his mouth the Martini too had spoken, and the red-sashed man had spun round and dropped face downwards in the mud. Instantly, both banks seemed to become alive with little white-clad men scrambling for cover, seeing whom, the constabulary did not wait for an order, but began to fire rapidly, and, for natives, very effectively. They had their dead still before their eyes. One or two futile shots came back from the jungle, but the surprise had been complete, the bolomen having assumed from the return of the Scouts that the rest of the expedition had been annihilated in the riflemen's ambush.

As the last boloman disappeared, Cochrane turned to his bugler: "Sound the 'cease-fire';" then headed his canoe inshore. "Go to the other bank, Mr. North, and see what you can find," he shouted.

A minute later they knew the fate of the Scouts—their bodies lay scattered along the bank where they had crawled ashore, whilst such of their rifles and kit as had not been lost in the river were piled up near by, ready to be taken to Maslog. All the dead had been boloed. Obviously, it had been an ambush of bolomen only, the pulajan chiefs reckoning on their victims coming to them from the water weaponless.

The constabulary had one look at the fallen; then, without asking permission, a dozen of them drew

what knives and bolos they possessed, and dived into the bush to look for the wounded, returning in a few minutes with an air of grim satisfaction on their faces, and, in more than one case, with fresh bolos strapped to their sides.

As soon as he landed, the Boy strolled up to the body of the officer he had shot. "Turn him over," he said to two of the soldiers, then he gave a sudden cry of surprise. "Cochrane—oh, Cochrane—come here! You won't hang the Presidente of Oras after all! Here he is! Here's our guide!"

Cochrane looked down at the dead man with a black frown on his face. "I suspected him from the first," he muttered. "I will hang him, though. I'll hang the whole lot of these, whilst we're waiting for the tide to let us get over that wall. Sergeant Reyes, string these pulajanes up in that big tree.—Ah, I thought you would like the job.—Have a look through his pockets first. He is sure to have some papers. Even the smartest Filipino never has the sense to destroy a letter and carry the contents in his head. Time after time, we got hold of Aguinaldo's plans that way. . . . You've found some? Let's see." He read through the paper quickly, then gave a low whistle. "Whew! This is interesting. It tells the presidente—who, it seems, was a full colonel—that as soon as we have been wiped out, Maslog camp is to be broken up, and the men are to go into the San Ramon hills, which they must reach by the change of the monsoon, at the latest. No more constabulary will come, the letter

says, as the Government is going to make terms." He paused and swore savagely. "Yes, they are going to make terms with these brutes. Evidently it's true, because it's signed by Papa Pablo himself, and—where's North?—it's dated from Calbayog four days back. Oh, if I could only lay hands on Pablo! It shows how much that skunk Anūgar's vaunted smartness is worth."

The only incident which occurred on the way down-stream took place just before the canoes reached the river mouth, when Sergeant Reyes solemnly produced a blood-stained package, and, amidst the laughter of the men, ostentatiously tossed it on to a mud-flat much frequented by alligators.

"What is that?" demanded the captain.

The sergeant, a grizzled old veteran of the Spanish service, came smartly to the salute.

"Those pulajanes you told me to hang, señor; I cut off their noses as a precaution, so that, if they rise again in three days, we can recognize them. That's all, señor."

Cochrane bit his lip and turned away, and a moment later the incident was forgotten, for the Boy gave a sudden shout. "There's a steamer in, not the coastguard, but some sort of a tramp."

Derek, who was lying back in the stern of Cochrane's canoe, evidently in considerable pain, raised himself on his unwounded arm.

"By Jove, it's the *Cingalee!*" he exclaimed. "What luck! I wonder what the devil Wilson is doing here?"

A few minutes later, a boat put off from the steamer's side and rowed rapidly towards them, Wilson himself at the tiller lines.

"Hullo!" the skipper cried, as he got within speaking distance. "You seem to have struck a hurricane, Cochrane. Where's North? Oh, there you are! Hit, by Jove! Not bad, you say? I am glad. Dale's ashore with Blenkarn. They chartered me, as the coastguard shed her propeller, and Dale was in a terrible hurry. He has been in a state. I fancy he expected something like this, after what we found yesterday at Dolores."

"What was that?" demanded Cochrane.

The skipper dropped his voice. "One man crawled out of the bush, short of his left arm. He was the sole survivor of Hoyt's force—and he died this morning."

Cochrane drew his hand across his eyes. "I guessed so much this morning, when I found how many guns they had. I knew Coote was right when he said they only had half a dozen in Maslog last week, and I wanted to rush through before they had Hoyt's."

The skipper turned to Derek. "Are you coming aboard, North? I will dress your wound, as I can see Cochrane's hands will be full. We sail for Calbayog to-night. You must leave this business, and come back to help Miss Westley. She wants it badly enough. Anũgar has arrested her father."

Derek's pale face flushed crimson. "My God! what for?"

"For being in league with Enrique de la Cruz, who, he declares, is Papa Pablo."

## CHAPTER XVI

WILSON turned a little pale as he cut away the sleeve of Derek's coat and exposed the wounded arm.

"By Jove," he muttered, "this is nasty! The bullet seems to have run the whole length of the forearm and out by the elbow. It hurts pretty badly, doesn't it? I thought so. . . . Why the blazes don't they send out surgeons with these unfortunate constabulary! Lucky I know something about first aid. There, I think that's as much as I'll do now. You had better lie down for a bit, old man. You are a little feverish already."

Derek shook his head impatiently. "No, no; I shall be all right. I couldn't stay still just now. Tell me about her—about Miss Westley. You say that little yellow devil arrested her father the morning you left?"

Wilson nodded. "Yes; he took him in his office before breakfast, and then ransacked the whole place. I wish I could have stayed to see her through with it."

Derek fumbled with a match-box in a vain attempt to light his cigar with one hand. "What did Major Flint say?" he asked.

"The major had gone to Manila," answered the skipper.

Derek let the matches fall and looked up quickly. "And you left her there alone, with no one of her

own color in the place, at the mercy of those foul little savages," and he swore fiercely at the sailor.

Wilson flushed. "Don't, old man," he said, very gently; "don't; I know it hurts, but I really couldn't help it. I had already agreed to bring Dale round here, and young Rayne is still in Calbayog. Besides, she insisted on my coming. I think—I think she was very anxious about you, and wanted you to come back."

It was Derek's turn to flush. "I beg your pardon, Wilson," he muttered, holding out a feverish hand. "I didn't mean it; but this business has upset me a bit—poor Coote and those gallant little fellows of Cochrane's! I've lost a lot of blood, too."

Wilson looked rather anxiously at the thin face and tall, lean figure. "There is nothing to worry about," he said quietly. "She will be quite safe. Young Rayne has half a dozen American soldiers there, who would hold up Calbayog and hang Anũgar with the greatest delight. Rayne has changed a lot, partly because Miss Westley has had him in hand, but chiefly because he has seen some of the women the pulajanes have mutilated. He knows now what the brown brother system entails. I expect, too, that Westley himself is free now, for Anũgar must have found what he was after."

"What was that?" demanded Derek.

Wilson raised his eyebrows. "Can't you guess? Enrique's twenty thousand pesos. The secret leaked out somehow; and there is no doubt Anũgar knew about the money and decided to collar it, reckoning

that neither Westley nor Enrique could say anything."

Derek paced the deck restlessly. "When are you going to sail?" he asked.

The skipper glanced seawards. "I should have gone to-day, if you had been all right. They cabled to Leyte for another coastguard to meet Dale here and to bring a surgeon—they had an idea he would be wanted—and she should be in before dark; but by the time the doctor has fixed up your arm it will be too late to get out. So we must wait till the morning."

But Derek rejected the idea indignantly. "No, no; I shall be all right. Don't waste time over this silly little wound of mine. Get round to Calbayog. You say she wanted it. Will you? That's a good chap. We must just go ashore and say good-by to Cochrane."

Major Dale was nervously pacing to and fro in front of Cochrane's temporary hospital, but he stopped abruptly when Wilson announced the *Cingalee's* impending departure. "I wish you would stay till the coastguard comes in," he said fretfully. "Supposing the pulajanes attack us, what shall we be able to do?"

The skipper laughed unkindly. "I am not a soldier, sir, so I can't say; but I think you will find Captain Cochrane has still enough men to hold the convent against all the pulajanes in Lamu—the whole three hundred."

The major walked up and down once more, then

stopped in front of Derek, who was talking to the Boy. "Mr. North," he said, "I hope you will—er—er—be discreet in what you write about this deplorable affair. You see, the Commission wants to—to end this unfortunate business, and naturally it will make it difficult if you inflame the whites in Manila. I know they cannot restrain you as they would an American citizen, but I have no doubt the Commission would show its gratitude tangibly."

Derek cut him short haughtily. "This is no question of nationality, but of color—and common decency. Your Commission has sullied the name of the white man, and as for its threats or its bribes—" he broke off suddenly, and stalked over to where Cochrane was awaiting him.

"So you are leaving us at last," the captain said as they walked down to the quay. "I am awfully sorry; though I don't think we shall have any more fighting or tramping, and the Boy"—he laid his hand on the youngster's shoulder—"the Boy is staying with me; but that doesn't mean I shan't miss you."

At the top of the gangway, a score of the constabulary, the late crew of Derek's boats, were assembled, and saluted stiffly as he came up. The Englishman looked at the mud-stained, tattered little men almost tenderly, and his eyes were unusually bright as he returned their salute; then he gripped Cochrane's hand in a long, almost fierce, clasp, and descended into the boat without another word.

Wilson glanced at him curiously as they rowed

back to the *Cingalee*. "You get to know a man pretty quickly when Death is squatting behind every bush you pass," he remarked.

Derek nodded, then looked back and waved his hand to his late comrades-in-arms, who were still standing on the quay, watching him.

It was not until the *Cingalee* was well on her way that Derek consented to lie down on the couch in the skipper's cabin. His arm was giving him a great deal of pain, and he had eaten practically nothing since the previous evening; but he could not rest, and it was only by getting him to tell the story of the unfortunate expedition that Wilson managed to keep him still at all.

"Coote's men were spoilt," Derek concluded. "He had treated them as white men, and they didn't respect him, and had got an absurd idea of their own importance. It was that cursed brown brother folly again. In Cochrane's hands, those same men would have been good soldiers. It is the Asiatic all over—he must be kept in his place. Poor Coote paid for his mistake with his life, as many more will do."

Wilson had already heard from Clare of Pete Jansen's fate. "Isn't it curious?" he said; "no white man seems to have seen Pete alive since we passed him that day near Goyal."

"Did it ever strike you the guns might have been meant for the pulajanes?" Derek asked quietly.

"We should have heard of them long before in that case," Wilson answered. "No; my own belief is still that, after all, they went down to the Celebes,

or one of those groups. We know they are not in Lamu, or any of the islands for that matter. It is an ugly game, though, and the owner will have to ship a new skipper if he wants any more of it done. . . . Well, you had better turn in now. You mustn't get to Calbayog looking as tired as you do now. . . . What is it, Morgan?" as the mate put his head in at the door.

Morgan scratched his head. "We are just off the wreck of the *Palapog*, sir, and there are a whole lot of fires ashore, on the San Ramon point."

Wilson and Derek went on deck at once; but the night was very dark, and they could make out nothing save the reflection of the flames amongst the trees.

"Pulajanes, I suppose," said the skipper at last. "The monsoon is changing now, and in a couple of days they should be able to reach the wreck in their canoes, as it will be quite calm inside the reef."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the *Cingalee* dropped anchor in Calbayog Bay. Derek, whose arm seemed to grow steadily worse, awaited the lowering of the boat with unconcealed impatience. He was very feverish and excited, quite unlike his usual cool, languid self. Wilson watched him anxiously. "He will lose that arm, and perhaps his life as well, if we can't quiet him down," he remarked to the mate.

Morgan gasped. "You surely don't mean that, sir? I know the doctor is away from Calbayog, but

we can run him over to Catbalogan, in the next island, can't we? It's only eight hours' steam."

As Derek clambered on to the quay, Rayne came down to meet him. "Oh, I say, have you been wounded? I am sorry," he said, as he shook hands. "I'm glad you've come, though. Everything seems to have gone wrong here, and the major can't be back till to-morrow morning. Anũgar has sent Mr. Westley away—to Manila, I suppose. Miss Westley won't see me, and they say she's ill. Will you go up there?"

Derek nodded. "Yes; I'm going now. Have you seen Anũgar?"

The boy colored. "Yes—well—I did yesterday morning, and I was feeling kind of mad about her; so when he came swaggering up to my quarters, I just took him by the neck and kicked him off the veranda. I know it means a court-martial, but I don't care. I feel better for it," he added defiantly.

Derek's eyes flashed approvingly. "Good!" he muttered, "good! But I wish you had killed him."

"I wish I had," answered the other; then he glanced at his companion's face: "I say, is that wound hurting you much? You look like it. Come in and have something before you go up," he urged; but Derek rejected the offer.

"No, thanks! It's nothing. I'll go straight to the house."

"I'll come with you as far as the gate," said the subaltern, "and then, if you don't mind, I'll wait

for you there. I want to hear how she is, very much, and, you see, she won't speak to me.—Hullo! here is Anūgar. I believe he has been up there again. Did you see him start when he caught sight of you? He has hurt his forehead, somehow. I wonder—” He broke off abruptly, and went rather pale at some thought which crossed his mind.

The governor was walking rapidly down the road from the Westleys' house; but he was a very different man to the sleek, apologetic mestizo whom Derek had known before, the half-caste who was always trying to make you forget he was not wholly white. Now he was a native, as savage as any of those pulajanes whom Cochrane had left hanging beside the Tubig River—a wild man, almost a wild beast, with a face distorted by passion, and a nasty cut just above his eye, from which he was dabbing the blood with a handkerchief.

As Rayne said, he started violently at the sight of Derek, and, for an instant, seemed inclined to turn into the house he was passing; then his face grew, if possible, more evil than before, and he came on with what was meant to be a defiant swagger.

Derek, on the other hand, stared him square in the eyes with a cold scorn, at the same time drawing a little to one side, as a man does when he sees something foul in the road. And so they passed each other, without a word, save a muttered curse from the subaltern.

At the Westleys' gate Rayne stopped. “Don't be long,” he said, rather huskily. “At least, just

come out and tell me how she is, and—and, if you can, find out why she is so angry with me.”

Derek was shown into the well-remembered dining-room by a very startled muchacho, who muttered something almost incoherent about telling the señora. A minute later, Clare came in hurriedly, and a single glance told Derek what had happened, for her eyes were blazing with outraged pride, though at the sight of him they softened instantly into pity.

“Oh, Mr. North, you’ve been wounded, and you’re so ill!” she cried, her own troubles apparently forgotten in the shock of seeing his wounded arm and pain-drawn face. “Is it bad, tell me; is it very bad?”

Derek smiled rather wistfully as he took her outstretched hand. “No; it’s nothing,” he said, and for a moment there was a pause, whilst she searched his features with her eyes.

“Who did it up? The doctor? What does he say?” she demanded. “Captain Wilson did it? Oh, what does he know! Let me do it for you, at once. I can see you are in pain, and you are very feverish. Let me do it, now.” Her voice was imperious, insistent; but Derek shook his head.

“No; there is no hurry, really. Tell me all about your father, about your own trouble.”

The hard look returned to her eyes, and she sank into a chair. “I’m so glad you’ve come back, I can’t say how glad. They’ve taken him away, you know, and ransacked the house and all that.” She spoke rapidly, almost breathlessly. “I have tried to cable

the consul-general, but I can't get the message through. They charge him with being mixed up with the pulajanes; they charge my father with that abominable thing, and to-day," she got up suddenly, as though she wanted air, "to-day, Anũgar came to tell me that you had been killed, and that my father had not gone to Manila at all, but to some secret place, and I should never, never see him again, unless—unless I would—oh, the man is vile, vile, vile!" she cried, and covered her burning face with her hands.

Derek, who had gone livid with wrath, clutched the back of a chair to steady himself. "Yes, and then?" he asked hoarsely.

She looked up with wet, flashing eyes. "And then he tried to touch me, and I lashed him across the face with my riding-whip, and the servants ran in. It was now, just now.—Oh, Mr. North, where are you going? what are you going to do? Stay with me here. I want you—oh, I want you! I can't be left alone."

"I shall be back soon," he answered in a low voice, which Clare hardly recognized, "I shall be back very soon," and he strode out of the door.

She took a step forward, as if to follow him. "Come back—oh, come back, Derek!"

But apparently he did not hear, for he went on, striding towards the gate with no sign of his former weakness.

Rayne came forward eagerly to meet him. "Well?" he asked, "well, what is it?"

"Come with me. I will show you," was the only

answer he got, and he followed wonderingly, in silence, to the plaza, where Derek suddenly stopped.

"Where is the governor?" he demanded of a lounging native, who started up as he saw the look in Derek's eyes.

"In the Court. He went in just now," stammered the man. Derek brushed the doorkeeper aside, and, as if he knew by intuition where to go, opened the door of the big council-room and went half-way up it, unnoticed by a group of native officials, who, with their backs towards him, were poring over a map spread out on a small table. Then he drew his revolver, the revolver Clare had bidden him carry.

"Antonio Anũgar," he cried in a loud voice.

At the sound of his name the Governor of Lamu sprang to his feet, and there in his own council-chamber, Derek North shot him between the eyes.

Rayne gave a little sob, horror and a fierce joy mingled, then he turned and followed Derek out of the door—noting, even in the excitement of the moment, that the Englishman quietly replaced his revolver in the holster, contemptuously heedless of the possibility of a shot from the other natives in the room.

As they came into the plaza, Derek drew a deep breath. "The air seems fresher," he said; "I am going back now to let Miss Westley see to my arm. Are you coming? No? Well, would you mind sending word to Wilson?" and he walked away calmly.

Clare was waiting on the veranda, and hurried forward to meet him as he came up the steps.

“Will you see to my arm now?” he asked.

But she did not seem to notice his words.

“What have you done?” she asked in a low voice.

His eyes flashed suddenly. “Something that ought to have been done long ago. He will never insult you again.”

“Oh, oh!” she caught at the veranda rail, then she came very close to him. “You have done this for me,” she said softly. “You have done this for me.”

The man drew a quick breath, as if trying to restrain himself. “It was the only thing to do,” he muttered, then swayed with a sudden faintness.

Like a flash, Clare passed her strong young arm round him and forced him into a chair. “Stay still,” she commanded, then ran into the dining-room, returning quickly with a glass of brandy. “Drink that at once—all of it. Now you are not to say anything at all, until I have this arm undone. I am sure it is too tight or something,” and she talked on, quickly, nervously, whilst she unwound the bandages.

As she exposed the wound, she gave a little gasp. Even to her untrained eyes, it was obvious what was the matter.

“How long—how long ago was it?” she whispered.

“Two and a half days nearly. Yes, I know it is poisoned a little.”

She turned very white. “You must go now at once, to Catbalogan. Captain Wilson must take you

to the army surgeon there." She spoke decisively, as though it were her right to say; then she knelt on the floor, and began to sponge the wound with an infinite tenderness and gentleness of touch.

"And what will you do?" he asked.

"I must stay to hear about father. I shall be all right now that horrible man is—is out of the way. Oh, Mr. North," she looked up suddenly with wet eyes, "how can I thank you? I couldn't have lived if he had lived too. I couldn't! I couldn't! But now," a sudden fear came into her face, "will they do anything to you—take you to prison, or—or—"

"I expect they will make a little fuss, but it is sure to be all right. He deserved it." He tried to speak reassuringly; but Clare shook her head.

"You don't know them, these horrible officials and judges. That—that man was one of them. Oh, why didn't I think of it sooner! Captain Wilson must take you away at once, first to the doctor—there is no cable to Catbalogan—then to Hong-Kong, to anywhere out of these hateful islands. You will go, won't you?" she pleaded.

"Would you have me run away, as if I had done wrong?" he asked, instead of replying directly.

She saw his view instantly. "No, you are right. You must stay—we must stay." Her eyes flashed proudly. "Yes, you must go to Catbalogan and get your arm done, and then wait and see what they will do. I shall come after you as soon as I have found father, for you did it for me," and she looked at him

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as she had never looked at him before; then she re-bandaged his arm in a way which, somehow, seemed quite different to the skipper's method, and after that she fetched him some light food, cutting it up for him, and sitting beside him whilst he ate it.

"What did Rayne do to offend you?" he asked suddenly, breaking a long silence.

Clare made a quick gesture of disgust. "Oh, it was he who told Anũgar about Enrique and the money. Anũgar boasted he had made Mr. Rayne drunk and got it all from him. I shall never, never, never forgive him.—And I had got to like him so much."

"Anũgar probably lied," said Derek gently. "Anyway, the youngster kicked him off the veranda yesterday, and would have done what I have done, had he known. I am sure he never meant to do any harm."

But Clare would not be pacified. "I shall never forgive him," she repeated, "especially if—if they take you." Then she jumped up suddenly. "Oh, here is Captain Wilson. Now you must arrange to go to Cathalogan at once."

Wilson came in rather sheepishly. "All your servants seem to have fled, Miss Westley, so I entered unannounced." Then he went up and gripped Derek's hand. "I wish that I had had your chance. Still, it has made us all feel good. But you seem to have paralyzed Calbayog. The presidente and all the officials have cleared, and Rayne has taken charge."

“Cleared? Do you mean fled, Captain Wilson?” Clare demanded.

Wilson nodded. “Fled into the bosque, where I hope the pulajanes get them. It shows what healthy consciences they have got. Some one, however, took advantage of the confusion to loot Anūgar’s private papers up in his house, for when Rayne went there to put a seal on them, he found everything in confusion. All the police have disappeared too, with their rifles, and half the tao are loading up their boats. Rayne showed what a good man he is by collaring the telegraph office at once. He says the army has got Calbayog now, and there won’t be a word go through till the major comes to-morrow.”

“Oh, I am so glad! That gives you—us another day, Mr. North. . . . Captain Wilson, you are to go now, at once, to Catbalogan. Do you hear?”

The skipper smiled at her tone of command. “I’m afraid I can’t manage it, Miss Westley. The chief had already started some repairs to the boilers, but Rayne is having steam got up in the new launch, and she will do it quicker than we could. Once this hot-headed chap,” with a nod towards Derek, “is in the army hospital, it will be all right. They will be in no hurry to deliver him up to the Manila people. That was why Rayne collared the cable. He was afraid of getting orders to send him somewhere else.”

The girl gave him a grateful look. “You are very good, you and—yes—and Mr. Rayne. Perhaps I was too hard on him. When will the launch be

ready? About an hour? Then you shall have some tea before you go. Will you ring the bell, Captain Wilson?"

The skipper rang several times; then: "There are no servants. I was right," he said.

Clare jumped up in dismay. "Oh, what shall I do? Captain Wilson, come with me and look. No, you must stay there, Mr. North."

In a few minutes they returned. "Yes, they have all gone," Clare announced, with a rather wistful smile. "I don't know what to do."

Wilson glanced towards Derek. "You must come aboard the *Cingalee*, Miss Westley."

"Shall I go?" Clare also turned to Derek, as if the decision naturally rested with him.

"It is by far the best and safest plan," he answered.

She made no further question. "I won't be a minute getting a few things, and then we will lock up everything here. Oh, it will be nice to have the water all around one and no Filipinos. Lately, I have got to hate having the hills just behind me, knowing what dreadful things happen there. We used to feel safe when the army was here, but now—" she gave a little shrug of disgust. "I will be very quick, Captain Wilson," and she ran off to fetch her bag.

It was almost dark when they reached the quay. Rayne was awaiting them there, and at the sight of Clare's white dress he drew a little to one side, but she called him with a touch of her old manner.

“Mr. Rayne, come here. I want to thank you very much, and—oh, I will tell you everything tomorrow. I am going to stay on board the *Cingalee* to-night.” She held out her hand, which the boy took eagerly; then, seeing that no one was looking, he bent down and kissed it impulsively.

“I’m so glad,” he muttered hoarsely.

Wilson walked on ahead to the end of the quay, leaving Clare and Derek to follow. At the top of the steps Derek paused.

“My boat is on the other side,” he said; then he took her hand, and, though he did not kiss it, he held it whilst he added: “It is only ‘*Au revoir*’ again.”

“Yes; only ‘*Au revoir*,’” she whispered, then turned and went slowly down the steps to Wilson’s boat.

## CHAPTER XVII

MR. COMMISSIONER FURBER sat in his office staring at a telegram which the general had just sent across from the Fort.

“Anũgar shot dead yesterday by Englishman, Derek North, for attempted assault on white lady. Presidente and all officials fled, also police with rifles. Have taken charge—John Flint, major.”

Commissioner Furber took up the message and read it through again. “Thank God!” he muttered. “Thank God, I am safe at last! Oh, the fool, if he only knew what a service he has done us, unless—unless.” His white face suddenly grew, if possible, a shade whiter, and, though he had turned very cold, there were beads of perspiration on his forehead. “Have taken charge.—John Flint, major.” He repeated the words mechanically. “If Flint should find out, if he gets hold of anything.” He reached out quickly for a telegraph form, but before he could write on it there was a knock at the door, and his secretary came in.

“Señor Ramon Guitierrez,” he announced, ushering in an almost white mestizo, who bowed profoundly to Furber and took a seat with an air of the utmost deference.

“You sent for me, señor, on urgent business,” he said.

The commissioner, who had pulled himself together again, nodded. "Yes, most urgent. It is this—our friend Antonio Anūgar was murdered yesterday afternoon by that Englishman who has been causing all this trouble, that man who calls himself Derek North. . . . Yes, I knew you would be shocked. . . . The message, which is from a certain Major Flint—You knew him? Ah, I remember; he imprisoned you in the cruel days of martial law. Well, this message states that the reason alleged is an attempted assault on a white woman. We can take that for what it's worth. . . . Now, señor, I am giving you this news exclusively," the mestizo bowed and grinned, "exclusively, and I wish it published in the form of an interview with myself. Your paper, which you edit so ably, is the one which appeals most to our brown brothers here, and they should be the first to know how I feel about this terrible crime, this cruel outrage. Note what I say—this murder shall be punished with the extreme penalty of the law. Nothing shall prevent that. I see that the plea of protecting a white woman, the color prejudice, will be raised, but we shall show your people that a white woman is no more to us than any one else. You may say, definitely, that this man will be hanged. This is not the United States or a British Colony, where those matters are left to a prejudiced white judge. You may say, too—what do you want?" he snarled at the secretary, who had just opened the door.

"Mr. Soley, commissioner, to see you urgently."

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“I will not see Mr. Soley. Tell him so.” Then he went on to the mestizo: “You may say, too, that we are unflinching in our determination to continue the policy of peace and have already started negotiations with this handful of so-called pulajanes, preferring to reason with them, rather than use cruel methods, and we regret deeply the action of certain constabulary officers, who have presumed to shoot down these poor, ignorant people. Also—Well, what is it? Can’t you see I am busy?” to the secretary, who had again ventured in.

“Mr. Soley asked me to give you this, commissioner,” presenting his chief with a note.

Furber read the note at a glance, and, once more, despite his seeming self-control, the cold sweat came out on his forehead. He turned to the mestizo editor—

“Excuse me, Señor Ramon, but it is important, after all. Will you wait in the ante-room, and,” his voice was a little unsteady, “do not mention a word of what I have said, until you have seen me again.”

Soley walked in coolly and dropped into the chair the colored man had just vacated. “I see I was in time,” he remarked.

“What do you mean?” demanded the commissioner, with an attempt at calmness.

The editor smiled. “In time to prevent you committing yourself hopelessly. Had you done so, the whole story would have had to come out. Don’t think I want to save your skin; it is only because I

am something you and your friends don't understand, a white American, that I am going to give you this chance."

Furber took up the note he had just received, and read it through again. "What do you mean to do?" he asked hoarsely.

"Nothing about that, so far," answered Soley.

Furber's eyes gleamed. "Then you have not the proofs; you dare not publish it."

Soley shrugged his shoulders. "Think as you like; but remember this: unless North has a fair trial, which means an acquittal, you shall pay dearly for it. You will release Robert Westley now." It was a command, not a question.

Furber made a show of defiance. "Why should I?"

Soley laughed gently. "Because I say you will. How can you keep him in the face of what we both know? Besides they have the news in Hong-Kong to-day, and to-morrow the British ambassador in Washington may be asking questions."

The commissioner fumbled nervously with the paper-weight on his table. "Anũgar acted without any instructions in the matter. I will tell them to release the man."

Soley got up. "Very well. I will let his daughter know. As for North, I advise you to be careful, unless you want the truth known," and he walked out as calmly as he had entered.

For a few minutes, Commissioner Furber sat deep in thought, then he lit a match and carefully burnt

the last scrap of Soley's note, and after that he rang his bell. "Show Señor Guitierrez in again."

When the mestizo editor entered, Furber turned to him with a forced smile. "Oh, Señor Ramon, I think, after all, you had better publish only the bare facts, as yet. Not because I have altered my views, but because I believe by so doing we can net in one or two more of our enemies. Will you come and see me again this evening, or, better still, meet me on the Luneta when the band is playing; I can drive you round, and talk at the same time."

The mestizo thanked him in florid terms, and departed, bowing profoundly, though, as the door closed behind him, his expression changed, and he muttered to himself: "The white-faced heretic, can he have known? or can that thrice-accursed Soley have found out and told him? I had better warn Carlos." And instead of going down the broad marble stairs, he went along the corridor to the offices occupied by the native secretaries to the Commission, where he was shown into a room in which a yellow-faced little man was drinking absinthe and smoking a strong cigarette.

Guitierrez shut the door carefully; then: "Carlos," he said hurriedly, "Antonio was shot yesterday, and I am afraid the American knows the truth."

The yellow-faced man jumped to his feet. "Shot yesterday! I have had no message through."

"No," answered the other grimly. "That murderer Flint has seized Calbayog—and the cable station."

The secretary gulped down his absinthe at a single draught. "What time does the Hong-Kong boat go?" he whispered.

The mestizo editor nodded approvingly. "Three o'clock. Yes, it is the safest thing, for if Flint finds your letters—" he shrugged his shoulders expressively. "He was going to hang me once."

The secretary unconsciously loosened the collar of his white jacket, as though he had a sudden sense of choking; then he began hurriedly to collect together his private papers.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Furber was walking nervously up and down his room, muttering to himself, "I believe it was only a guess, after all. Soley can't know; he can't have any proofs. He must have been bluffing. I got back every line I wrote myself, and if I can recover those others—" He sat down, drew the telegraph forms towards him again, and scribbled a message to Major Flint, Calbayog: "Secure all late governor's private papers and forward at once to me. Reply. Urgent.—Furber, commissioner."

"Send that immediately," he said to his secretary; then he tried to settle down to his ordinary work, but in a very few minutes he resumed his pacing to and fro.

"Soley can't prove anything, I'm sure," he murmured, "especially when I have anything Anũgar was fool enough to leave.—Jansen too is dead, thank Heaven!—I shall get those papers in four or five days, and then," he gave a vicious little laugh, "then

I shall hang North, and make Manila too hot for Soley. But for them, the party would never have been in this danger."

The band was playing as usual on the Luneta, the big open space beyond the Walled City, where Manila society congregates of an evening to exchange scandal, and get a breath of such sea-breezes as Cavite Bay can furnish. Nowadays, the Luneta has a nice sea-wall and broad, gravelled walks and carefully tended grass, and, except for the grim old walls in the background, it is all horribly prosaic and as nearly American as anything in Manila can ever be. Yet once, in the days when the Great Commoner was wiping away the stains left by a dozen feeble predecessors, the Luneta saw very different things; saw a British squadron sail calmly into the bay and drop anchor; saw a handful of British sailors row ashore, and, heedless of the Spanish fire, turn a convenient church into a battery; saw them pound a breach through those supposedly unbreachable walls, saw them scramble yelling over the broken masonry; saw the golden banner of Spain fluttering slowly downwards. But all that belongs to the dead past. We have forgotten it, as we have forgotten our hatred of the Spaniard, as, to our shame be it said, we have also forgotten the very names of most of the men of those days who made our empire into an abiding fact. Probably, our forefathers impeached them or had them shot; anyway, it is safe to assume they

died broken-hearted. We have forgotten them; and the only thing we do remember is the tradition of ingratitude, which we still cherish so carefully.

The band was playing as usual, but few were really heeding the music; for the killing of Anũgar, of which men had just learnt from the *Herald*, was far more interesting than any light-opera tune; whilst the same sheet of the paper also contained accounts of the ill-fated Maslog expedition and the ghastly tragedy at Dolores.

Opinion on the matter of Anũgar was widely divided. The extremists amongst the Government party, Furber's own followers, were loud in their indignation at what they termed the murder, and very anxious to see Derek condemned to death; but the unofficial Americans, especially the married ones, made no secret of their approval.

"I have been expecting something of the sort for a long time," declared a leading shipping agent. "Once you let a native mix socially with white people, this kind of thing is bound to happen. His ideas of women are so utterly different to ours. I am a strong supporter of the party in the States; but my wife and daughters come before my politics, and if any native dared to insult them, I would shoot him like a dog."

The man to whom he spoke, a spectacled chief in the Education Department, sneered. "I think you would find they would hang you, none the less. Here a woman is a woman, and nothing more. We

don't intend to have Southern practices in the islands."

The other turned on him fiercely. "Southern practices! They are the practices of every self-respecting man who honors the women of his race, and those who don't are damned renegades.—Ah, that got him," to another of the party as the official strode away. "He is married to a native woman, you know.—Well, if they bring this man North to trial, it will be up to us to see him through, unless we want to have an epidemic of outrages on our women. That is what the brown brother policy must end in, if it goes on long."

"Furber will do his utmost to hang North," remarked a naval officer.

"I know he will," replied the first speaker. "But there are things Furber can't do. This Maslog and Dolores business will hit them hard—two white officers and the best part of a hundred men sacrificed wantonly. You can't keep them from hearing that in the States; but I suppose it doesn't matter so much, now the election is over.—Poor little Mrs. Hoyt! They say she is half-crazy with grief. My wife is round with her now. Do you know who sent up the account? It can't have been North, for he is in Catbalogan hospital."

"It was young McCullogh, Soley's assistant editor," announced the naval officer. "Soley told me just now that McCullogh went down on a Spanish boat with old John Flint to meet Mr. North.—Good-evening, Captain Carling; good-evening, major," as

a couple of men in obviously English clothes strolled up. "Getting weary of Manila yet? Have you seen the paper? One of your countrymen—he was in your Service once—has been running amok and slaying our brown brothers."

Captain Carling took the paper and glanced at it, then he gave a low whistle. "Whew! so that is where he has got to. I say, major, look here. You knew North, didn't you? He used to be my captain. It must be the same chap. There aren't two Derek Norths."

The major read the report carefully. "Yes, I knew him well," he said. "Knew all his people too. He was the man about whom that ugly story got round, and he sent in his papers in a fit of rage. Awful hot-tempered chap.—What will they do with him, lieutenant?" to the naval officer.

The sailor shook his head. "It is difficult to say. One man, Commissioner Furber, that white-faced skunk driving with the little yellow rat, will do his best to have him hanged."

The major started. "Hanged? For shooting a native who assaults a white lady? Good heavens! I always thought you Americans were quite sound on that question."

The lieutenant smiled bitterly. "So we are in the States; but here we have native judges and no public opinion. He could appeal, of course, and I expect he would get off in the end; but it would mean four years in prison before the case was ended."

Captain Carling shuddered. "What a ghastly

system! Have they got him in jail now? In an army hospital, you say? Oh, that is decent of them. Something may turn up before the trial, perhaps; but I should have done the same in his place. Wouldn't you?"

"You may bet on that," answered the lieutenant. "But don't be too hopeful of his chances. It was only the other day that a major in the army who was accused of some paltry embezzlement, an accidental thing, was sentenced to forty years' penal servitude by the civil government—I won't say the civil judge—although at the court-martial he was acquitted. That will show you the sort of venom we have out here. They reckon a soldier is their natural enemy."

As the Englishman walked away, Carling turned to his companion. "This will clear North's name in the Service, I should think. I say, I wonder if we could get down to this place, wherever it is, and see him. It would be the square thing to stand by him. He was always very decent to me."

The major shook his head. "It's a long way from here, and my leave is practically up."

The younger man reflected a minute. "I think I shall cable the Chief. He ought to know. He was very fond of North, and very mad about his leaving in that rotten way. He would probably arrange extra leave for me, and, anyway, I've got a month left. I expect they can tell us at the club how to get to Catbalogan."

Commissioner Furber sat, if possible, even more

upright than usual in his carriage. He knew men were watching him and discussing him, and, for once, he did not like the feeling. His companion, however, had no such misgivings and smirked at all the women, white and brown, whom they passed.

The commissioner seemed rather loath to broach the subject of Anugar, but at last—

“I have no more news yet about this terrible murder,” he said. “I cannot understand it. I cabled this morning, but, so far, no reply has come through from Calbayog. I think we will go and inquire if it has arrived whilst we have been here.”

The operator in the office sat looking rather disconsolately at his instrument. The last message he had got through to Calbayog had been one from Soley to Clare, announcing the impending release of her father, who, it appeared, was really on his way to Manila after all, Anugar having sent him by a boat which was visiting several out-of-the-way ports before returning to the capital. That despatch had gone immediately after Furber's, but nothing had come back.

“Is there any answer to my cable to Calbayog?” Furber's rasping voice asked in the outer office.

“No, commissioner, not yet,” the clerk answered. “The land wire has been down in Panay, but we expect to be through right now; and there's a man waiting to take it.”

Furber bit his lips, then pushed open the glass door and entered the operators' room. “Which of

you is trying to get Calbayog? You? Oh, very well. I will wait, if you expect it soon."

The minutes passed by with deadly slowness as Furber sat on the rough stool, grimly staring at the needle. A score of other instruments were clicking away in the room, but he never heard them, never seemed aware that a score of men were watching him and wondering at his presence. He cared about Calbayog, and nothing else. The minutes became half an hour, three-quarters of an hour, almost an hour. Then, suddenly, the instrument began to click. The operator took his feet off the table and laid down his cigar.

"Calbayog," he said, tapping out a signal in reply; then came more clicks, and he began to read off—

"On service. Flint to Furber. In reply to yours," the commissioner leaned forward eagerly, "papers have been—" "He has stopped," the operator said, tapping his own key. "Hullo, what's this? That means 'very urgent. Pulajanes have'—he has stopped again."

He tapped rather viciously, but got no reply, then again and again. "No good, commissioner," he said resignedly, relighting his cigar.

"What do you mean?" demanded Furber. "Is the line down again?"

The operator shook his head. "No, the line's all right; but the man at the other end has cleared."

## CHAPTER XVIII

“I WISH the launch would come back,” sighed Clare, shading her eyes with her hand and gazing seawards, “I wish she would come back with news. It seems such a long time to wait.—Tell me, major, what is Mr. McCullogh doing here?” nodding towards the young journalist, who was sitting in the doorway of the chart-room, deep in conversation with Wilson.

The major did not reply at once. He had already had a long talk with her, and had done his best to assure her that Derek was certain to be acquitted on the plea of “justification”; but, although he was by no means certain that he had convinced her, he was not anxious to return to the subject of Anũgar. He had hoped that Soley’s cable, announcing her father’s impending release, would have raised her spirits; but now that the one anxiety was over she seemed to worry more than ever about the other trouble.

“Major, what is he doing down here?” Clare repeated her question.

The old soldier looked at her pityingly, she was so terribly unlike her ordinary self, worn and anxious, with pale face and eyes which told of the sleepless night she had passed. “McCullogh came down to see North,” he answered reluctantly. “He had some rather important information, a clue Soley wanted

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North to follow up. He cabled Soley about it again this morning, and has got orders to go on with it himself, as North cannot."

"Oh, major, is it something that might help him—Mr. North? Something against Anūgar? Oh, do tell me, you must tell me!" she pleaded.

The major nodded. "Yes," he said gently. "It is something against Anūgar; but then it is only a hint so far, and it wants a great deal of proof to be of any use."

"What is it?" she demanded.

"It is not my secret. You must ask Mr. McCullogh."

Clare turned quickly. "Mr. McCullogh," she called, "come here. Yes, and you too, Captain Wilson. Mr. McCullogh, I want you to tell me this secret. I can see Captain Wilson knows it already."

The journalist, a round-faced, spectacled youth, was startled out of his usual self-possession.

"Really, Miss Westley, I—I—" he began, but Clare cut him short.

"Mr. McCullogh," she said very quietly, "this is something which would help Mr. North, is it not? Yes. Then you must tell me; for if they want to punish him for killing that horrible man, they must punish me, too, because I asked him to do it; I made him do it."

McCullogh glanced towards the major, as if seeking guidance; but both the soldier and the skipper were looking away. Then he turned to Clare: "Well, Miss Westley, it is this—Mr. Soley thinks that if

we could get on board the wreck of the *Palapog* we should find evidence that Anūgar was playing a double game. This would have been important enough before, but it would be doubly important now, because it would be another excuse for Mr. North."

The color rushed to Clare's pale face. "Oh, let us go at once and look! What do you expect to find?"

The journalist shook his head. "Mr. Soley would not say. He wanted Mr. North to form an independent opinion, to search the wreck from end to end, and let him know what he found. I was going to ask him again, but the land wire is down in Panay, and I can't get through yet."

The girl sighed. "Oh, how silly of him, when so very much may depend on it." Then she turned to the skipper: "Captain Wilson, you hear what he says, don't you? Can you get to that wreck? The monsoon is just changing, isn't it?"

"I can get inside the reef any time now, and board with the ship's boats," answered the skipper slowly, "only you see—" and he paused lamely.

"You don't promise you will go," she said impatiently. "Of course, I know you have some horrid man you call your owner, who wants money; but I have heaps of my own, and I will give whatever he asks. Will you go now, at once?"

It was Wilson's turn to flush. "It isn't a question of money, Miss Westley. Anyway, I can't load here because there seem to be no laborers left in the town. I had arranged to start for the wreck

to-morrow morning, unless we heard something fresh from Soley; but we—the major thought—you would be going to Manila to-night in the Spanish coaster that brought him down, so we didn't tell you."

"I am not going to that hateful Manila, at least not yet. Father will come down here, and meantime I shall go with you first, and then," she colored and looked at him half-defiantly, "then I shall go to Catbalogan.—But why don't you start now, Captain Wilson, instead of to-morrow?"

"We should only get there in the dark and have to lie off all night," answered the skipper. "We are better in here, than out in those badly-charted waters."

Clare sighed again and walked to the rail, where she stood a while, staring out towards the open sea. At last: "Major," she said, "I do wish your launch would come back with news of Mr. North. His arm was so bad when he left. I can't think what keeps them so long. Mr. Rayne told them not to wait a minute after they got a note from the surgeon."

Wilson threw a rather hopeless glance towards the major, who shook his head mournfully.

"If it is so, you will have to break the news to her," the skipper whispered, as he passed the other on his way to his cabin.

The major drew his hand across his eyes, then for a long time he sat very still, watching that slim, white-clad figure standing rigid against the rail.

It was Clare who broke the silence again. "Major,

major," her voice was very low, "you are sending a report into Manila by this coaster, aren't you? Remember it was all my fault. I asked him to do what he did, I—I told him things that made him do it."

After lunch, at which she ate practically nothing, Clare went on deck again and resumed her watch, drawing a chair up to the rail, and sitting with her chin resting on her hands, scanning the horizon. It was late in the afternoon before she made any move, then, with a heavy sigh of disappointment, she got up and went into the chart-room, where the major was making out his report.

"I am going ashore," she said briefly.

The old soldier looked up quickly. "You had much better not do so. The town will not be very safe. Some of Anũgar's friends may be rude to you."

"I thought they had all fled," she answered. "Anyway, I am not afraid of them. I want something out of the house."

"Tell me what it is, and I will have it fetched."

The girl crimsoned suddenly. "No, no; I want to get it myself, and, even if I did tell you, you couldn't find it. I shall go now before it gets too dark."

The major saw the hopelessness of protest. "Very well, only you must not go alone. I will go with you." And he was beginning to gather together his papers, when Rayne, who was standing near, shyly offered his services as escort, and was accepted

readily; for in the course of a long talk that morning, he had been fully forgiven, the blame for his indiscretions being transferred from his account to that of the dead governor, although it was his outspoken admiration of Derek, rather than his own contrition, which had really restored him to favor.

The town was strangely empty and silent. Hardly a native was to be seen anywhere. Many had fled in the confusion following Anũgar's death; and a number more had loaded up their canoes with their lighter goods, and paddled away under cover of darkness. The Chinamen's stores were closed, the majority of the owners being already safely bestowed on board the Spanish coaster. There was no one in the public offices, and a solitary American soldier in the plaza took the place of the vanished police force.

As she passed her father's office, Clare noticed with surprise that it was locked and barred. Rayne followed her look and smiled. "Yes, your father's clerks were missing this morning, Miss Westley, so I took the liberty of sending the books and papers down to the *Cingalee*, before you were up. I took the prisoners out of the jail for the job, and also," he blushed, "also I got the key of the house from Wilson and took all the best things out. I know it was cheek; but, you see, with only six men I can't stop looting, if any one starts."

Clare turned to him gratefully. "Oh, Mr. Rayne, how good all of you are to me!" she said with tears in her eyes. "I have so many friends, you, and the

major, and Captain Wilson, and—and—” She broke off abruptly and did not speak again for a minute; then, “Why do you suppose they have fled?” she asked.

Rayne shook his head. “I don’t know at all. The tao and the Chinese have gone, of course, because the presidente and the police went, and they think there is trouble coming. Some say Enrique is marching here, others that now Anũgar is dead the pulajanes will not be afraid to come, although that constabulary major, Dale, is trying to treat with them. Did I tell you some one went off with all Anũgar’s private papers? Well, my corporal says that about that time he saw one of your servants come out of Anũgar’s house with a basket, go down to the quay, launch a canoe, and paddle away.”

“Which of our servants?” asked Clare quickly.

“The pockmarked one—a kind of steward, wasn’t he?”

Her face brightened suddenly. “Oh, I am so glad! He was one of Enrique’s men; Pedro his name is. I wonder if there was anything very, very important in the papers.”

Rayne smiled. “I think so, because Commissioner Furber has cabled to have them sent on to him.”

At the door of the house, Rayne paused. “I will wait here.”

Clare nodded. “All right. I will be very quick,” and in a couple of minutes she was back, rather breathless, with a small package in her hands.

"May I take that?" asked the subaltern.

"No, no! Please don't trouble! Shall we walk a little faster? The town is horrible to-day; it is all so silent, and the hills look as though they had come right down on us." She glanced back with a shudder, then gave a sharp cry, "The pulajanes! the pulajanes!"

Rayne grasped the situation instantly. Three hundred yards behind them, from the jungle at the back of the Westleys' house, a column of red-cross men was streaming down on to the town. The pulajanes, however, were not running in open order with a weapon in each hand, as is the ordinary way of the boloman; but were dancing along in regular formation, four or five abreast, and on each man's left forearm was bound a strip of wood upon which he pretended to sharpen the bolo he held in his right hand. "*Tad-tad!*" "Kill, kill!"—the hateful chorus of their chant was plainly audible. "*Tad-tad!*"—the national anthem of Lamu.

"We had better hurry, although there is really plenty of time." Rayne spoke very quietly, then he pulled out his revolver and fired it as he ran, for a warning to his men.

"*Tad-tad!*" The answer came back from behind, this time loud and perfectly distinct.

"*Tad-tad!*" He fired again and then again, conscious that the bolomen were increasing their pace.

"If the boat should not be alongside the quay, or if some of the tao, who were now beginning to scurry,

towards the plaza, should make a rush and swamp it"—the fear gripped him suddenly, and he deliberately fell a few paces behind Clare.

The girl seemed to miss him instantly.

"Mr. Rayne, you are to keep up with me," she panted.

"*Tad-tad!*"—it was going to be a question of seconds after all, for the leading bolomen were racing after them now. If the boat were not there—then, as he turned into the plaza, he gave a hoarse shout of joy; for five of his men were standing at the end of the quay with Morgan, whilst the sixth was just running out of the telegraph office, loading his Krag as he ran.

The plaza, deserted half an hour before, had suddenly come to life. Scores of natives, many of them dragging or carrying little children, were tumbling out of the houses and rushing down to the beach, where they seized the first available canoes and pushed out into the bay, in most cases without paddles of any description.

Clare ran on swiftly, steadily, never looking back, never faltering or stumbling until she was just abreast of the soldiers, when she swayed suddenly, and would have fallen, but for the mate, who caught her in his arms and unceremoniously carried her down to the ship's boat. After that, except for a confused sound of firing, she remembered nothing until they were almost alongside the *Cingalee*, when she heard one of the soldiers remark: "I think we got seven, lieutenant, besides the one you shot with

your revolver. But they're the toughest brown brothers ever I saw."

"A lot of proper little Cains," growled the corporal. "See how they're cutting 'em down now! I guess I'll make good Filipinos of one or two more when I get on board. I can't shoot from here.—He's got that woman—no, he hasn't! Oh, the hound!" then he broke off abruptly, as he saw that Clare had opened her eyes. "Narrow shave, Miss," he went on awkwardly. "We hadn't too much time, after the lieutenant had been back and fetched the parcel you dropped when you stumbled."

Clare raised herself, and looked round quickly to where Rayne was sitting very upright, with a guilty look on his face. Obviously, he was afraid she was going to thank him, but she merely smiled and held out her hand for the packet, off which most of the paper had now been torn, revealing Derek North's book.

"Yes, corporal, it was a long run, wasn't it?" she said. "I was so glad to see you all there. I suppose they are going to burn poor Calbayog now"—but she carefully avoided looking towards the beach, where the pulajanes were now cutting down such fugitives as were left, apparently undisturbed by the fire of the two or three white men on the *Cingalee*.

The major was waiting at the steamer's gangway. "No one hurt?" he shouted anxiously.

It was Clare who replied. "No one hurt," then she climbed up the ladder without assistance.

“My oath! she has got a nerve,” remarked the corporal admiringly. “I reckon most women would want to weep a bit after being chased half a mile by bolomen, but she just smiles and says: ‘Yes, it was a long run.’ I don’t wonder the Britisher shot that yellow-faced little insurrecto for her sake. I would try and shoot every darned brown brother in the islands if she asked me.” Then he took a bite off his plug of tobacco, swung himself up the ladder and hurried aft, where he seated himself on the wheel-box and began calmly and scientifically to pick off such pulajanes as were unwary enough to offer themselves as targets.

Meanwhile, Wilson had sent his boats to pick up a few survivors, who, preferring the sharks to the pulajanes, had taken to the water, and also to assist the paddleless canoes. One or two riflemen on shore fired half a dozen rounds without effect; but apparently, the fear of losing their share of the plunder was stronger than their desire to kill their fellow-men, and they soon hurried off to join the looters.

“I would land if I had twenty men,” sighed the major; “but as it is, I can do nothing. There must be a couple of hundred of those fiends. . . . Rayne, tell those men not to waste any more ammunition. The light is too bad now.—Ah, there the burning begins,” as some of the nipa<sup>s</sup> shacks burst into flames; then he felt an arm slipped into his, and looked round to see Clare beside him.

“Have you got your breath back?” he asked.

She did not answer his question, perhaps did not hear it, for she stood very still, gazing at the spreading fire. "So that is the end of Calbayog," she said at last. "There are lights in our house, major. Do you see? In the dining-room. Oh, it is on fire, too. I should never have gone back there, but still—" her eyes filled with tears; then after a pause: "It is worse for the poor tao, though, they lose everything, whilst father has lots of money. Did they kill many?" she added in a low voice.

The old soldier looked down at her very tenderly. "I think not," he answered. "There must have been some sort of warning yesterday, and those who had not actually gone must have been ready to leave at the first alarm."

Clare nodded, and for some time they stood in silence, watching the blaze. "The church is well alight now," she said suddenly; "and, yes—our roof is on fire.—Oh, the church has fallen in. . . . Major, I wish the American people could stand here and see this."

The major sighed. "I wish they could, Clare," he answered, "I wish they could. They would stop all this sort of thing, if they only knew."

"Ah," she repeated softly, "if they only knew. That is what I wanted him to tell them." She spoke with unconscious simplicity, as though there could be but one to whom she referred.

"Major," Wilson's voice broke in, "one of those fellows we took out of the water has been telling us things. He says he had time to see the presi-

dente and the police, the whole mob that cleared out yesterday, mixed up with the pulajanes. He is quite sure of it, and as they got near enough to scratch his back with a bolo, it may be true. He says the presidente had red shoulder-straps, a red sash, and a revolver—that is a full colonel, isn't it?"

The girl was listening eagerly. "Let me see the man. Bring him here, Captain Wilson. I am sure to know him."

A couple of minutes later, a short, sturdy tao came strolling aft with an air of complete unconcern, as though pulajan raids were part of the normal order of life; but at the sight of Clare he took the cigarette out of his mouth and dropped his jaunty air. The girl recognized him instantly.

"Why, it's Juan," she exclaimed; "my groom! Oh, I know you can trust his word, although he was one of those who ran away yesterday." Then she proceeded to cross-examine the man, eliciting exactly the same story he had told the skipper, and after that she demanded the reason for the sudden flight of the servants. "You left because the others left, and they left because they feared Anūgar's friends, and because Pedro had gone already? How did Pedro know so quickly? He followed the Señor North down, you say? Oh, so even the servants understood?" and she turned away in sudden confusion.

When the man had been dismissed, she took the major's arm again, and drew him over to the rail. "Major," she whispered, "do you begin to suspect

anything? Doesn't the news about the presidente give you the clue? Oh, if it is only so, if it is only so!" Then, before he could ask her meaning, she gave a little cry: "The launch! there are her lights, quite close!" And she ran to the gangway, everything else forgotten in her longing for news of Derek North.

The skipper of the little boat sprang lightly on to the ladder and ran up; he had seen her white face beside the lantern, and he understood.

"Note for you, Miss," he said, handing her a letter in Derek's own writing.

Clare took it eagerly and hurried to her cabin. The sailor turned to the major and saluted. "I have a report here for you from the surgeon, sir. Mr. North himself wrote to Miss Westley, saying he was in less pain, and so on. I expect he is, sir, for they've taken off his arm. Properly poisoned it was—bit of the sleeve carried in with the bullet."

"Will he get over it?" asked Wilson, whose face was almost as white as Clare's had been.

The sailor shrugged his shoulders. "Doctor won't say yet. I saw Mr. North myself after it was off. He looked cruel bad; but he said, 'Tell Miss Westley I'm better. Don't tell her about the other part.'"

## CHAPTER XIX

WILSON heaved a sigh of relief as the cable of the *Cingalee* rattled out through her hawse-hole.

“Well, Miss Westley, we are safely inside the reef, and the wreck is still where old Pete put her. It looks to me as if he had tried it in the dark and had taken the wrong passage altogether. I don’t suppose we shall ever know for certain; but we ought to know very soon what he was doing here. . . . What do you see on shore, major?—Smoke? Let me have a look. By Jove, yes, three—four—five big fires, at least! It must be pulajanes, who have come down to loot the *Palapog* now that the monsoon has changed and they can get out to her. Well, we have got here first, and they are not likely to interfere with us. A cutting-out party of bolomen could be driven off with chunks of coal or the steam-hose.”

The skipper brought his vessel to an anchor about four hundred yards inside the reef, and at once ordered the largest of his boats to be lowered.

“The tide is falling, and we had better take advantage of it,” he remarked. “It makes it all the easier to get to her.”

As soon as the boat was alongside, Clare prepared to descend the ladder, greatly to the surprise of the skipper, who began to protest rather nervously.

“I didn’t think you were coming, Miss Westley.

Really, you had better not, you know. It means getting very wet, and then a wreck is always nasty, dismal, and smelling of bilge-water."

"I shall go, all the same," Clare answered calmly, "I want to see for myself.—Oh, I am quite safe, Captain Wilson. I am used to going up and down these horrid little ladders, and yours is not nearly as bad as some of them."

Wilson gave way without further argument. He knew it was no mere whim; for, though she had said but little since they had steamed out of Calbayog harbor, leaving Rayne and his men to make their way to the nearest cable station in the launch, it was only too plain how terrible was her anxiety; and the more the skipper discussed the matter with Major Flint, the more miserably certain they both became that there was yet greater anxiety and sorrow ahead of her, that, even though Derek were to recover from the operation, the pro-native clique in Manila would leave no stone unturned to get him hanged, or, if public opinion proved too strong for that, to have him sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It was a political matter entirely. Considerations of law or justice did not come into it; and the only hope of an effective defense was that Soley's theory might prove correct; that the wreck might furnish sufficient evidence to force the hands of the commissioners.

"The poor old hooker has pounded her bottom in," remarked the skipper, as they drew near the reef; "smashed it up completely, and, at the same

time, made a bed for herself in that half-formed coral. She would take some shifting now."

The ship's boat was beached on a small sand-bank, which, just above water even at high-tide, was quite dry now, being separated from the unfortunate coastguard by about fifty yards of shallow water. Littered about the sand was an odd collection of jetsam—a couple of mattresses sodden and discolored, one of them ripped open, with the stuffing bulging out; a stout galvanized iron tank whose side had been staved in by the seas, and, close beside it, an incandescent lamp with its filament still perfect; a stoker's sweat-rag and a lady's dress-shoe, a delicate, high-heeled satin affair, probably the souvenir of some visit to Sampoloc, the Piccadilly of Manila; an American magazine and an English banjo primer; a broken oar, a tangle of cordage, a photographic printing-frame—and a number of long cases.

As the boat's keel grounded, Wilson stepped over the side, picked Clare up lightly, and, almost before she had time to protest, set her down on the dry sand; then, with barely a glance at the other things, he strode over to where the boxes lay.

One look was enough to satisfy him. "We are not the first, after all," he said to Clare. "But here is the evidence we wanted, or, at least, the evidence I expected to find."

The girl gave a quick nod of comprehension. She knew as well as he did what the cases meant, and the blaze of excitement in her eyes showed that she

understood, too, how much more they might mean. But the journalist, being strange to the ways of small Eastern ports, did not know. "What are those, then?" he asked eagerly.

The skipper glanced towards the major, who was staring at the cases with a heavy frown on his face. "The major knows, and, I think, Miss Westley knows. Those boxes were full of guns, and, unless I am very much mistaken, we shall find some more of them on board. Evidently, they found the cases too big for the canoes, and I expect they unpacked the rest in the hold. There were a thousand guns in this shipment originally."

"How do you know?" demanded the major sharply.

Wilson laughed a little uneasily. "Because I have seen them before, and know how they came down part of the way from Hong-Kong. Perhaps I will tell you later. Meanwhile, let's have a look on board. These fellows may not have finished yet. You see, they were only here yesterday," pointing to the fresh ashes of a small fire; then he stooped down and picked up the photo printing-frame. "One of old Pete's, I suppose. He was very keen on it, although he was the last man you would have expected to go in for that sort of thing. He told me once it paid him, I don't know how."

At the edge of the water, the skipper stopped. "It is six inches deep and the coral will be bad to walk on," he said. "Will you stay here, Miss Westley, or shall I—" he colored and stammered.

Clare laughed—her spirits had risen wonderfully with the discovery of the cases—and rejected his implied offer. “Oh no, Captain Wilson, I am much too heavy, and I can walk, you know. I’ve waded lots of times, much deeper than this, when we’ve been spearing fish. I wouldn’t stay here alone with all those creepy things,” glancing at the scattered wreckage. “Of course it’s alone,” following the skipper’s look in the direction of the Chinese boat’s crew. “I don’t count them,” and then, with perfect unconcern, she entered the water and started towards the wreck.

The *Palapog* appeared hopelessly dilapidated as they drew close to her. The impression of soundness, which a landsman would have gathered when he saw her first from a distance, vanished as soon as the details became plain, and was replaced by an equally exaggerated sense of ruin. Her copper sheathing was in strips, her white wooden sides streaked with lines of rust from rivets and stanchions; one of her stumpy topmasts had broken off by the cap, leaving a jagged end, whilst the falls on the davits were dangling just above the water, swaying mournfully in the breeze; the varnish had already blistered off the little mahogany saloon, and all the loose gear had been swept from the deck; one of the long one-pounders was pointing skywards, the other seemed to have been unshipped, whilst the Gatling by the saloon skylight and the searchlight in front of the chart-room—there is no bridge on a coastguard—were brilliant with green verdigris.

“She has had a few whacking great seas over her,” remarked the skipper, scanning the vessel with a professional eye. “It just shows what stout little boats they are that they stand it at all. . . . I see our friends who came for the guns left a rope-ladder for us. I’ll go up first. Do you think you can manage it, Miss Westley?”

She smiled in answer, and, when the others had ascended, swung herself up with far more agility than either the major or McCullogh had shown.

There is something of the solemnity of death about a wrecked ship, some quality which causes men to lower their voices and tread lightly and start at every sound, which makes them hurry over whatever task they have in hand, and leave as soon as that task is complete. A wrecked train, a cyclone-swept town, the scene of a great fire, are terrible sights—terrible because of the loss and the misery and the desolate homes; but, when you look on them, all your sympathy is for the human victims; the railway carriages or the houses are mere inanimate things which can always be replaced. With a ship, however, it is very different. In her case, though you may sorrow for those who sailed in her, you grieve also for the vessel herself, as though she too had been a living thing, whose career had suddenly been cut short.

Probably, all four of the searchers on the *Palapog* felt the spell of the wreck; for there was but little said as they made the round of the deck, glancing first into the saloon, and then into the cabins which

had been occupied by the mate and the two engineers, the only white men on board besides the skipper. There was much the same desolation in each—bunk curtains hanging moldy and discolored in front of a pile of sodden bedding; on the floor a pool of black, stinking bilge-water, with a pair of boots and a pyjama jacket rotting in it; three or four photographs on the partition, almost unrecognizable, peeling from their mounts; half a dozen books and magazines swollen to twice their original size; some pipes with tarnished mounts in a fretwork rack, and a box of cigars jammed in behind the water-bottle; a mildewed suit of oilskins on a peg, and a locked sea-chest.

“They went in a hurry,” remarked the skipper; “they didn’t wait to take much kit. The mate was a rotter I wouldn’t have shipped in the fo’c’sle, and I believe the engineers were Dagos. I expect those pulajans on shore are pretty mad to see us here; they must have been meaning to come off this tide and clear out the rest of the stuff.”

In the pantry, where, as was the case with the officers’ cabins, both doors and portholes were open, the remains of the last meal, a horrible mass of damp putrescence, was still on the swing tray, whilst in the corner lay a pile of broken crockery, crowned by a huge solar topee, once the pride of the Chinese steward.

Next to the pantry was the cook’s galley. “The only door which was shut,” began Wilson, as he turned the handle; “still, I expect—” he stopped

abruptly and gave a low whistle; for the place was clean enough to satisfy even the most exacting chief officer; whilst, stored neatly beside the stove, were a stock of tinned provisions and a bag of flour, and on the cook's table, which had been packed up to compensate for the slight list of the vessel, stood several bottles of photographic chemicals and a couple of porcelain developing dishes.

The skipper turned to his companions with a look of blank astonishment. "What do you make of this? All those things were put there after she had settled right down in the coral."

"It was Captain Jansen, of course," answered Clare promptly. "He must have lived on board after the others had gone.—Oh, how horrible!" as a sudden thought struck her. "He knew the pulajanes had already risen, and he let his men land and be killed, and stayed behind himself. I suppose he felt sure the wreck would be safe, whilst they thought all they had to do was to row ashore to San Ramon, never dreaming it was burned."

Wilson shook his head. "I think it is much more likely he was drunk when he put her here, and they couldn't get him into the boat, so went without him. Besides, from the looks of things, he had no reason to be afraid of the pulajanes, because the guns must have been for them. Shall we go up to his cabin now? We may possibly find some clue there," and he led the way to the upper deck.

A single glance into Jansen's cabin was, however, enough to dispel any hope of enlightenment. Though

the looters had left the other berths alone, they had ransacked the skipper's room with great thoroughness. All the ship's papers had gone, as well as the contents of Jansen's own desk, whilst the whole of his kit seemed to have been pulled out and searched, the contents of his chest of drawers being scattered about the deck. Even his books had been thrown down from the shelves.

"There is nothing left here," said the skipper, after a rapid examination. "They have taken every scrap of paper. We had better have a look in the holds now."

"I am afraid you are right," answered the major. "Still, this seems a curious thing for pulajanes to have done. As a rule, they don't worry about white men's papers or books."

Clare sighed. "There was something special they wanted, some letter they expected to find. It was probably the key to the whole thing. Oh, if we had only been here first! I thought we were going to find so much, but now, though we know he had the guns, we can't prove who paid for them, who was behind it all. It does seem so hard." She turned away miserably, and followed the others down to the main deck, leaving the journalist still examining the dead man's broken desk.

The main hatch was off, and Wilson quickly clambered down into the bowels of the ship, where he lighted a match and looked round. "Nothing here," he shouted up after a short survey; "only ballast and stores and a rotten smell of bilge-water. We'll

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try the other hold; there's a small one abaft the saloon."

He climbed out again and led the way to the stern, where he descended once more, this time through a much smaller hatch, and for a full five minutes they heard nothing of him, then he came up, a little white about the lips, with a couple of native straw hats tucked under his belt. As he reached the fresh air, he drew a deep breath.

"The rest of the cases are there, empty," he said briefly. "They have got the lot of the guns, and the ammunition as well. I suppose they found, after all, it was easier to open them below. But there has been some one else here besides Papa Pablo's men."

"What do you mean?" asked Clare quickly.

Wilson drew the hats from his belt and opened them, showing a crude red cross stitched on the front of both. "The owners of those have been killed down there within the last two days."

The major knit his brows. "Perhaps some constabulary came off to her. There are a few parties still out."

"No, major, those fellows have been bolloed."

At his answer, Clare gave a little cry, "Oh, I begin to see it now, I believe."

The old soldier turned to her anxiously, "What do you see, Clare?"

Clare shook her head. "I want to think it all over first. There are so many things in it; but I think—I'm sure in fact—I know about those guns. I know

from where you left off, Captain Wilson," giving the skipper a look full of meaning.

A moment later the journalist came aft, beaming with satisfaction, and carrying a small cardboard box.

"Have you found anything more?" he asked eagerly; then, when the skipper had told him, "Oh, what a great story!" he said gleefully. "It will be the biggest scoop for years. We'll cable the entire thing to one of the syndicates in the States. I guess it means a passage home and a job on one of the big dailies for me. My word, it will be good to get back to God's Country again!"

"I don't see there's much to cable yet," growled Wilson, whose usually happy temper seemed ruffled. "You've found out nothing, except the fact that the pulajanes, or some other of your brown brothers, have got a thousand guns, which, I'll admit in confidence, I brought down as far as Gual. I thought they were for the Celebes, at first; anyway, I couldn't help myself; though after your father told me about this pulajan business, Miss Westley, I saw Soley in Manila, and put him on the track of the people in Hong-Kong, in case these wretched things were coming here."

Clare flushed and beckoned him to one side. "Did he—did Mr. North know?" she asked breathlessly.

Wilson looked down at the worn face and lied loyally. "No; do you think it was likely?"

The girl heaved a big sigh of relief and turned to

the journalist. "Mr. McCullogh, what is in that box?"

"I will tell you in a minute.—Captain Wilson, did you ever think Pete Jansen was a blackmailer?"

The skipper shrugged his shoulders. "I can't say it ever struck me he had that particular vice; but I know he was a pirate and," he flushed crimson, "and a gun-runner, and that he had piled up at least one boat on purpose, and was generally about the biggest old scamp in these waters, so if you tell me he was a blackmailer too, I am quite ready to believe you. Have you got proofs, then?"

The journalist opened his box and disclosed some photographic negatives. "These are the proofs," he said, lifting up the plates one by one very tenderly. "Your fat man was a genius in his way. The people he was dealing with were sure to be very careful to insist on the return of any letters they might have to write, whilst the checks they paid him would, of course, come back to them; but Pete did not mind that." He held up one of the negatives and peered through it lovingly.

"You mean he photographed them all?" asked Clare, with a touch of impatience at his deliberation.

McCullogh beamed through his glasses. "Yes; I knew there was a secret drawer in that desk—I have one of them in the office—so I tried it and found these, done up very carefully. There was nothing else, though. Still, these are almost enough. Pete was a methodical man; he took two of each to make sure. The first one," holding it up to the light and

peering at it intently, "is a check for a thousand dollars Mex., drawn on a Hong-Kong branch in favor of Pete Jansen by Juan Aguilár."

"Who is he?" asked the major quickly.

The journalist shook his head. "I don't know myself, but it is the name Mr. Soley told me to look out for especially. He knows all about him."

Clare, who was listening with sparkling eyes, nodded to herself. "I know, too, I believe," she said quietly. "No, I am not going to tell any of you yet.—What is the next one, Mr. McCullogh?"

"A similar check, dated two months later, post-dated it must have been, for the *Palapog* was here when it came due."

Wilson laughed. "He knew Pete. Half in advance, the other half after delivery—with a mental reservation to stop the second check if it seemed safe.—And the third one?"

McCullogh stared through the negative for a full minute, then he took up the duplicate and examined that too.

"This is the important one," he said at last, glancing from one to the other of his companions with an unusually serious face. "I believe," and his voice trembled with suppressed excitement, "I believe it's the biggest thing of its kind a paper in the States ever had. It reads: 'Captain Jansen. Yes, you are to close with their offer, take the stuff and get rid of it as I told you. Do not come here, as they will be watching you. Write your reply on the back of this, and I will then send you the money

for which you ask,' and then there are some initials."

"Oh, what are they? Tell me," cried Clare, taking a step forward as if to see for herself.

McCulloch handed her the negative. "You can't make them out. But I know," there was a note of absolute triumph in his voice. "I know whose they are. Commissioner Furber wrote that letter."

Major Flint groaned and walked over to the rail, where he stood staring with misty eyes towards the gloomy shores of Lamu; but Clare turned to the journalist with a glowing face—

"Mr. McCulloch, are you quite sure? It means, doesn't it, that the commissioner knew about the guns and wanted them thrown away quietly? He was afraid to interfere publicly. Oh, if we can only get a little more. Do you think Mr. Soley can fill in the blanks?"

The journalist pushed back his hat and scratched his head. "Really, Miss Westley, I don't know. What we have already makes a great story."

Clare stamped her foot. "Story! I don't want a story. I want something to help Mr. North, something against Anũgar."

McCulloch looked at her rather blankly. "I don't see that we have come to Anũgar yet, Miss Westley."

The girl laughed a little scornfully. "I thought you newspaper men were so clever. Think it over again, Mr. McCulloch." Then she crossed over to the major and laid her hand on his arm.

"Don't think I am horrid or unkind, major," she

said gently. "Of course, I must be pleased because I think I see a way to help him, but I am very, very sorry it hurts you so. Still, it's not the army; the army never did those things."

The old man took her hand in his. "No, dear, the army never did those things, as you say. But the men who have done them are public servants, and—"

"I think we had better be getting away," Wilson's voice broke in. "I don't fancy we shall find anything more here. It's not very lively, is it, Miss Westley?"

She glanced round and gave a little shudder. "No, it's creepy and mournful, and I'm so wet, though I forgot it till just now."

"Would you mind sending for the one-pounders and the Gatling, Wilson?" said the major, as they were rowing back to the *Cingalee*. "I will take the responsibility, though they are civil government property. Those fellows on shore have got a great deal too much off the wreck already."

"I thought of the guns," answered the skipper. "I will let the second mate and one of the engineers go for them right away."

"There is a canoe coming off, sir," announced Morgan, putting his head into the *Cingalee's* little saloon. "A small canoe with three natives in her and a white flag flying in the bow."

Wilson got up quickly and looked out. "Let her come alongside," he said. "They can't do us much harm."

The canoe, an ordinary dug-out with outriggers

on both sides, was paddled up slowly and not very skilfully.

“Those are not coast tao,” said Clare, who was watching from the upper deck. “The two who are paddling look like hillmen, and the one in the stern seems to be some one important. . . . Lend me your glasses, major.” She took a rapid survey of the boat. “Oh, the one in the bow is Pedro—you know, our servant who is supposed to have stolen Anūgar’s papers; the one in the stern is—take the glasses, Captain Wilson, and tell me if you recognize him.”

The skipper had a long look, then turned to her with a puzzled air. “I’ve seen him somewhere before, but I’m not certain. Is it the man who came about Enrique’s money, the old tao we found listening on the veranda afterwards?”

Clare smiled. “Yes, but you can see now he’s not a common tao. I wonder—well, we shall know in a minute. . . . Pedro is clumsy in a canoe,” as one of the outriggers cracked against the ship’s side. “Ah, he is coming up alone.”

The man came aft with his hat in his hand and bowed, first to Clare, then to the major and Wilson.

“The Señor Enrique de la Cruz is in the canoe, and wishes permission to speak to the señorita.”

The two men exchanged rapid glances of surprise, but Clare merely smiled and turned to the skipper. “Will you say he may come?” she said quietly, adding, as soon as the messenger was out of earshot, “I guessed who it was on shore when you found those dead pulajanes this morning. It explained, too, why

Captain Jansen was afraid to land with his men. Draw up another chair, will you, captain? Enrique is a gentleman, and not a brown brother at all."

The old chieftain followed his guide with an air of quiet dignity, and took the chair to which Clare motioned him as calmly as though he were used to meeting white ladies every day of his life.

"I saw you were on board, señorita," he said, speaking in perfect Spanish, "and as I wanted to speak to you, I came off at once.—Pray remain," to Wilson and the major, who were moving to the other side of the deck. "And you, too, señor," to McCullough, who had just hurried up, with his fountain-pen still in his hand. "This will be of interest to all of you. You, señorita, have the broken piece of bamboo?"

"Yes, I have it. I kept it because—I kept it as a curiosity."

"You did not think of claiming the money?"

"Of course not, señor. It only came to me by chance. It wasn't meant for me at all."

The old man shook his head. "I told Señor Westley to give it to any one who brought the stick—to any one," he emphasized the word. "Still, I know well the honorable practices of your family. But, none the less, the money was yours according to my own instructions. It is yours yet, if you will have it."

Clare shook her head. "No, no, señor, I wouldn't touch a peseta of it—besides," and she smiled, "I am afraid the pulajanes have it now."

Enrique's face suddenly grew dark—the savage was, after all, very near the surface. “The pulajanes will not keep it long, señorita. I shall have it back in two or three days,” he growled; then he went on in his former calm tones. “Still, if you will not have it, may I have the honor of doing you some service instead?”

She looked away for a moment, then she faced him again with flaming cheeks. “I want you to help Señor North. I want Anũgar's papers.”

The old man's grim face relaxed into an admiring smile. “A brave man and a brave woman,” he murmured; then: “Señorita, I see that you suspect the truth and wish to prove it. I thought you had gone to Manila, and I have already sent the papers to you there. “Yes,” in answer to an exclamation from Wilson, “I am like these accursed pulajanes in that respect—I have many ways of communicating. The papers started early this morning,” and he glanced towards the horizon, where the outlines of the next island were just visible.

Clare, who had suddenly turned very pale, pulled herself together bravely, and thanked him in a voice which strove to be as calm as his own, though the major's quick ears detected the echo of a sob behind the clear tones; then: “Is it all there?” she added anxiously.

The ladrone stroked his grizzled mustache. “There is enough to hang a dozen, señorita,” he answered quietly. “The fools! To write such things! Still the plotters of Manila are always the

same; though no man, not even the illustrious Señor Furber, ever saw my writing."

"So he knew—Señor Furber knew? You told him?" she leaned forward eagerly.

Enrique de la Cruz shook his head. "You will read it all, señorita, when you reach Manila. Any one may read it. It suits me to have it known—now I have the guns."

"So you really have the guns?" The major spoke for the first time.

The old chieftain nodded. "Of course," he answered simply. "I came down with five hundred men to get them, though I was only just in time; for, after the fighting at Maslog, the pulajanes marched over to seize the San Ramon point, but I held the neck already, and," he laughed softly, "they were surprised, señor.—Those two you found on board? Oh, they must have been paddling round the coast, and finding that the change of the monsoon had come, they went on board. But they stayed a little too long."

"What was it you were searching for amongst the papers, señor?" McCulloch asked.

Enrique gave him a keen look. "You are the man who would write this story? Neither you nor the Señor North will write it, when you learn the whole. Yes, I am a hillman, but still I know," in answer to the journalist's look of incredulous astonishment. "You will not write it, so I will tell you—I was searching for a letter from Señor Furber. It is the one thing missing in the story of the guns. If I

could have found anything to prove he knew, I could have made my own terms with the Government."

"He did know," Clare answered quickly, and told him about the photographs.

The ladrone laughed, perhaps to hide his annoyance. "Still, I have the guns. The story of them I can tell you in a few words. They belonged to the pulajanes, and Captain Jansen was to land them at Catarman as soon as the town had been burned. He had done the same sort of thing before, during the insurrection. He drew part payment for them, and then he sent to me, and I bought them for twenty thousand pesos—guns and ammunition. I, however, wrote nothing and paid nothing in advance, nor would I hamper myself with the silver when the captain might be late, or might betray me in turn. So I arranged the matter of the stick, which he was to have when I had the guns. He was to come into the San Polycarpio inlet, but he missed the passage—perhaps he was drunk—and—you know the rest."

"But he had the stick when Cochrane found him," objected Wilson.

"There were two of my men who remained on board with him, one of whom had the stick—it was not the man they found dead, but another who has disappeared completely—and the captain must have got the stick off him," answered the ladrone.

"But how did they come to be ashore?" asked the major.

Enrique shrugged his shoulders. "We shall never

know now. They are all dead; but I think my lieutenant, the one with the stick, fell overboard and was drowned, and they lowered the boat to pick up the body and get the stick—they had the small boat left—and they were blown ashore. Perhaps they broke an oar. Anyway, they would have found it almost impossible to get back, once they had gone a little way from the reef.”

Wilson frowned. “It may have been so, only Pete, who was a thorough seaman, ought to have known better; although, after all that time with nothing to do, I expect they were soaked with liquor. I forgot to tell you, major, there is still a lot of spirits on board, probably some Pete was smuggling.”

“What a dreadful man he was!—Do you know what happened to his crew, señor?” Clare asked.

“The pulajanes found them, and—” he made an impressive gesture. “Only one escaped, and reached Calbayog after hiding for weeks in the bush; but he, too, is dead.”

Clare gave a little nod of comprehension. “I know; the man who talked in the canteen. He disappeared. Oh, how hateful it all is!”

Enrique got up from his chair. “That is the story of the guns, señorita. The rest you will read in Manila.”

The girl rose too, and held out her hand. “Thank you, señor, thank you! You have done so much for me, more than I can tell you.”

The old chieftain bent over her hand. “It was but paying off my obligation to you—and to Señor

North. Besides," and he smiled, "I have the guns now, and it suits me that it should be known. Farewell, señorita. Farewell, senior," to the major; then he saluted gravely and turned to go.

Wilson accompanied him down to the main deck. "What will you do now?" he asked bluntly, as they paused at the gangway whilst Pedro hailed the canoe.

"I shall destroy the pulajanes, to the last man if I can," answered the ladrone with sudden ferocity. "And then," he glanced towards where the major was standing, "then I shall see what the Americans do. I only ask to be left alone. But if they put in another such as Anũgar to oppress the tao, let them beware. I am not a politician, señor. I know nothing of the independence and the equality and liberty of which the insurrectos talked; but," he drew himself up and his eyes flashed, "these were my own countrymen who have died in thousands, in tens of thousands, during the last three months."

"But Papa Pablo, you must reckon on him?" and the skipper gave him a keen look.

Enrique de la Cruz laughed. "There is no longer any Papa Pablo, señor."

"Captain Wilson, you will go straight to Manila?" Clare spoke appealingly.

"Of course," answered the skipper promptly. "I should have gone there anyway, as the pulajanes have effectually settled the question of loading in Calbayog."

“Is—is Catbalogan very much out of the course?” She looked away as she asked.

The major caught the skipper’s eye and shook his head.

“I’m afraid we couldn’t manage it, Miss Westley. Besides, we are sure to hear about North in Manila.”

“I should like to know, very much. Captain Wilson, wasn’t there a doctor coming to Oras?” The question came suddenly.

“Yes; but you see—” the skipper began, but Clare cut him short.

“Why didn’t he do Mr. North’s arm then?”

“North wouldn’t wait for him, Miss Westley. It wasn’t my fault, really. I tried to persuade him, but it was no good.”

She gave a little gasp, and seemed about to speak, then she turned away and walked to the rail, whence she stared at Enrique’s departing canoe.

“God help her when she knows it all!” the major whispered.

“I was a damned fool to tell her!” Wilson growled. “Still, she has a way of making one speak, and she would have known sooner or later, as she will have to know about his arm—if he pulls through. But he was so run down and worn out that I shouldn’t be surprised at anything. Why, when he shot that little yellow devil he was half mad with pain and fever; and, of course, that horrible business in the jungle makes a man three parts a savage.”

“But I think he would have done it, anyway,” answered the major quietly.

“Major,” Clare came back to them, “I am going to lie down. There have been so many awful things in the last few days, that, somehow, I think they’ve upset me a little. They seem worse now it’s all over. Oh, don’t ask me about it yet! I will tell you what I think Enrique means when I feel better.”

But it was not until the *Cingalee* was entering Cavite Bay that any one except her own maid, who had come off amongst the fugitives in Calbayog, saw Clare Westley.

## CHAPTER XX

SOLEY folded up the last of the papers, and then carefully replaced the whole pile in the bag.

“So my theory was correct, after all,” he said. “Though at one time, when I sent Mr. North down, I hardly expected to be able to prove it. You and I, Miss Westley, seem to have been the only ones, outside the palace, who guessed the truth. Even your father and Major Flint never suspected it.”

They were sitting in one of the private rooms of the hotel, and had just finished going through the bundle of documents, which had been handed to Clare within an hour of her arrival, delivered to her personally by a well-dressed young native, in whom she had recognized her father's former warehouse boy. The messenger had refused to take any sort of receipt.

“No, no, señorita. The papers come from one who writes nothing himself, and who asks for nothing written. He will know whether you have them or no,” and then from her window she had watched him swagger up to a waiting carromato, the hansom of Manila, and drive off, cigarette in mouth, looking like a Government clerk, like a school-teacher, like anything rather than a follower of a great ladrone chieftain.

Soley, who had heard of her arrival from McCul-

logh, had driven up to the hotel a few minutes after the departure of Enrique's messenger.

"Your father ought to be here to-morrow, Miss Westley," he had said. "He started for Calbayog as soon as they liberated him, started before he knew it was burned; but they have fetched Cochrane round there to garrison what is left, and have got the cable working again. Mr. Westley wired me he was going over to Catbalogan first, and then coming back here."

Clare's pale face had flushed suddenly. "Catbalogan? Have you any news, Mr. Soley? Oh, do tell me?"

The editor had shaken his head—he had received a warning message from the major, and did not want to be the first to break the news.

"No, only that he was getting on well. You see, he has got an iron constitution, and I am sure there is no reason to be anxious. The only trouble now will be to make the Government view the thing in a reasonable light. I did not wait to hear all McCullogh had to say, but I understood you expected some papers when you got here."

Then Clare had handed him the packet she had just received, and had sat very still whilst he glanced through it and gave her the gist of each paper in turn, only her eyes and the nervous play of her hands showing how great was her excitement.

"So my theory was right, after all," Soley repeated.

Clare gave a great sigh of relief. "We can get him off now, can't we, Mr. Soley?"

"I think you can make your own terms, Miss Westley, although I fancy only a hint will be necessary. It will never come into court now."

"Have they—have they mentioned my name in connection with it?" Clare's voice trembled a little.

"Yes, I am sorry to say they have. Every one knows; for, you see, you were the only white woman in Calbayog."

The girl colored. "I don't mind. I—I'm proud that any one should have done so much for me. . . . I know what you are thinking, Mr. Soley, that I am horrid, that nice girls wouldn't think as I do; but I don't see why any one should be sorry for such an awful man as Anũgar."

"I wasn't thinking anything of the kind, Miss Westley. I was envying North for having had the chance—Ah, here is the major just driving up. Do you mean to tell him?"

"Of course," answered Clare. "I would tell him anything. He always seems to understand."

"We have the whole story clear now, major; there is no longer any mystery about the tragedy of Lamu," Soley said, as soon as the greetings were over.

The soldier's eyes gleamed. "Tell me, if Miss Westley does not mind."

Clare laughed, in almost the same way the major had been accustomed to hearing her laugh before the tragedy began, and the sound told him much.

“Of course I don’t mind,” she said. “I want you to hear. But do smoke, please, major, and you too, Mr. Soley. There is such a lot to say, and smoking makes it so much easier.”

The editor lit a cigar, then turned to the major. “Well, I can give you the key to the thing in a few words. Anūgar was Juan Agūilar, and Juan Agūilar was—Papa Pablo.”

The major sat up very straight in his chair. “Go on,” he said in a low voice.

Soley looked at him keenly. “I suspected it when I asked North to go down,” he resumed. “You see, Wilson told me about the guns, and I cabled to a Chinaman I know in Hong-Kong—never mind who he is—and he replied that Juan Agūilar paid for the guns. I cabled again to ask who Agūilar was, and the very day they burnt Catarman I got his reply, saying he was a stout mestizo who had lived in Hong-Kong during Aguinaldo’s rebellion, and had disappeared afterwards, although his banking account was still open and showed a large balance. Oh, there is not much a Chinaman won’t find out if you pay him, and I have never known them give false information. At first that was all I had to go on. I knew Anūgar had been in Hong-Kong at that time, but so had a score of other rich mestizos. Yet, somehow or other, I felt sure he was the man, and I thought North might tumble on the proofs. You know how inconceivably foolish our brown brothers are about keeping dangerous papers, and there was a chance of getting hold of something

Papa Pablo had written. Well, the only proofs North did find were to the effect that some one was cabling down the secret decisions of the Commission; and, for a time, that seemed to knock my idea on the head, as I reckoned Anũgar would get these in the ordinary course from Furber, though there was always the possibility that Furber knew who Papa Pablo was, and was cautiously working against him."

"Did he know?" the major's question came sharply.

Soley laid his hand on the bag of papers. "It is all here. Furber is no fool. Some spy offered him the secret, and he bought it, long ago, just at the time the guns left Hong-Kong. And Anũgar was aware that he knew, and went on unconcernedly, being certain that Furber's hands were tied, that, for party reasons, he dare not denounce him, as that would have been an admission that the brown brother policy was a failure."

"Didn't he do anything at all?"

"I'm afraid not. When he first found out there was a chance of a rising, at the time that pulajan shot at your men, he wrote to Anũgar, whom he still thought to be loyal, asking him to try and put the thing down quietly, as under no circumstances could troops be sent. 'The party has declared the islands to be at peace, and to send the army down now would lose us millions of votes,' he wrote. Then, when the rising actually came, and he found what a big affair it was going to be, he decided to leave it alone, to let the fire burn itself out, and then deny there had ever

been a blaze. That was why he was so wild with North and myself. But for the *Herald* practically no one in Manila, no American at least, would have known. I forced them to send down the constabulary, though I am not sure that I did any good by it."

The major made a gesture of disgust. "It is abominable. They start lying, and then they find it impossible to stop. Do you know that, by the time this business is over, between fifty and a hundred thousand tao will have died, mostly from sheer misery and starvation, and that practically every tao in the island will have lost all he possessed?"

"What matter?" the journalist retorted bitterly. "They would have lost more than a hundred thousand votes by acknowledging their failure."

The old soldier got up and paced the room. "Well, tell me the rest. What was Anūgar's object? The whole thing seemed to be so utterly purposeless, after all."

"It was not purposeless at first," answered Soley. "Had they got the guns, they would have been strong enough to seize three or four of the southern islands, and from these the rising would have spread right through the group. They knew, you see, that there was no fear of the army being sent until they were firmly established; and if Pete Jansen had kept faith with them, I believe we should have seen Luzon itself in a blaze by now. They had an organization in every town, and as Anūgar grew stronger, he would probably have dropped the religious pretense, and have become simply a political leader. But Pete

betrayed them, and, to keep his followers loyal until such time as he could get the guns off the wreck, Anũgar allowed them to loot and burn as they liked."

"You say they had organizations. Do you know any of the Manila pulajanes?"

Soley took a paper out of the packet and handed it to the major. The old soldier glanced down it, then drew a deep breath.

"Good heavens! Half the leading natives in the city, and most of them civil servants. Are there any proofs of this?"

"Their signatures," Soley answered grimly.

The major turned away and stared out of the window. "How did you get on the track of Jansen?" he asked at last.

"By logical deduction. I knew his character; I knew, too, that Wilson had seen him off Goyal, and, as soon as I heard of the wreck, I felt sure the guns were on board. Of course, what McCulloch found clears up that part. Pete took Anũgar's money, then betrayed him to Furber, who was only too glad to avoid a scandal by having the guns thrown overboard quietly, and paid Jansen to do so. Then Pete, who was perhaps the biggest scoundrel of the lot, betrayed both Anũgar and Furber to old Enrique, who seems to be the only one who has scored."

"Had you nothing more to go on, all along, except your suspicions?" demanded the major. "McCulloch spoke as if you had."

Soley nodded. "Yes. I did not want him or North to know, as I wished them to confirm my idea

independently; but I had sent Anūgar's photo to Hong-Kong, and my Chinaman had got it identified as that of Juan Agūilar, so I knew that, if I could prove that the guns were on their way to Lamu, I had got him on that count; though there was still nothing to show that he was Papa Pablo. Of course, when North shot him the thing got urgent, and I was more than relieved to get McCulloch's cable after you had seen Enrique; for there was a chance that Pete had never had the guns. I hardly dared to hope, though, to get the whole thing on paper. It simply shows their inconceivable folly. Even the smartest of them are really savages still. Well, major, I think you've got it all now."

"I trust so. Heavens! what an abominable business! You will never think of publishing this, Soley?"

The editor shook his head. "No; I think it is too strong. It would raise a revolution in the States, or something very near it, and do no good, after all. The party is in for four years. No, it's splendid copy, magnificent copy," he sighed regretfully; "but it's too shameful to put in print. It's done, and making it public won't undo it. Besides these papers belong to Miss Westley."

"What are you going to do, Clare?" the major turned to her anxiously.

Clare laughed. "Don't look so very serious, major. I am not going to try and get Mr. Furber guillotined, or electrocuted, or whatever you do to people like that. I am only going to send these papers to

the bank—I have already asked the manager to let a clerk come for them—and then I will leave it to you. You must arrange for them to let him—Mr. North, I mean—go quite free. Then I will promise to have all these destroyed. Otherwise—” she broke off and smiled, but there was no mistaking the determination in her voice; this slight, pale-faced girl knew how strong a hand she held, and was quite prepared to throw down the gauntlet to the astute politicians in the palace.

“You mean to force the hands of the commissioners?” the major asked gravely.

“Of course,” she answered calmly. “If they had not done wrong, I shouldn’t be able to do it, should I? I should like very much to see them punished, though; and I am not sure we ought to let them off. Mr. Furber is a traitor.”

Soley shook his head. “No, you are too hard on him, Miss Westley. He was doing what he thought to be his duty to his party.”

Clare’s lip curled scornfully. “His party! And how about his country? and about those thousands of tao? No; it’s not because I have a wee bit of sympathy for him—he is absolutely horrible—but because of our color. These natives ought never to know of a thing like that. We white people ought to keep those matters to ourselves.”

The major got up and took his hat. “I wish they all thought the same.—Well, you will leave it to me, Clare? And you will do the same, Soley? All right, I will go across and tell the general. He will

know what to do. Oh, one thing more, Soley. Do you suppose Anũgar was the original Papa Pablo? ”

“ No, I should say not. The original is probably dead, and this fellow took on the tradition because it was an easy way of rallying the hillmen, who had stood aloof from the insurrectos.”

“ I see. Thanks. I will see you later, Clare, if I may come round. Good-by for the present,” and he went out, looking, as Clare was quick to note, quite an old man.

“ Poor Major Flint! ” she said, as she stood on the balcony watching him driving up the cobbled street. “ Poor Major Flint, he does feel it terribly, for he is so very honorable himself. Mr. Soley, I should like to see Commissioner Furber’s face when he hears he has been found out.”

“ It won’t be a great surprise to him,” answered Soley, who was waiting whilst his own carronato was being sought. “ You see, I told him several days ago that I knew the truth. I wanted to stop him getting deeper in the mud by promising the natives he would hang North.”

Clare’s eyes blazed suddenly. “ Did he say that? Did he dare to say that? ” she cried. “ If he did, I will get all those papers published. Oh, how could he! ”

Soley smiled at her vehemence. “ No, but I was afraid he might ; for, outwardly, Anũgar was still his man ; so I bluffed him. I had no proofs then, of course, but he didn’t know that for certain.”

“So you have to bluff, as you call it, and tell lies, and threaten, to make your officials allow a man to have a fair trial.” Clare’s voice was very scornful. “Oh, Mr. Soley, why don’t men like you and Major Flint and Captain Cochrane go into politics, and drive these dreadful people out? They must be a very small class, after all.”

“I am afraid they wouldn’t have us, Miss Westley, especially in the Philippines. We are in the grip of a hideous thing they call the Party Machine.”

The girl sighed. “You all seem so dreadfully hopeless about it, you won’t try to fight it.—Well, good-by, Mr. Soley. Thank you so much. You will let me know the moment you get news of Mr. North. I am so anxious to hear,” she added simply.

. . . . .

That night, the general dined at the governor-general’s house.

“I have seen Furber,” said the civilian curtly, when the ladies had left the table.

The soldier drew his chair a little closer. “Yes?” he asked.

The other man nodded. “He admits it, says he did it for the best, the party’s best.”

The general examined the end of his cigar rather carefully. “What will you do?” he asked, after a pause.

The civilian sighed. “North must go away quietly, and we must hush up the rest of the story. One or two of the worst of the conspirators have

fled; but we can't touch any of them openly, for, if we did so, the whole thing would come out, and that would be worse than letting them go. Hush it up, that is the only way," and he reached out wearily for his glass.

"Have you told that plucky little girl?" asked the soldier.

The civilian nodded. "I sent her a letter, covering all she wanted, and she sent me an order on the bank to deliver the papers. So it all ends."

For a while there was silence. At last: "I am sorry for you," grunted the general, "infernally sorry. It wasn't quite what they taught us as boys."

The governor drew his hand across his eyes. "My resignation has been accepted officially now, and my successor is appointed."

The general looked up quickly. "Who is it, after all?"

The governor laughed harshly. "Furber—a sound party man. He has really had the position ever since he came out here. I was a figurehead, and the other commissioners were his creatures. Listen!" he held up his hand suddenly.

Two or three soldiers were coming down the road singing lustily—

"Am I a man? or am I a mouse?  
Am I the governor-general, or a hobo, a hobo?  
I want to know who's the boss of this show,  
Is it I, or Emilio Aguinaldo?"

"Exactly," said the governor grimly, "exactly.

I have asked myself a similar question more than once. It was written about my predecessor, who prohibited it; but I—well, I rather like it. Will you have another glass of port? No? Then we had better join the ladies.”

## CHAPTER XXI

“I AM sure it could not be helped, dear,” said Robert Westley. “That surgeon at Catbalogan is a first-rate man; but it was a case of North’s arm or his life. We ought to be thankful he has pulled through at all.”

“It is too dreadful. I can’t bear to think of it.” Clare turned a very tear-stained face towards him. “Are you certain they are doing all they can for him? He must be so lonely down there with no one to talk to; for, of course, the officers have lots to do.”

Her father, who had arrived in Manila that morning, and had just got through the unwelcome task of breaking the news about Derek’s arm, smiled and shook his head.

“I think they look after him as well as any one could, Clare. Besides, there is one of the officers of his old regiment staying there, a Captain Carling, a very pleasant young fellow, who went down with me on the *Serrantes*. He was on leave in Manila when he heard about North’s exploit and hurried to Catbalogan at once.”

Clare opened her eyes very wide. “One of the officers of his old regiment, father? Oh, I am glad! It must mean so much to him. Does he worry very

badly about his arm, or about what they might do to him?"

"No, dear—at least, not outwardly. He seems remarkably cheerful, considering all things. I have no doubt, though, it will be a relief to him to hear what my little girl has been able to do for him, that there is not going to be any sort of prosecution."

"But you mustn't tell him that father—promise you won't. Say it was the major, or Mr. Soley, or old Enrique. Besides, it was through me all the trouble came," she added rather incoherently.

Robert Westley drew her to his side. "How was it through you, Clare?"

The girl looked down. "Well, you see, he shot Anūgar because of me, and his arm got so bad because he wouldn't wait at Oras for the doctor, but hurried round to help me. When is he coming up, father?"

Her father shook his head. "Not for a week or two, I expect; but Flint tells me they want him to go away as soon, and as quietly, as possible. They won't let him land here, but will just send him on board the Hong-Kong boat."

"Then we may hardly see him at all. How horrid they are; for, really, he got them out of their trouble, and they ought to be so grateful to him."

"I dare say they are in their hearts," answered Westley. "But they can't very well show it. It will be difficult enough for them, as it is; although I suppose people ought to be getting used to the curiosities of the law here. I fancy they will just

take refuge in silence, and as Soley, their only dangerous critic, will say nothing, it will all blow over."

"And those wretched men will go unpunished, and every one will forget it, except the poor tao, and Mr. Coote's mother, and Mrs. Hoyt, and, of course, Mr. North. . . . Father, what are you going to do now?"

"Well, the pulajanes practically finished winding up my business when they burnt Calbayog. Another two or three weeks will see all my affairs here settled, and after that I thought we would go home for good. What do you say, dear?"

"You know I shall be glad to get away from the islands," she answered. "I never want to see them again. I should always imagine there were bolomen coming out of the bush behind me, and I couldn't be civil to a native. I should look on them all as traitors and murderers."

Westley nodded. "I thought you would be pleased. What shall we do this evening? Go down to the Luneta?"

"No, no; I couldn't. I should hate to have every one staring at me and talking, as I know they would, especially those nasty mestizos. Lots of people have called to see me already; and, though I know some meant to be nice, because I was alone and so on, most of them only wanted to ask questions about—about it all. I should like to go out and stay with Mrs. Shaw—you know, the major's cousin—she sent me a message by him. You will let me go, won't you,

father? But I won't see any one, except, of course, Mr. Soley and the major and Mr. Rayne. Did you see Mr. Rayne, I meant to ask you?"

"Yes; he will be up before long. . . . Of course, you shall go to Mrs. Shaw's, dear. It will do you good. I expect you want a rest."

"I think I do," she answered wearily.

Ten days later, Clare, looking more like her old self, was sitting on the veranda of the Shaws' house, pouring out tea for Rayne.

"He didn't look very ill then?" she asked anxiously.

The subaltern shook his head. "No, he was still thin, naturally, but quite different to what he was that day, when we saw him last.—Miss Westley," he turned to her very earnestly, "I didn't realize till then what a man's anger could be. He was absolutely quiet, but nothing could have turned him from what he meant to do. He must have been a fine soldier."

Clare rewarded him with a grateful look. "I thought at one time you wouldn't like him, for his ideas were so different to yours; but you have changed, and now, Mr. Rayne, I know you will be a very good soldier too, like the major—or him. I shall never forget the time the pulajanes chased us, and you went back for my book."

The youngster colored with pleasure. "I would have done more than that," he muttered.

"I know you would," she answered. "I think

you would have done what he did, only I was horrid and wouldn't see you then. . . . But what did he say when you told him they were not going to try him, or anything like that?"

Rayne shifted uneasily in his chair. "Well, Miss Westley, he was rather angry."

"What did he say?" she repeated. "Tell me. You know you must, Mr. Rayne."

The boy hesitated a minute, then he blurted it out. "He said: 'I'm not going to tell a damned lie to get them out of a hole. I didn't shoot him because he was a traitor, but because he was a colored man who insulted a white woman. Any decent white man would have done the same. Let them do the lying themselves.'"

The girl, who had listened with parted lips, drew a deep breath. "Ah! and then, Mr. Rayne?"

"Then Captain Carling, who was there, drawled in his bored sort of way: 'The bounders will do that quick enough, old man. They seem awfully good at it. I wish we could éxport the Indian Congress persons out to 'em. I saw this Furber Johnny driving in Manila with a nigger of sorts up beside him. Shocking bad form, I thought it.'"

Clare laughed. "Oh, Mr. Rayne, you mustn't exaggerate. But what did Mr. North say then?"

"I told him they didn't want him to say anything, but were just going to send him to Hong-Kong, without letting him land in Manila; and that made him more angry. Then the doctor came in, and turned me out; but I saw him again before I left,

and he seemed all right, and asked me to tell you that he was getting quite fit again."

She leaned forward and looked at his cup. "Do have some more tea, Mr. Rayne," she said rather hurriedly. "Won't you? No? Then please light your cigar. I know you want to smoke. And then tell me all about Calbayog."

The subaltern took out his cigar-case and obeyed her, then: "Well, there isn't any Calbayog left really, except the walls of your house, which Cochrane has turned into constabulary headquarters. But the tao are beginning to come back, and there will soon be a new lot of shacks, though they have no food or clothes—nothing, in fact, poor little chaps. There are no pulajanes about now. Enrique is hunting them down, and hundreds have already thrown off the red-cross and joined him. Cochrane says he wishes some one would come along and ask for a fight; for it's getting slow and his men will become soft if they have food every day; but he himself leaves next month to go to China as an instructor—he's got the rank of colonel, I believe—and the Boy, who is just now up in the hills with Enrique, is going with him. Cochrane said he wished they could get North to join them."

The girl looked up indignantly from the cigarette she was lighting. "Mr. North go and drill those hateful Chinese! I'm sure he wouldn't."

At last Rayne got up with a regretful sigh. "I suppose I must go," he said.

Clare walked with him to the end of the veranda.

“You will come and see us again before we leave, won’t you?” she asked. “I will get Mrs. Shaw to invite you to dinner.”

The boy stared at her blankly. “Before you leave? But you can’t go back to Calbayog for months yet.”

“Oh, didn’t I tell you? I always do forget to tell people the important things. We are not going back to Calbayog at all, but sail for Hong-Kong as soon as father has finished his business here. We are going home to England.”

Rayne’s face suddenly grew very unhappy. “Is that so really, Miss Westley? I say, I am sorry. I—we shall miss you horribly,” and he walked to his quarters in a distinctly miserable frame of mind, cursing the pulajanes and his own luck.

It was a week or so after Rayne’s visit that Robert Westley came rather unexpectedly into the room where his daughter was writing.

“There is a transport in from the south,” he said.

Clare laid down her pen quickly. “You mean Mr. North has come?”

Her father nodded. “Yes; I have just been out to see him. He looks very well,” he hastened to add, in answer to the question in her eyes. “He has got over it wonderfully, when you consider what a shock the whole thing must have been.”

Clare got up rather unsteadily. “Let me go aboard and see him,” she said softly.

“What, now, at once?” he asked, stroking her

hair. "You will have plenty of chances, dear. He is going to Hong-Kong by the *Woosung* in a couple of days' time, and I have arranged for us to go by the same boat."

Clare flushed with pleasure. "Dear old daddy," she said, kissing him. "Still, mayn't I go out to-day—with you, of course?" and Westley laughed and consented.

. . . . .

Derek was leaning over the rail of the little transport, the same one which Clare had once criticised on account of her sea-going qualities, when he caught sight of a white dress in an approaching launch.

"I think it is Miss Westley," he said very quietly to Captain Carling, who was still with him.

The captain gave him a keen glance, then tossed away his cigarette end, and stretched himself. "I think I shall go and change—get into some shore-going things. I want to fetch my mail from the club."

"Those are shore-going things you've got on now," said Derek calmly. "You had better stay here. I want to introduce you."

Carling laughed. "You are a beggar to have your own way, North. Sometimes you seem to think I'm still your subaltern. Who are the others under the awning? There are two besides Miss Westley and her father."

"One is Rayne—you know him—and the other is Major Flint. If we only had Wilson, who, they say,

sailed a week ago for Hong-Kong, we should have the whole of the Calbayog party."

"I say, I shall be one too many, North; really I shall. I've got some letters to write before I go ashore."

"You stay here," replied Derek, then he moved over to the gangway to receive his visitors.

Clare was very pale as she stepped aboard, and it was a very cold hand she put into Derek's. She tried to look him in the face, squarely as of yore; but, somehow, her eyes would return to that empty sleeve pinned across his coat. He saw her trouble instantly, and tried to divert her thoughts.

"It's awfully good of you all to come off and see me like this," he said. "It's the worst of being a dangerous character; they won't allow you on shore to visit your friends."

For once Clare was at a loss for an answer, and she stood gazing down on the deck whilst Derek shook hands with the others; then he turned to her again and introduced Carling, whom he had summoned with a nod.

"Captain Carling came down to Catbalogan to cheer me up, Miss Westley, and now claims all the credit for my recovery."

"Bad patient he was, too, Miss Westley," answered the officer. "It took me all my time to keep him quiet. If it hadn't been that there were no boats but these transports, and the doctor wouldn't let him on board, I believe he would have run away from hospital long ago. He used to chivy me

round in the old days, and this gave me a chance to get square."

The girl laughed rather nervously. "Was he really so bad as all that? Mr. Rayne told me quite a different story about you, Mr. North." Then the whole party moved off to the awning, where Clare sat down and listened rather inattentively to Carling, whilst Derek was talking to the major and her father. Carling watched her closely, and noticed how, even when she was replying to his remarks, her eyes were always on Derek, and he noticed, too, that Rayne, who was standing a little apart, seemed to have no interest in anything but her.

A few minutes later, Derek came over and took the chair on the other side of her.

"They have been explaining the situation; as regards the authorities, you know. It was most awfully well done," and he thanked her with his eyes.

She looked down. "It was Enrique really—Enrique and the major."

Carling muttered an excuse and got up; then, after an awkward pause—

"Did it hurt very much?" Clare asked in a low voice.

Derek shook his head. "No; it was soon over, and they were wonderfully careful and good."

"Does it hurt now?" The words were almost whispered.

"Oh, not a bit. I am getting quite used to it, and can manage to do most things for myself. You

will be able to see, if, as I hope you will do, you come to dinner on the mail-boat one night."

Clare looked up in surprise. "Didn't you know we were going on the same boat to Hong-Kong? I thought father was telling you;" then her cheeks grew suddenly hot at the look which came into his eyes.

There was little more said, for the memory of their last meeting was vividly before each, and it was rather a relief when the major joined them.

"Westley is taking Captain Carling off to dinner to-night, North," he said, "but I am going to get our skipper here to invite me to keep you company."

Captain Carling was a very agreeable guest, and during dinner devoted himself to his hostess—Mrs. Shaw had insisted on their dining with her, and not, as Westley had proposed, at the hotel—but when the coffee was served on the veranda, he relinquished his post to Westley, and took a chair next to Clare's.

For the first few minutes, he talked more or less at random, as if his mind were not on what he was saying, but at last he seemed to pull his courage together, and dropping his usual drawl, he turned to her earnestly.

"Miss Westley, did Captain North," she started at the unfamiliar title, "did Captain North tell you he used to be in our regiment?"

She nodded. "Yes, I knew he was in a Sikh regiment and—and that he left."

Carling was fairly started now. "He sent in his

papers in a fit of rage. I was awfully sorry—we all were, from the colonel downwards—but no one could say anything to him. You know he has got a terrible temper.” Clare shook her head. “Oh, yes, he has, really, Miss Westley, though there was enough to make a man wild; but as I say, no one could help him, because he wouldn’t let them, and he wouldn’t help himself.”

“But he didn’t do anything wrong. I know he didn’t. He couldn’t be anything but a gentleman,” Clare exclaimed.

Carling felt in the pocket of his dinner jacket and produced a telegraph form. “When I heard about this affair—this shooting, you know—I cabled the Chief, telling him in a few words, and asking for an extension of leave. This is his answer—‘Yes: go down and tell him the regiment is proud of him.’ I think that shows you, Miss Westley, what they think.”

The girl sat up suddenly, and held out her hand. “Let me see,” she said, then she read the slip and heaved a sigh of satisfaction.

Carling smiled to himself and went on. “Well, when I got my mail to-day, I found a letter from the Chief, telling me that the business over which Captain North resigned had been cleared up, and that he was more than vindicated.”

Clare gave a little gasp. “Tell me all about it,” she said.

Carling hesitated. “I don’t know whether I ought to. You see——”

“I want to know,” she answered decisively. “I am sure to hear it somewhere, and I want to learn the true story first, because I hate to know a thing is a lie, and not be able to prove it.”

The captain knocked the ash off his cigar with rather exaggerated care. “I shouldn’t like North to think I had told you,” he said at last. “He’s so hot-tempered, you see.” Clare smiled a little scornfully. “Oh, but really he is, and he wants the whole thing forgotten. I went back on board this afternoon, and gave him a letter from the colonel, and, after he had thought it over, he said he never wished it mentioned again.”

“But surely—” Clare began. “Isn’t he going to clear himself publicly, then?” Carling shook his head. “But why not? Why not, Captain Carling?”

The captain’s voice was a little unsteady as he answered her. “Because, if he is a hot-headed idiot, Miss Westley, he is also a very perfect gentleman, and he won’t clear himself by injuring another man.”

Clare took up her fan and began to use it rather vigorously. “I must hear it all now,” she said quietly. “It isn’t only curiosity, you know that.”

Carling looked at her for an instant, and what he saw in her face made him give way. “It was nearly three years ago,” he began. “We were quartered in a station where there was a good deal of society, worse luck, and North got engaged to the daughter of the magistrate.” Clare’s lips tightened a little, but Carling was looking away. “I didn’t like her, and I liked her mother still less. Her people were

dead against the engagement too, for North was a poor man in those days, and they thought the girl, who was really handsome, might have done better—as a matter of fact, she eventually married some rich old civilian. Well, North got engaged to her; but I always thought that the opposition of her mother and the jealousy of other fellows had a good deal to do with making him propose. He was a beggar for getting his own way.”

“You don’t think, then, he cared for her very much?” Clare asked quickly.

Carling smiled. “I don’t know much about those things, Miss Westley. Anglo-Indian mammas always chased me off. North seemed keen, and determined to hold his ground. . . . Just about that time, as luck would have it, one of the hill tribes got restless, and there was talk of our regiment going up. Then, one night, when we were discussing the thing at the club, North said openly he hoped we shouldn’t be sent, for it was a rotten district, and we could do nothing without a small army. Other fellows had said the same before; but it so happened there was a man from the line regiment standing by, one of those fellows North had cut out, and he made a nasty remark, and there was a bit of a row.”

“What was the remark?” demanded Clare.

Carling hesitated again. “Well, it was a hint that North didn’t want to risk his life, now he had other ties.”

Clare gave a cry. “How abominable! To say it about Mr. North of all men! And then?”

“Then some cad repeated it outside the club, and the story got round. There were plenty of idle women who were jealous of North’s *fiancée*, and North himself wasn’t very popular outside the regiment, because he had never learnt to suffer fools gladly. We were all pretty mad about it in the mess, and tried our best to stop it; but, just as it was dying down, we got orders to hold ourselves in readiness for active service, and that very night North was in hospital, with a revolver bullet through his foot.”

The girl started. “An accident? How did it happen?”

Carling shook his head mournfully. “He said he had begun to clean his pistol, not remembering it was loaded; but the story didn’t sound probable—he was too careful a man—and the next day the whole station was alive with the old slander, that he did not want to go on service, and had maimed himself, rather than risk the hillmen’s bullets.”

“They said he was afraid—they dared to say he was afraid! Oh, what hateful people there are in the world!” Clare’s voice was fiercely scornful. “But he? What did he say?”

“He stuck to his story, Miss Westley. The regiment never went in the end, but the harm was done. I always thought his *fiancée’s* mother had a good deal to do with it; and, if you had ever lived in one of those miserable little communities, you would know how they revel in a lie. Then one of those scurrilous

rags you sometimes get up-country published as much as it dared of the story; and from the station it spread right through India."

"But surely they didn't believe it, Captain Carling?"

"Too many believed it, Miss Westley, or pretended they did; and, when he was up again, he found himself cold-shouldered; not in the regiment—we knew him—but outside it. He wouldn't give any explanation, not even to the Chief, but the story hit him terribly hard, and, when he found out how it had spread, he was so savage to think such a thing should be believed that he sent in his papers. He wouldn't explain; he wouldn't try to live it down; but just threw up the Service in a bitter, scornful sort of rage. Even if his name had been cleared at that time, I don't think he would have stayed. He was too angry with every one."

Clare's eyes flashed. "He was right, too. And what happened then?"

"His engagement was broken off—she went back on him at once—and he left India. We heard of him from time to time, that he was knocking about the East and—and not doing much good. He wouldn't go home, although he came into his uncle's property soon after he resigned. Probably, if he had inherited it before, the trouble would never have occurred, for the world is much kinder to rich men."

"I don't think we ever thought of him as a rich man; I don't think we ever knew," answered Clare.

“But I want to know the real story—how he got hurt,” she added a little impatiently, as if he had been wasting time.

Carling turned round and faced her. “There was a boy in the regiment, a nice boy in many ways, and, thanks to North, he has turned out a good officer; but he was only a boy then, and rather weak and silly. He drank a little, and gambled a good deal, and he got himself into a hole. North guessed his trouble, it seems, and that unlucky night he went round to his quarters to see if he could help him to get straight. The youngster really was in a bad fix, and absolutely desperate. He had been trying to drown his worries, and, of course, had made them worse. North entered just in time to see him fingering a revolver, and made a grab for it; then there was a struggle, and the thing went off and hit North’s foot. It sobered the boy when he saw what he had done, and, to do him justice, he wanted to go and tell the colonel the whole story, there and then. But North wouldn’t hear of it, made him swear to hold his tongue about the affair, because, as he said, it would have ruined the youngster’s chances to let it be known. Then he got back to his own quarters and made up the yarn.”

The girl looked at him with suspiciously bright eyes. “Oh, how splendid!” she murmured. “But didn’t that wretched boy speak when he knew what trouble he had caused?”

Carling shook his head. “It was the luck of the whole miserable business that he should have gone

down with fever next day—whisky and anxiety brought it out, I suppose—and he very nearly pegged out—died, I mean. They sent him home a wreck, and he never heard anything of the slander till he got a letter from North, holding him to his promise. At that time, too, as I said, nothing would have pacified North; he was too angry at having been suspected.”

“How did your colonel know in the end, then?” demanded Clare.

“The youngster told him. He heard North was in trouble here, and he couldn’t keep it any longer.—No, no, you mustn’t blame him too much, Miss Westley. He had given his word, not foreseeing all it would mean, and he didn’t know till it was too late. The blame lies with those who started the slander, and the fools who believed it. But, of course, North himself was not very wise. He ought to have treated it with contempt; but, as I said before, he is too hot-tempered—or he was then.”

“He was wise,” Clare retorted indignantly. “How could you expect him to mix with people who had even listened to such things? He was much too good for them to understand him. But now,” there was a note of triumph in her voice, “they will know the truth about him, if he is afraid; for Mr. Soley says every paper in the East has the story of how he got wounded and—of the rest. Still,” her tone became a little wistful, “I wish they could hear about the other as well, about what he did for that boy.”

“North will never tell that, or allow it to be told.” Carling spoke with conviction.

“I know he won’t,” she answered, “and perhaps he is right; it might seem to spoil it a little, and, at least his friends know.”

“His best friends know,” corrected the captain gravely.

. . . . .

It was late on the following afternoon when Rayne walked over to Major Flint’s quarters to explain some detail connected with his duty in Calbayog. When his business was finished, the older man looked at him keenly. “You seem a bit unwell,” he said. “You had better have a cocktail. The sun has been too much for you.”

Rayne shook his head. “I’m all right,” he said wearily.

The major mixed his cocktails, and they drank them in silence, then: “What is it, Rayne? You are worrying about something. Tell me.”

The boy stared out of the window a moment, then turned a very woebegone face to his superior officer. “She’s sailing to-morrow,” he muttered, “and I don’t suppose I shall ever see her again. I think I shall resign, major. I couldn’t stand Manila after this.”

The major lighted a fresh cigar in rather leisurely fashion. “You will get over it, my boy,” he said at last, “and then you will wonder why you ever thought of doing what would be a very poor compliment to

her. You will get over it, as men older than yourself have had to get over it," and he sighed heavily.

The boy glanced up quickly, but what he saw in the major's eyes stopped the words which had risen to his lips, and for a while they smoked in silence.

"She will marry him, of course?" Rayne spoke abruptly.

The major shook his head. "I don't know. I dined with him last night. He told me something about his past—he is a very fine man—and then I gathered that he meant to part from the Westleys at Hong-Kong. He was a cripple, he said, and he had broken with every one he used to know, and once a man got a bad name he never really got rid of it. I told him he was all wrong, but he wouldn't listen."

Rayne drew a deep breath. "Did you tell him what she thinks of him?"

The major smiled sadly. "I could hardly do that."

The subaltern flushed. "I don't know, sir," he said doggedly. "I hate to think of it, of course. It hurts horribly, but I know how she feels—she has asked me about him—and it would kill her if he went away. I know it never could be myself—I knew that all along; but I would sooner it was North than any one else. Oh, I wish I had had his chance."

"You mean about Anũgar? It wasn't that. I saw it long ago, before either of them suspected it themselves, when he was staying here with me. But it is not for you or myself to interfere, Rayne."

The boy got up. "I don't know about that, sir," he repeated. "I'm dining with him to-night," and he went out with a very white face.

The major mixed himself another cocktail; but, somehow, it did not taste quite right. "I think I shall go up to the club," he muttered; "it is lonely here;" then, as he stood up, he caught his own reflection in the glass and sighed. "I'm getting an old man, and I suppose old men must expect to be lonely sometimes."

It was when Rayne and Derek were sitting on deck after dinner that the subaltern blurted out what he had to say.

"You will be going home with them—with the Westleys—to England, I suppose?" he began.

Derek shook his head. "I think not," he answered quietly. "I am going up to Japan for a bit, and then I shall probably go over to your country and look at that."

Rayne fidgeted with his cigar-case. "I say," he broke out at last, "don't you know what a lot she thinks of you? Why, that time the pulajanes chased us in Calbayog she had gone on shore only to get a book of yours; and it has been just dreadful to see her anxiety about you. I would give anything to have her think like that of me, but I know it can't be, and I couldn't bear to feel she was miserable. Do you think she is one to trouble about whether you are a cripple, as you say, or what people have said of you, after all you have been through here? She blames herself for it all, and unless—

unless—If you went away, she would think you blamed her too. I don't care about you, but about her."

Derek was looking straight in front of him towards the twinkling lights of Manila. Like Rayne, he was very white, but his voice was perfectly steady as he turned round and held out his hand.

"Thank you," he said gravely. "I didn't think, though, that you felt the same as I do. I am very, very sorry, because I know what it means."

Rayne laughed a little harshly. "Who could help it?" Then he got up abruptly. "I think I should kill you, as you killed Anūgar, if you didn't make her happy. Good-night, and if I don't come aboard to-morrow, good-by."

. . . . .

Dinner was just over on the *Woosung*, and Clare and Derek were standing by the wheel-box, watching the swirl of white water streaming away astern. All through the meal, Clare had been chafing inwardly at the manner in which the Chinese steward had cut up Derek's food, and as soon as she got away from the table, she had waylaid the offending Celestial, and had given him instructions which he had received with a grin of benevolent comprehension; then she had joined Derek on deck.

"There is no sign of the islands now, not even a light," said Derek.

Clare sighed. "No, nothing. There is only what we carry with us in our memories."

"Do you want more?" he asked.

She gave a little shiver. "No, no; I would forget most of it, if I could—at least most of what has happened during the last few months."

"Not all of it, then?"

Clare shook her head. "Some of it I never could forget—I never want to forget," he only just caught the words.

After a while, "Why don't you smoke?" she asked abruptly. "You know you haven't got to ask permission."

He fumbled in his pocket and produced his case, laid it on the seat, and took out a cigar. She watched him with parted lips, but as he tried awkwardly to get a match out of his box, she sprung forward with a cry, "Let me do it; oh, let me do it for you!"

Derek saw the tears in her eyes. He dropped his cigar on the deck and took the hand outstretched for the match-box. "Will you always do it for me, Clare?" he asked softly.

He felt her hand tighten on his own. "If I may," she whispered.

They were still leaning over the rail beside the wheel-box, when the deck-steward made his last round. He was a Chinaman, so he did not understand their words; but he was also a man, and he smiled knowingly to himself.

"That is a hint, Clare," Derek said, as the pig-tailed figure began to stack the chairs.

Clare sighed happily. "There are lots more evenings before we reach England, and if they are all as perfect as this—Do you know," she turned to him

very seriously, "I don't mind this quite so much"—she touched the empty sleeve tenderly—"because I am so proud of all it means; and it doesn't matter now what any one says. This proves what you are."

"Nothing matters to me now, except you," he answered.

"Derek," the word was whispered shyly, "Derek, shall we see Captain Wilson in Hong-Kong? Well, he told me a story when he said you didn't know about the guns, but I think I shall forgive him, because it was he who brought you down to me."

THE END



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