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JACK CURZON.

BOOK I.

MY CONTRACT WITH THE KATIPUNAN.

(Being a portion of the Records of the Managing Clerk of Martin, Thompson & Co., English Merchants doing business in Hong Kong, Manila, Cebu and the Straits Settlements.)

CHAPTER I.

"YOU SABE, MANILA NO GOOD!"

HONG KONG is sizzling in a summer day of 1896. But Hong Kong always sizzles; not that the thermometer is so high, but the humidity is so tremendous.

"By Jove, Jack, I've lived in the furnace air of upper Egypt, Dongola, and all that, don't yer know," mutters little Ponsomby of the postal service, "but hang me, this is existing in 'biling' water. Next we will have 'biling' oil *à la Mikado!* Why the deuce don't those beastly punka-boys stir their lazy carcasses?"

But I, John Talboys Curzon, am too languid to answer this remark, and sit lazily listening to the creaking of the punka, dreamily looking out of the window of the English Club on the passing concourse of Wyndham Street and Queen's Road, and wishing I was over at Kowlung on the other side of the harbor where the southwest monsoon blows upon the pretty white villas, and gives a little relief to the infernal sizzle of humanity in the British metropolis of south-eastern China.

The passers-by on the main thoroughfare of Hong Kong do not interest me greatly.

On this hot day even the coolies as they carry sedan chairs or run about with jinrikshas are languid; the semi-occasional Sikh policeman in his crimson turban, though born on the burning plains of Central India, seems not quite as alert in pursuit of Chinese malefactors as usual. The few Europeans in the Club are wildly calling for cooling drinks. The whole place seems like a boiling hell.

Semi-occasionally I glance out at the big clock in the stone tower or consult my watch, for I am awaiting the arrival of the Pacific Mail Steamship *City of Peking* from San Francisco, which has been indicated by the flags on top of the hill at the Signal Station, and know I will have a hot job of it in transferring Miss Maud Ysabél Gordon of Luzon from that boat to the *Esmeralda*, which will take her to her father's and sister's arms at Manila.

My connection with her family began in 1895; though up to this moment I have never yet seen the young lady I am to greet on the incoming steamer; my interest in Maud Ysabél arising from my relationship to Mazie Inez Gordon, her younger sister in Manila, I happening to be the fiancé of that young lady of infinite Eastern graces, beautiful Spanish eyes and Saxon lilies.

I can well remember when I announced my engagement in the English Club at Manila, the consternation of my chums and intimates.

"What, marry the daughter of 'Bully' Gordon? Hang it, Jack, your future father-in-law will make you walk the plank some fine night! In his early days they say 'Bully' was little better than a pirate," suggested young Johnson, the agent for the great hemp firm of Jones, Goring & Co., of Cebu and London.

"By all the Tagal dialects," little Simpson of the English Consulate cried, "this is the crowning piece of your bad luck, my poor fellow!"

Here his voice grew low, and he whispered in my ear this by no means complimentary remark: "Bully will never let you off. He is so anxious to get his daughter out of the clutches of the Church which he hates with the hate of a Puritan, though there is little of that save its rancor in his nature."

"*Mein Gott!* You are going to marry Fräulein

Mazie Gordon? *Donner und Blitzen!*" chuckled Herr Adolph Max Ludenbaum, one of the big German merchants of Manila, whose hemp capacity and numerous German thalers have squeezed him into the English Club. Then taking me aside, he whispered to my astonishment, for up to this moment Herr Adolph had never taken very much interest in me: "Mein young man, let me give you warning. Mein friendt, Capitan Silas Salem Gordon is not looked on with kindly eyes by the Spanish officials. Look out dot you don't get into a grand government trouble. Remember der interests of your firm."

"I always do," I reply, "*I never smuggle.*" A remark that puts a scowl upon the fat face of Herr Adolph, and makes him rub uneasily together his plump hands already greasy with Manila humidity.

These warnings about "Bully" Gordon did not please me a little bit, as I thought of Mazie's sweet Filipina graces tempered by her father's Yankee blood into a darling mixture of Castilian archness and New England passion.

As to troubles, I am used to them since I was born. If any baby fell out of the cradle in the nursery, Jack Curzon was the baby. At school, if any boy threw a stone, Jack Curzon connected with the wrong end of its line of flight. In after life, in the first business venture of my career, for with my usual good fortune I was born the youngest of a large family, and had to step out and carve my own way with a small moiety from my mother's estate, I got the worst of it.

Taking the usual course of cadets of fair English families, I left my home to push my fortune. Investing my little capital in an Australian sheep-farm, which was smitten with the drought the year after I bought it, I found myself almost at my last sovereign. Drifting from Melbourne to China, I finally reached Hong Kong some eight years before, becoming the junior of the numerous clerks of Martin, Thompson & Co., engaged in the Sulu, Visaya, Luzon, Cebu, Penang and Straits Settlements trade. Then by the worst luck of all, at least, so my office companions thought, I was exiled to Manila to conquer the mysteries of the hemp and tobacco traffics.

But all lanes have their cross-roads, and in Manila,

having had fortunately full charge of the business, it grew under me, and I shortly afterwards was transferred and made the Hong Kong manager of the business of Martin, Thompson & Co.

But of all the lucky things that came to me in Manila in the year 1896, I bless God most for Señorita Mazie Inez Gordon of the Island of Luzon, as sweet a creature as ever that sun which brings to early maturity, flowers and women alike, shone upon.

In the course of business I had had the opportunity of doing a great favor to the father of the young lady, El Capitan Don Silas Salem Gordon.

This gentleman had been familiarly known and dreaded in the early "fifties" and "sixties" as "Bully" Gordon, and celebrated as the toughest American skipper who ever sailed a ship in Chinese waters. Having given his Yankee name a Spanish twist he was now addressed as Don Silas Salem Gordon, and had become a subject of Spain.

This had come about as follows. Being wrecked in 1867 on the north coast of Luzon, under circumstances that made the underwriters of his vessel very anxious to put their hands on him, Gordon after loss of his ship had remained in the great island of the Philippines and gone into the tobacco trade, where he did smuggling galore in conjunction with Spanish revenue officers on the north coast of the island. With the capital gained from this he had become a tobacco planter in the lovely province of Nueva Ecija.

To increase his estate, he had married in 1872 the great Spanish heiress of the neighborhood, Doña Luisa Areles, though probably the girl's charms had had something to do with it, for the mother of my fiancée must have been a Spanish beauty; though the mixture of the Caucasian of the Yankee sea-captain with the pure Castilian stream of the Iberian mother had produced a vivacious loveliness in Gordon's two daughters that comes only where the blood of two diverse races are discreetly mixed.

Don Silas being in Manila on business, had brought his youngest daughter of scarce sixteen with him. But women develop early in a Tropic land and I had promptly fallen in love with her.

Her elder sister, my sweetheart had told me, was in the United States, having been sent there to be educated, her father wishing to put more of the Yankee combativeness in her. "Bully" even remarking to me: "Mazie, will never be able to stand up against *procuradores*, *pica-pleitos* and other legal cormorants when I am dead. Her fortune will be a prey to them. But let Maud get a good Yankee training, and hang me, she will take care of her own and her sister's property. I'll risk Maudie against the *corregidor* and the Supreme Court of Manila combined, that is, if she can get the United States Consul to help her."

"Why don't you go to Daland, yourself, if you expect trouble with the Spanish officials?" I query.

"How can I after renouncing American citizenship," mutters the poor fellow, his face becoming anxious, for he knows he has cut himself off from American protection, having become a subject of Spain in order to hold his land on the island, and furthermore, being very well aware he is on the bad books of the Spanish government on account of a claim he has against certain officials for some very valuable tobacco lands to which he declares he has the *titulo real* from his dead wife, they refusing to admit his title, though the late Señora Gordon's family had had possession of the same for over a hundred years.

Two months before this day on which I am meditating in the Chinese metropolis, I had been called by urgent business from my sweetheart's arms in Manila to Hong Kong, and had left her with a strange anxiety in my heart, for Mazie's manner had become anxious also.

"It is not for myself, I fear, Señor Juan—no, I'll call you Jack," she whispered to me, "it is for that great man, my father. The *Corregidor* of Nueva Ecija hates him; the Bishop of Pampanga does not love him; Captain-General Blanco shrugs his shoulders when he hears his name mentioned. My father will fight *so* for his rights. He is like the noble *toro* in the bull-ring; he is equal to the bravest game-cock at the *Gallina de Tondo*. But there are too many of them against him. O *Dios de mi madre*, if my sister were but here! She was so strong in character. All the servants loved her for her fighting strength; not that they feared her,

for she was ever kind to them. Even Ata Tonga, the fierce Tagal on my father's estates, worshiped her and would have taken a beating kindly from her, because she was always just to him. Ata Tonga, he of the wondrous nose; he who can smell like a dog and has the devotion of a mastiff and the ferocity of a blood-hound, Ata Tonga said: 'When Senorita Maud cometh it is like the perfume of new-blown roses in the air. When I smell the *Corregidor*, it is the odor of the *daghong-palay*, the deadly snake of the rice fields. When my nostrils catch the stink of the German, it is like the oily, fetid, sickening pickle-flavor of the anaconda, who twines about, crushes, and then devours his prey.' *Caramba!*" laughs my naughty darling, whose profanity is of the most bewitching Spanish order, "How Ata Tonga used to hate our German friend."

"German! What German?" I whisper.

"Why, Herr Adolph Max Ludenbaum, of course. Ata Tonga thought my father's old German comrade was a villain, though I do not believe Ata. Dear Senor Adolph has been so good to all of us, and of such assistance to *mi padre* in his troubles. When we were children, Adolph dandled me and my sister on his Teutonic knees."

"By the god-of-war," I snarl, "he loves you!"

"Ah no, jealous one," laughs the girl, tapping me with her fan in charming Filipina coquetry. "Not *me!* I've heard he loved my poor dead mother," says the girl with a little sigh, "though that can't be true either, for he adores my father. At all events, Herr Adolph always liked my sister best when we were children; petted her the most, and gave Ysabel the most *dulces* when he visited our tobacco plantation under old Montes de Baler, the grand peaks that rise high above the plains of the Pampanga, those great pampas where the wild buffalo herd; that wondrous land which reaches the mighty mountains among which the *Negritos*, the little savages, find refuge from the Spanish tax-gatherer."

"Still I do not like your German friend," I mutter savagely.

"Tra-la-la! Herr Ludenbaum has made you so wildly jealous, Senor Juan, that I must play the latest

dance music to soothe *mi caballero*." And my darling sits down at the grand piano in their beautiful villa just up the Pasig River, in the suburb of San Miguel, and dashes off for me the popular "Washington Post March" with the vivacity of a Rubenstein and the soft, pathetic, sensuous touch of a true music-loving *Filipina*.

"By George, that's one of Sousa's, the American composer's melodies!" I say, having heard Jimmie Bolton, who has just arrived from San Francisco, whistling the ditty at the Club.

"Yes, my sister has just sent me a lot of music from the United States. You know Maud graduates this year at that great girl's school where papa says they are taught to have confidence in themselves like men, not to be nice, demure, little convent girls, as I was. You know the place I mean; that great, great *Colegio de-de-*" and Mazie snaps her fingers castanet fashion, "*de-Vassar*. I have it now! Ysabel's letters are all about America. She writes about going to a ball, *madre mia*, without a duenna, given by the cadets at—at—at," Mazie again snaps her pretty fingers appealingly.

"At West Point," I interject.

"No! That is not the name."

"At Annapolis?" I suggest.

"*Santa Maria*, yes! Where they make *fighting* sailors," cries the girl delighted. "What a wonderful guesser you are, Juan." Then she flies on: "Maud writes that her Spanish manner was so effective. You know what I mean—a fan—the eyes—the—the lips."

"Oh, don't I!" I mutter rapturously.

"So effective that a young Japanese warrior studying there by the permission of the United States and by order of the Mikado, said he was proud of Ysabel as a product of the great islands of the Pacific. But then Maud didn't care so much for the Jap."

"Ah, there was another fellow," I mutter.

"*Santissima*, you have guessed it again!" Mazie's eyes grow big.

"It is a secret?"

"Yes. A young naval sailor *muchacho*, an Americano, *Filipo* Preble Marston, of the United States Navy—I know the name very well, Ysabel writes it so often—, said that he must and would be her first fa-

vorite, *caballero especial*, because his name was *Filipo*, and Senorita Maud Ysabel Gordon was a Filipina. From Maud's letters this Senor *Filipo* must be a wonderful man. He does not make love at a distance like Spaniards. He doesn't play the guitar beneath her window. He simply says: 'Surrender at once you little Spanish beauty, and I'll hoist the American flag upon you before you know you're captured!' *Diablo!* what did he mean by that?"

"About the same, I imagine," I reply, "as I did when I said to you: 'You dear little Spanish-American witch, you're the prettiest chick in the Philippines, and I——'"

"Oh yes, I remember what you said. You needn't tell me about that now. I blush every time I think of it," murmurs my sweetheart; then breaks out: "Oh, you don't know what wondrous letters my sister writes. She tells me of things I couldn't believe if I didn't see them here in miniature; of railroads a thousand miles long; that young ladies often wear boots instead of slippers—think of that! Isn't it bold? Besides Maud uses language sometimes I can't understand. She tells me that I must be a bang-up *Americano*, a *bully Yankee*. Does that come from the great name my papa has received in honor of his courage?"

To this I do not reply. I grimly think of the awful tales of shanghied sailors; of her father's performances with marlinpike and rope's end; of his desperate fights with revenue boats when opium smuggling, and one or two little Sulu episodes that were next door to piracy, but have been forgotten in the lapse of years, which have given my little tender sweetheart's Yankee father the cognomen of which she is so proud.

Therefore, I do not answer her, but turning the subject, suggest: "By-the-by, what does that Tagal of the wondrous nose think that you smell like, my sweet one?"

"Like orchids," laughs my darling.

"Why, orchids have no smell to speak of."

"Neither do I, I hope, to your obtuse organ," laughs my charmer. "But to Ata's delicate nostrils I have the perfume of orchids and smell like coriander seeds. At least he says so."

"And your father, does he smell like a musk-melon?" I jeer.

"*Santa Maria*, no! Ata says papa's scent when he does not disguise it with rum, is like that of fresh killed cattle; he has so much savage blood flowing in his fighting veins. *Dios mio*, you shall not laugh!" she adds petulantly. "Don't you know, you grinning Englishman, that there are whole tribes whose scent is as acute as that of sleuth-hounds; that they can track anything by its perfume; that they live in a different world from us; that they know their enemy is walking around the corner before he comes in sight. They even say they tell by scent when their sweethearts love them."*

"Ah, then I hope that orchids and coriander seeds mean constancy," I mutter.

"They do, *Dios mio*, they do!"

"And this wonderful creature, this Ata Tonga, who can tell by his nose what other men can't discover with all their five senses, where is he?" I laugh. "I want to examine him about you, Mazie, to see if the perfume of orchids and coriander still remain with you."

"Oh, Ata Tonga went away soon after my sister left for America. He had not the heart, he said, to remain when the perfume of the wild roses no longer came to his nostrils. Like his highly impressionable race, he loves or hates fiercely. He would have drooped, had he remained, he said, after the ship had taken away to the distant land the being who had her hand upon his heart. My father declared Ata's education made him restless. He said we had been fools to send the

* This wonderful development of the organs of the sense of smell in certain tribes of Tagals has been noticed by all who have explored or traveled in the interior of the Island of Luzon, and has been commented on by them extensively.

Sir John Bowring in his work on the Philippine Islands in 1854, speaks of the very strong lines that run from the nose to the mouth in these tribes, whose nostrils have the power of expansion like those of a dog, and whose sense of smell is as acute. In the act of kissing, lovers contract their nostrils to determine if their sweethearts are true to them. By their sense of smell they can distinguish their masters and mistresses.

John Foreman in his travels in these islands, published in 1890, also comments upon this extraordinary development of this sense among the Tagals, though it does not extend to the whole community.—Ed.

wild boy who had come to us from the mountains to the Padre's school to have him taught to read and write. It would put the Devil into him. So Ata Tonga went away from us. I have not seen him for four years. Perhaps when Maud returns, her boy, as he calls himself, will find us again."

"Yes, perhaps he will sniff wild roses five hundred miles from here and track her to you. So Ata Tonga is an educated savage."

"Wonderfully so. Besides the accomplishments of reading and writing and some little arithmetic, he is musical like all Filipinos and plays the trombone beautifully," laughs Mazie.

"And to them adds the instincts of a savage," I suggest.

"Yes, Ata has the eye of a hawk, the nose of a hound," cries the girl, "the courage of a game cock and the faithfulness of a *Filipino* for his mistress that he loves."

"So you *Filipinas* are all faithful. You love once, you love forever," I say and take my sweetheart in my arms.

But to my astonishment she mutters: "Yes, faithful—faithful to death." Then, breaking from my sobs: "Though the *Cura* says——"

"Well; what does the *padre* say?"

"Oh, nothing. Don't agitate me!" The *Señorita* looks agitated and distressed; then dashes on: "Let me tell you of my sister. *Ysabel* writes me letters from America that give me spasms of delight. Some day you will take me there, Jack, after you—you have"—and she hides her head, which is now blushing red as the blossoms of the fire-tree.

"Married you?" I whisper.

"*Dios mio*, yes, Jack! All my life commences *after* you have—have married me," and for some unexplained reason Mazie commences to cry as if her lovely dark eyes were the fountains of perpetual beauty.

"Why are you weeping?" I gasp, astonished.

"Oh, I—I don't like to explain to you. Ask papa; he will tell you better than I, Jack, the awful news. Go away from me! You break my heart!" And to give the lie to this speech Mazie Inez throws her arms around my neck and kisses me with tropic passion.

and her lips smell not like coriander seed, but as roses dewy with love for me, the phlegmatic Englishman who adores this mixture of Spanish archness and American coquetry.

So I leave her alone, for our meetings have been on the American order; her father, thank God, having permitted an Anglo-Saxon freedom of intercourse with my betrothed. Of course there has been a *duenna* in the house, a sort of third or fourth cousin, *Doña Valrigo*, a Spanish lady of well developed cigarette habit, terrific age and most retiring manners; so retiring that she has never interfered with my *tête-à-têtes* with my fiancée. Perhaps we have been a scandal to the Spanish community, but I don't care, and even now as I sit in the Hong Kong Club, I see in my memory, Mazie's white arms coming from the soft *pina* gauzes of a *Filipina* robe, her little feet clothed with conventional silken hosiery of the European, but driven into the petite slippers of the Philippines called *chinelas*, her dark eyes beaming on me, the Saxon lilies of her cheeks covered with maiden blushes, the soft music of her voice ringing after me: "My Jack!" as I go from her to her father to ask: "What is the meaning of this? Mazie hints to me there is some obstacle to our coming wedding."

In answer to my question, old Gordon, who has been browned to Malay color by forty years in the hottest tropics, and wrinkled to infinity by unending contest with fellow-man, liquor, and fate, growls out in Yankee twang: "*Carrajo! Diablo!* I mean damn it! dash it! hang it! The infernal *padre* has put his accursed clerical nose into your marriage contract, my British lion."

"What has he done?" I falter.

"He has condemned you as a *hereje* to perpetual celibacy. Unless you become a member of the Church of the Philippines and carry image in the procession, Mazie and you will never fall foul of each other."

"But Mazie, will she stand it?" I ask uneasily.

"Blow it, that's your breaker ahead. Mazie is a good girl and believes in her religion, and thinks she should do the commands of the Church and all that kind of sanctimonious rot. As for me, I joined the Church when I became a Spanish subject. *Santo*

Dios! I mean hell and damnation! I had to," the Yankee sea-dog snarls, "to get my fist on the lands that belonged to me. And then after I had blessed myself with holy water, marched in procession at carnival time and by Cape Cod! done penance with burning candles, they have gone back on their contracts with me, and are trying to do me and my daughters out of an estate worth half a million pesos. But," here he snaps his Yankee jaws together with the click of a bear-trap, "by Paul Jones and Yankee Doodle, I, the *renegado*, the Yankee who can't look his flag in the face, have put a wrinkle on these Spanish cormorants that'll make them open their infernal pirate peepers!"

"What is it?" I whisper anxiously. "Perhaps I can aid you."

"No, by Columbia and the god of war, I don't need any aid in this matter!" mutters the sea-dog in savage sturdiness. "I've got 'em tighter than a shanghied sailor. But this is under hatches till I spring it on 'em; but as you're going to be in the family, for if I know the cut of your jib, Jack Curzon, you're not the man who's going to be stopped from grabbing hold of a pretty girl by priest or layman. *Santa Maria!* I mean, Blast my eyes! if I thought you would, damn me if I'd let you have her. So I'll tell you of my little joke upon the *Corregidor* of Nueva Ecija and the Supreme Court of Manila combined." Here his voice becomes very low as he whispers: "You know I sent my daughter, Maud Ysabel—I had to mix the poor child's name and make it half Spanish to please her mother—to the United States to be educated, for two tremendous reasons. First, Maud has got a bull-dog, fight-it-out yard-arm-to-yard-arm, spirit like mine, though it is veiled with a feminine softness and Yankee cuteness that makes her a *diablo* of a girl in a scrimmage. Even that blasted Tagal, Ata Tonga, the surliest brute I ever thrashed, worships and adores her; because she has spunk enough to thump the life out of him if he ever disobeyed her. Well, with that spirit added to an American education, Maud will make a pretty lively fight, not only for her own rights, but for those of your Poll."

"My Poll?"

"Yes, your gal, your Portsmouth Polly, the lass that will wait for you when you come home from a cruise to the club at night," grins the sea-dog, "after you're spliced to her." Then he goes on, and his words now almost takes my breath away: "But I reckoned Maud must have the weapons to fight this accursed gang of *procuradores*, officials and *pica pleitos*, and how the devil should I arm her ag'inst 'em. Suddenly it struck me like a chain-shot, and when four years ago, I sent Ysabel to Yankee land, I gave her certain instructions, and Maud writes me she has fulfilled 'em. Here's her letter! That doesn't give it away, does it?"

And he hands me an epistle in pretty refined feminine hand, which reads:

DEAR PAPA,

I am returning to the Philippines soon after the graduation. As I am twenty-one now, I have followed your directions. Tell you all about it, and much *more*, when I arrive. I've a sensation for you and Mazie.

Give my love to my darling little sister, and say I shall bring lots of gowns for her, and kisses for you both.

Your devoted Yankee daughter,

MAUD YSABEL GORDON.

As I gaze on this, Bully Gordon's voice startles me, it has such a jeering Yankee twang in its gruff tones. He laughs: "If they overhaul my letters in the post-office, no Spanish official from that will guess that my daughter Maud Ysabel Gordon has, under my direction, taken out her papers while in America and become a *citizen of the United States*, and will now fight the damn Spaniards under Old Glory. Good as gold, ain't it! *Caramba!* I mean damn it! let them dare put their hands on her! They may down me," adds the ex-sea-captain, as I stare at him astounded at the sharpness of his idea, and delighted at the strength it will give his daughter in her fight for her own and my sweetheart's rights, "they may garote me, and I can't appeal to the American Consul because I've cut loose from the bird of freedom, but Maud under the American flag, I'll risk her to smash the Captain-General. Miss Goddess of Liberty will be here in two or three months. Now what are you going to do,

Jackey? Are you going to become a member of the Church at Manila, or are you going to stick to your religion? By-the-by, under what clerical colors do you sail anyway?"

"None at all, I imagine," I answer, "though, of course, I was christened in the Church of England."

"Yes, I never guessed you were troubled with religion very strong," he laughs. "But what are you going to do about Mazie now the priests have tackled you? As her daddy it's my duty to ask."

"Marry her," I say promptly, "priest or no priest, Catholic or Protestant! Whatever she is, Mazie's the future Mrs. Jack Curzon!"

"Of course; I knew you'd do that. When?"

"The next time I return to Manila. I am called away for a month or two to Hong Kong. When I come back, if Mazie's the girl I think her, she'll marry me; though whether I become a member of her Church to ease her religious scruples, shall be my consideration during my trip to China."

"All right, heave ahead! In Hong Kong, you look out for my eldest daughter and get her transferred from the Pacific Mail boat to one of the steamers running here. Of course, Maud can handle herself, but like most gals, my darling likes to play the woman, give herself la-de-da, touch-me-and-I-faint feminine airs, though she could take the quarter-deck or head a boarding party in person. She's nautical from truck to kelson; always ran after the sea. It's the Cape Cod blood in her, and it's coming out strong in her over in Yankee land. I think even now she's spooney on a naval tar, one of the kind that boards a feminine craft and hoists a flag on her before the girl knows what he is doing, one Phil Marston. By Davy Jones, if he's like his dad, Captain Jim Marston of the United States Navy, who thirty years ago chased me for a month in the China seas because they said I had shanghied a couple of California roustabouts, he's a tough one, and he may land Maud Ysabel; but Lord, after he's spliced to Maud Ysabel, she'll make him walk the plank if he goes cruising after strange feminine flags! What do you say to that, my land-lubber!"

"Say to it," I laugh, "If Maud Ysabel is half like

her darling sister, Mazie Inez, no man could cruise after strange flags, when he's got her for his wife."

"You bet! No man with blood in his body could run away from Maud's Venus figurehead. Lord bless yer, she looks as pretty as an opium dream. All I've got to do is to close my peepers and see her figure like a Tahiti nymph, only with Spanish feet and Andalusian ankles; arms and shoulders hard as ivory and white as cocconut kernel, and as pretty a pair of full rounded bows as ever run a man down and sank him in the sea of matrimony. But it ain't that I want to talk to you about." Here old Bully Gordon's face grows very serious, and his voice very low and cautious. "Young man, you don't guess what's going on in these islands, but I do; and if I know my sailing lights, and I think I do, there's going to be one of the most tarnation political typhoons blowing in a few months that ever struck the Dons. It will be mixed with bullets and cannon-balls, too. So in case you get a telegram telling you to hold Maudie at Hong Kong, for I know her well enough to log, if I get into trouble she will come to the boarding nettings also, you put her in the charge of the American Consul at that port. Anchor her there till further orders."

"Certainly!"

"Remember this as God is above you! If you get any wire from me, don't pay attention to its lingo, but hold the gal. They've a mighty 'cute official here who overhauls all telegrams. If I cable at all, you may know it's from a shipwrecked mariner on his beam ends upon a lee shore. Give me your flipper that you'll keep your word."

He wrings my hand as I mutter huskily: "But her sister?"

"Oh, Mazie won't get into trouble. She's of the kind that'll lay snug during a storm," he remarks.

Then, though Mazie clings to me and with many kisses renews her promises to be mine, I am compelled to tear myself away and board the steamer for Hong Kong.

All this, memory brings to me as I sit seven hundred miles from Manila, gazing at Wyndham Street and Queen's Road.

But my musings are suddenly broken in upon by the

sharp boom of steamer's gun disturbing the breathless, torrid, humid air. The *City of Peking* has arrived. I must go down to Pedlar's Wharf, take sampan and meet this dashing American Yankee Filipina, who is coming to fight the Spaniards under the flag of the United States for her property and her sister's.

Even as I, mopping my brow, rise languidly to do this, a letter is handed to me by one of the Club boys, who says: "Sahib, this was just left at the door by a coolie."

Carelessly I tear it open, and start astounded. For in characters that are a curious kind of half print, half script, I read:

Yow Sahib! Manila no good!

CHAPTER II.

ON THE PACIFIC MAIL BOAT.

REMEMBERING Gordon's parting words, this paper gives me a shock. Can it be a warning? The hieroglyphics have apparently been written by a Chinese brush pen. The paper that bears them is that soft tissue of which tea wrappers are made, in use in every Chinese counting-room. Is this ambiguous communication intended for the benefit of myself or of the young lady I am about to despatch to the Philippines?

Recollecting her father's last impressive order to stop Maud on any kind of a cablegram from him whatsoever, I run out of the club, signal a 'riksha, and dragged by a sweating coolie, go down to the Praya to our main office. Here I find that no cable has come to me this day from anywhere.

To make doubly sure, I trot Mr. Coolie back, and at the general telegraph offices on Queen's Road, discover that no wire for me from Manila has arrived.

"You seem anxious, Mr. Curzon," remarks the delivery clerk, who knows me very well. "Are you afraid of trouble there?"

I answer his question by another. "Why do you ask, Mr. Jones?"

"Because," remarks Jones, "one or two commercial cables that have come over lately rather indicate they expect an insurgent outbreak or uprising in Luzon, and all of them have the appearance of being carefully censored. Besides, a cable to the Spanish Gov—" Jones claps his jaws together and seems frightened at what he has said, remembering that all telegrams are sacred.

This suggestion of the telegraph clerk increases my anxiety; but still leaves me in doubt what course I shall take. Jones, despite inquiries on my part, will say nothing more. I have only a few hours to transfer my charge from the *City of Peking* to the *Esmeralda*, which has been held for the former vessel's arrival since the morning, as the Pacific mail boat is somewhat behind her schedule time.