

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.



Without more definite information I feel unauthorized to keep the young lady from her father and her sister.

Suddenly I ask another question: "Any cables for Miss Maud Ysabel Gordon, on the *City of Peking*?"

"Yes, one," answers Jones, looking over his list. "Will you take it to Miss Gordon? Her steamer is just in."

"Certainly," I answer, and getting the envelope in my hand, think this will solve my problem.

But even as he hands it to me the clerk destroys my idea by astonishing me with this remark: "It came from San Francisco two days ago."

So, turning the matter over, as my 'riksha-boy trots me down to Pedlar's Wharf, I conclude I will tell the young lady everything, and let her be her own judge of the course she will take.

Notwithstanding the heat, the Praya is crowded with business men, some of the fat and lazy ones going about in palanquins borne by the omnipresent coolie. Coolies are groaning under chests of opium, boxes of tea and bales of hemp, marking time as they strain under their burdens with that unceasing tongue-click, which rythms the movements of their straining muscles. Sedan chairs are carried by coolies; jinrikshas are rushed about by coolies—untiring coolies, who have no Sundays, no holidays, except when Chinese New Year's comes, with its three days of exciting fire-crackers and intoxicating samshoo. Upon the water front, boats are being lowered from the davits of its granite sea-wall. At Pedlar's Wharf, the general landing place for all comers except the P. & O. steamers which have a dock further down the Praya, is a crowd of shore boats loaded with people who want to board the *Pekin*, which is just now dropping anchor in the stream.

Elbowing my way into the perspiring crowd, I look about for a boatman. A moment after, as I leave the little wharf, I note Hong Kong looks rather pretty; for the sharp hills that rise above its houses are, for a wonder, green. The villas along Kennedy Road with their tropic gardens seem cooler than they really are. A little touch of the southwest monsoon has just caught a corner of the harbor and gives it sea breeze

The straits are full of shipping from every quarter of the world, among which are dodging steam launches, a fleet of sampans and numerous junks. Quite a crowd of these launches, sampans and row-boats are about the *City of Peking*, whose black sides rise high above them. A throng of Chinese searchers after business, runners for hotels, solicitors for tailors, who'll make you a suit of clothes and guarantee good fit for "sixie dollar," or artists who'll paint your portrait or a picture of your ship for a couple of taels, are trying to fight their way up the long side-ladder; most of them Chinese bumboat women doing business for their lazy husbands, who lounge in their sampans.

A few minutes after, forcing my way through these, I find myself upon the white deck of the big ocean liner. Under its ample awnings, being conducted by the first officer, who is an acquaintance of mine, through quite a group of lady passengers in gauzy summer dresses, and gentlemen in pith helmets, straw hats, and light flannels and white ducks, every mother's son of them using a palm-leaf fan, I find myself presented to a young lady in whose personality I have a great curiosity.

I gaze astonished.

From Bully Gordon's description of his daughter, and Mazie's remarks about her sister, I had expected a girl of **aggressive**, smite-you-down, keep-your-distance-sir, Diana-style of beauty. But looking into my face are a pair of appealing, take-me-to-your-heart, American eyes of the brightest sapphire. These, shaded by the longest of brown lashes, droop in pretty diffidence as I make my bow. The softest kind of a feminine voice, the very timbre of which would mean passion if the two coral chiseled lips were speaking to a lover, say to me words of greeting, languidly but very pleasantly: "Ah, so glad. I expected you, dear Mr. Curzon. Papa wrote me you would take charge of me here. I am delighted you have come so promptly. You know," she adds, with a little suggestive, feminine, put-myself-in-your-hands kind of quiver, "a girl like me feels so alone in a strange land. Besides coolies are sometimes a little saucy when there is no gentleman to direct them. I was getting quite nervous, but at sight of you, I'm—I'm rather brave again.



"Thank you so much." She extends cordially an exquisitely gloved and extremely graceful hand as I gaze at her astounded.

As to beauty, Señorita Maud practically exceeds her father's description. The Venus figurehead is there, made alluring by Hebe eyes. The prettily rounded bows look as if they might run down any man who had a heart in his bosom. The white shoulders and snowy arms as they gleam beneath the white muslin of her tropic gown, apparently made in the very best French fashion by a first class New York modiste, seem whiter than the whitest cocconut kernel or vegetable ivory. I note the lithe figure of a Tahetian girl who plays all day in the surf. Following the curving beauties of her graceful pose, I catch sight of a charming little slipper and know she has a Spanish foot. But is this the Boadicea who'll head a boarding-party, fight on the quarter-deck, and down the Captain-General and Supreme Court of Manila, in her struggle for herself and her sister's rights? I fairly chuckle to myself as I think what a wondrous mistake the doting admiration of her father and her sister has made in this girl's character, whom they consider their family Joan of Arc.

"Oh, yes, she'd thump the life out of Ata Tonga the savage Tagal, wouldn't she?" I grin to myself; then almost sigh as I reflect that even Mazie herself with her pretty little Filipina manners would do better fighting for her fortune than this beautiful creation of Paris fashions and feminine airs, graces, and nerves.

Even as I think this, the girl has turned to a Chinese steward, and called, a trembling eagerness in her voice: "Quick, Wong! Please see if any telegrams have come on board for me."

"Yes, missie," answers the Chinese boy. "If 'em ain't come on board, me glowey after 'em!" and he gives her a look of most respectful adoration as he salams before her.

"That boy seems anxious to do your bidding," I remark.

"Oh, yes, *all* gentlemen do, I think," says Miss Maud archly, and favors me with the first Filipina movement I have seen in her, for she looks at me over her fan in a way that reminds me of my own dear Mazie.

"You needn't send the boy for your telegram. I thought of you when on shore," I whisper. "Is this what you want?" and produce the cable from San Francisco.

"*Dios mio!*" cries the girl, "Thank you; thank you, Mr. Curzon!" And she tears open the envelope.

A moment later I get my first true idea of the mind and heart of Maud Ysabel Gordon. As she reads the short message her eyes blaze up into a kind of violet with Spanish fire. With impulsive movement she kisses the handwriting of the telegraph clerk, and with a deft use of fair fingers the blue envelope and its contents plunge beneath laces and gauzes to take resting place on as pretty a spot as ever gave sanctuary to a lover's missive.

"You—you must excuse me, Mr. Curzon," she laughs, "I hadn't heard from Phil for twenty-five days. You—you know—Mazie must have told you. He is my—no, I hadn't yet written *that* to them." And blush after blush fly over her exquisite features. A moment later she adds: "I have told you so much—listen to the rest of it. Of course, as my sister's fiancé, I feel you are brother-in-law to me now, Jack. This telegram is from—" here her voice becomes strident with hope, "from *Filipo*—I mean Phil Marston, my sailor betrothed. He is an Ensign in the United States Navy. He cables me that he is ordered to join the *Petrel* on this station. Ah, but I knew that must come. I went to see the Secretary of the Navy myself. I told him: 'Great *Americano*, here is a poor naturalized Yankee girl, who is going to become body and soul a Yankee by marrying one of your bravest cadets, he who plunged overboard at Norfolk and saved two drowning men.' My Phil bears a medal on his breast for that; that is, he would if he weren't so modest. He has it locked up in his kit I believe, though once for two kisses, he showed it to me. I said: 'Shall this young man, Mr. Secretary, who is going to make me a true *Americana*, be compelled to spend all his meager salary in cables at two dollars and fifty cents a word. Put him in the China squadron.'

"Perhaps some day his ship may fly her flag in the Philippines, then it will not be even cables from Hong



Kong, but kisses in Manila." Here she blushes and laughs: "Oh, what must you think of me, Mr. Curzon? But I forgot myself; in the joy of knowing *mi caballero* is ordered here. That the same typhoon that blows the houses down in Manila will blow my kisses to him as his vessel fights the storm in the Yellow Sea. Then she takes my arm, looks into my face and whispers: "Am I as loving to my sweetheart as Mazie is to you, you great big Englishman?" Next looking at a young English lady, who is gazing astounded at her peculiar vivacious performance with me, she says: "Mrs. Royston, let me present Senor Jack Curzon to the lady who has so kindly chaperoned this voyage."

As I shake hands with a charming young matron who is coming out to join her husband Burton Royston of the P. & O. steamers, Miss Vivacious runs on: "This is not my lover. He is only my sister's fiancé. Had he been my own sailor boy, I would have given him a hundred kisses right in your face. *Santa Maria!* I am not afraid to show I adore a man, when I do."

"Oh, no, Maud," laughs her chaperone, I knew this was not your fiancé. Everyone on the boat is very sure that young naval officer who bid you good-bye when the *City of Peking* left San Francisco, has your whole heart in his pocket."

"*Santos!* I am glad there is no doubt about him!" returns Maud. Then she whispers to me: "Phil is such an impulsive fellow and so—so jealous of me. He says I do too much work with my eyes and fan. *Dios mio*, the darling boy wanted to marry me before I left San Francisco, but I—I did not dare!" Her face, that is blushing, suddenly grows troubled, perchance at thought of the man she loves. A moment after, she says lightly: "Jack, isn't it about time to get me transferred? We must bid Mrs. Royston good-bye. I believe the *Esmeralda* leaves to-day."

"Yes, I am awfully sorry. You have only three or four hours in this port. I would have liked to have done the honors of the place to my dear sister," I answer, for the girl's manner has magnetized me.

With this, Maud makes her adieu to the lady who has put her ægis over her for the voyage and I escort her to the gangway finding she has magnetized every man-jack on the ship, passengers, officers and even

waiters and stewards. All have a farewell for her that shows she is the pet and pride of the *Pekin*.

At the gangway I am compelled to pause to get another view of my charge's character. The *Boston*, one of the new warships the United States has sent to the China station, is at anchor a mile or two down the roads. From her comes dashing a steam launch. Three or four athletic young fellows in naval uniform spring up the side-ladder, and I discover Senorita Maud Ysabel has captured the United States Navy.

The youngest officer, who is a little in advance of his companions, takes off his hat, and says: "Miss Gordon, don't you remember me; Charley Phelps? I danced with you at Annapolis two years ago."

"Why Phil's chum at the Academy!" cries the girl, enthusiastically.

"Yes, I had a letter from Marston telling me to look out for you, so I and some of my messmates came to see that everything was very right with you in Hong Kong. We would have been here before, but couldn't get leave as it was general inspection. Let me present Mr. Hawthorne."

"Ah! George Hawthorne, navigator of the *Boston*. I have a letter of introduction to you," says Maud, "from your wife. I met Alice in Annapolis. She was with Mrs. Captain Burnham."

"Thank you very much" says the officer, and seizes the note that Miss Gordon produces; then mutters "Alice is well, and the baby?"

"Oh, Farragut was looking grandly. He gave me two kisses for you."

"Quite right; where are they?" And the dashing lieutenant-commander strokes his mustache in an anticipatory manner, and looks very roguishly at the beautiful face that is so near to his.

"You will find them enclosed in the letter!" says Senorita Maud with the cutest kind of Yankee smile.

While his companions burst out laughing, Mr. Phelps presents Messrs. Boardman and Saville, remarking: "Two of the wardroom mess."

Greeting them very affably, Miss Gordon introduces me, remarking: "My future brother-in-law, Jack Curzon of Hong Kong."



"You have a sister? Any more like you in Manila?" asks Saville eagerly.

"Yes, but Jack's got her."

Then the conversation goes into naval news, and I find my charge is heart and soul a naval girl. She tells his brother officers of her fiancé being ordered to the *Petrel*, and remarks: "Mr. Chadwick of the *Monocacy* on this station also is, I believe, now a lieutenant-commander. Will that give any of you a step?"

"No," they all answer, and one of them mutters; "Promotion! Barring war, twenty years from now I may be still a lieutenant," then asks in serious tones: "How about the Dons in Cuba?"

"Oh, I believe there is a rebellion or revolution there or something of the kind," replies the girl, and they all go into an Annapolis gossip as she tells them how Mrs. Rear-Admiral Dawson snubbed Mrs. Commodore Brown, and that Miss Sally Jenkins was the belle of the last graduation hop.

But after a minute or two of this, Maud suddenly says: "Jack, isn't it about time we were moving? I am awfully sorry to leave you gentlemen, but the *Esmeralda* sails to-day."

"Yes; I have only time to get you properly shipped," I say, taking her hint.

And the naval gentlemen, taking her suggestion also, make their adieux, with many proffers of service to their chum's sweetheart in this far distant land; one of them, Phelps, remarking rather laughingly: "Perhaps we may all be down in Manila to see you some fine day."

A few moments after, having made arrangements for the transfer of her baggage, I hand my charge down the side-ladder, where she gives as pretty an exhibition of feminine timidity, little feet and graceful ankles as any lady who has ever descended from the high sides of the *Pekin*.

### CHAPTER III.

#### "THIS MESSAGE TO MY SAILOR BOY!"

IN the boat Maud whispers to me, a new tone in her voice: "You understand why I broke off that conversation? Though the chat of the brother officers of my sweetheart is like breezes blowing to me from his country, I have a much more serious matter to discuss with you."

"About your sister and father?" I whisper.

"Yes; of the utmost secrecy."

"Very well," I say. "Supposing I give you a drive up the Kennedy Road. There is no place so convenient for a tête-a-tête between a young lady and gentleman as a carriage."

Ashore, I engage, with some little difficulty, a barouche, and we drive away to the Kennedy Road in search of stray breezes, and finally succeed in finding a few.

During this, Señorita Maud Ysabel Gordon gives me three or four flashes of her character that make me sit aghast.

"Papa wrote me that you knew why he sent me to be educated in great America," she whispers.

"Yes," I answer. "You have fulfilled his instructions?"

"To the letter; with the assistance of papa's maiden sister, Miss Prudence Kimble Gordon who lives in Boston, and was delighted to welcome the daughter of her brother who had run away to sea on a whaler. Though I had more difficulty in the citizenship business than I had imagined. I had to take up a residence in Kansas where they allow women to vote. Even then the Federal judge hesitated about naturalizing me, as I was advised, considering the use I wanted to make of them, it was best to receive my papers from a United States Court.

"But with my application seconded by a great woman, who is mayor of a town out there, I was made a Yankee!" laughs the girl. "When the woman mayor,