

man she loves; faltering womanhood apparently arises up and for one moment dominates the brave girl.

Looking round at the numerous Spaniards on the deck, emblematic of the Filipinos, she shudders: "I seem to be leaving my love behind me. The sound of that rising anchor is cutting me off from him!" Her lovely eyes fill with tears, and she commences to wring her hands and falter: "Philip—my Philip! I—I should have never—never promised myself to him. I should never have given the hope of happiness to my sailor boy. I—what has come to me to-day has brought back to me something I had almost forgotten. Suddenly the clean-cut coral lips whimper: "If I should never see him again, you—you will tell Phil that the last beat of my heart was for him. You will ask my dear boy to forgive me for having made him love me?" An exquisite pathos is in her liquid voice, a kind of dazed despair seems to fly in ripples of agony over her mobile face.

"Feeling like that, you shall not go!" I whisper.

"I must! What has come to me to-day makes it imperative. You do not know!" Suddenly she mutters: "Forget what I have said, except the message to my sailor boy in case—in case you never see me more." Her soft voice has grown strangely hoarse.

"Ah, you fear?"

"I fear *nothing!* But you do not know my danger and I do." And the exquisite beauty of her countenance seems to be made ethereal by some premonition of disaster which brings a new loveliness into her passionate eyes.

"You shall not go!" I whisper determinedly.

"Quick! The side ladder is being raised. You have little time!" she cries, and flies with light feet to the other side of the deck, where she is cut off from me by the crush of passengers.

I would pursue her, but the shout is "All ashore for the last time!"

If I am to go, I must do it now.

With a terrible anxiety in my heart, I beckon to her, but Maud waves me off, crying from a distance: "Captain Tayler says you must leave the ship at once, Jack!"

Then as I reluctantly descend the vessel's side, Maud comes to the rail, and looking over calls airily: "*Adios, mi caballero!* I'll tell Mazie what a good boy you were to me," and waves adieu with fluttering handkerchief.

Looking at her ethereal loveliness, in which there seems to me now a desperate kind of levity, for she is laughing till the tears roll down her cheeks at a Chinese dandy in a shore boat which has come up too late, I think: "Had I not been in love with Mazie Inez, Maud Ysabel is pretty enough, coquettish enough, charming enough and brave enough to have conquered me."

Then as my boat pulls away, and the great propeller of the *Esmeralda* begins to churn the water, the half despair in her elder sister's eyes makes me shudder as I think of my own dear girl in that troubled land to which Señorita Gordon goes so undauntedly to confront the Spanish rule, which is and has been always cruel and bloodthirsty, from the old Roman days when Hamilcar taught *Punica fides* to the Iberian, to these modern times of Valmaceda and Weyler, with medieval Alva, Pedro the Cruel and Jayme the Butcher thrown in.

CHAPTER IV.

"BROTHERS, I SMELL A STRANGER!"

THESE ideas throw me into gloomy meditation over what the man with Eastern face and English dress had said to Señorita Gordon. Maud would never have looked as she did unless she guessed something damnable was going to happen in the Philippines. Then like a flash comes into my mind that mysterious Chinese warning.

I am aroused from my feverish meditations by my boat jostling with another steam launch, which is apparently returning from the departing steamer.

"By Josh, Curzon, your boys are jim-dandies for steering!" comes to me from the other craft; then follow imprecations upon the coolie boatmen in unmistakable fluent heathen Mongolian jabber, the like of

which no European can imitate, no missionary get the twist of, study how he will the Chinese classics.

Looking at the other boat, I call: "Hello, Khy!" and gaze on the greatest Chinese dandy in Hong Kong, a young man of the brightest, slit, Oriental eyes, the most decided Mongolian features and the costume of a Fifth Avenue swell, with one or two Radcliff Highway and some Oriental embellishments thrown in. He is smoking languidly as he reclines under an awning in the stern sheets, and is Mr. Ah Khy, commonly known in Hong Kong as "Young China." In his desire to exhibit European fashion, he sports a Prince Albert coat, white vest, lavender trousers, white gaiters, patent-leather boots, red necktie and big watch-chain; crowning his adornment with a high stove-pipe hat even on this burning, sultry, roasting sizzling day.

"By Jupiter, Khy, you are elaborately arrayed!" I remark.

"You bet, I'm got up to beat the band! I was rushing it!" he answers in easy American slang. "I was going to make a call on a bang-up gal on the *Esmeralda*. I wanted her to know, by Josh, that if she was hazed at Vassar College I was put through at Yale. Her dad, old Gordon of the Philippines, has been getting his daughter educated modern, as my governor has had me." Here Mr. Khy bursts into voluble Chinese invective at the two boatmen, adding in English: "You dirty landlubbers, do you want to run my friend Curzon down?" Then he suggests in a horrible Western familiarity he has picked up in the United States. "Come into my boat, Jackey, I've got the primest bottle of cocktails with me, and hang it, the way your lubbers are steering, if we linger together, one of us is sure to be swamped."

Accepting his invitation, I jump into his boat, and seat myself beside the son of probably the richest Chinaman in Victoria, not even excepting Hing Kee the comprador who owns the Hong Kong Hotel and English Club House. A moment later I order my men to get out of the way and give us sea room and turning to Mr. Khy ask eagerly: "You know Señorita Gordon?"

"Know Maudie? Well I should ejaculate! My father was the head of the Manila branch of Hen Chick

& Co. when I was a kid, and shipped or smuggled most of Gordon's tobacco. I really think that my father's sending me to Yale, for my old gentleman is a progressive old Philistine, and guessed that if I was to stand up against the outside barbarians he'd have to make an outside barbarian of me, gave old Bully Gordon a hint of trotting his daughter after me a few years later. You've been doing the polite to her I imagine from a distant squint of the ship's deck. You had better luck than me. I slept too long after poker last night and the *Esmeralda* got under way before I could get on board. You are engaged to Maudie's sister, ain't you?" he asks, with imported Yankee curiosity.

To my answering nod, Khy remarks: "Thought so!" then asks rather eagerly: "Did you notice whether Maud had got a box of cigarettes?"

"Certainly; Miss Gordon had them in her cabin."

"Ah; then probably the governor will forgive my missing her," says the young fellow languidly as he offers me a cocktail, which by the mercy of God I refuse.

"I suppose Maudie is a howling beauty by this time," he babbles on, "As a kid she bid fair to beat anything in the push. I hope she's a success. My governor thinks that I'm a failure. He educated me Western so I could beat the Japs, Dutch and Yanks at trading, but hang it, it's only made me a fish out of water. Chopsticks and rice don't come natural to me," he says with a shudder. "By the bye, I've imported from San Francisco a Chinese-American cook who makes me think of Delmonico's. Will you come up and dine with me some day? I'm so damn lonely for English and European society," mutters the poor fellow dolefully.

While the Chinese-American has been chatting, I have been turning over in my mind the curious warning about Manila, and having concluded that Khy is about the best man in all Hong Kong to investigate my Mongolian puzzle, have been devoting my thoughts to enlisting him in the affair.

Suddenly an idea of the proper bribe flies into my brain. I suggest: "Khy, old fellow, how would you like me to assist you into English society?"

A spasm of Asiatic joy flies into the nondescript's face, "Holy Poker!" he cries, gripping my hand, "You'll do that for me, will you, Curzon? Great Scott, put me up at the English Club, won't you. You're one of the Governors, ain't you?"

I give a shudder.

"You can do it," he cries, "My father has a thundering big I. O. U. of Johnson's and another equally as expansive of Richards', and Johnny Pell of the P. & O. office owes me a thundering lot on the last Spring races, which he hasn't settled. They dassent go back on me. You can shove me in."

"Perhaps," I answer; knowing I am telling a lie as atrocious as Ananias' best.

"If you can do it, I'm your friend for life!" babbles the Celestial dandy. "Cracky! Wouldn't my governor feel proud if he saw me looking out of the windows of a place which he couldn't put his nose into. By the bye, will you have a stinker?" And Khy effusively passes me one of the finest cigars I have ever put my hands upon. This, providentially, I put in my pocket, reserving it for an after dinner bon bouche.

"Will you help me in this?" I ask suddenly, and put before his eyes the paper I have received bearing the words about Manila.

To my astonishment it seems to effect Khy much more than I had expected. He gazes at the writing and mutters: "Holy Moses!" then hands the paper back to me **remarking**: "I—I don't want to have anything to do with this."

"Your manner tells me you know something about it."

"Shouldn't wonder." Then he glances at me eagerly, though nervously, and asks: "Have I your support to get into English society? Will you try and put me up at the English Club?"

"Yes, by Jove!" I mutter desperately. "You get me to the bottom of this, and I am yours to command." Though as I say this I know the very mention of Khy's name will make me the scoff of my compatriots. I am inclined to think the constitution of the Club will bar him. Anyway, I know he'll be blackballed till his pigtail stands on end. So I don't feel

very much compromised about the matter, and with diplomatic candor proceed to give him hope.

"Your grip on that," cries Khy, and meeting my out-stretched hand, he again examines the paper carefully, and remarks contemplatively: "It looks like my governor's handwriting."

"What? This warning!" I gasp.

"Oh, yes. I also think the package of cigarettes sent on board to the young lady was an additional one," he whispers. "By Hookey, I was directed to suggest to Señorita Maud to smoke like blazes and get to the bottom of the box before she reached Manila."

"But why this peculiar underhand method of conveying warning to Gordon's daughter?" I query. "Besides, of what is it a warning?"

"Hanged if I know," answers Khy lazily. "But you can bet my governor does."

"Then why didn't he say it openly?"

"Ah, you don't know Hen Chick," he laughs. "My old man's a regular Machiavelli, he is. Besides he is in Manila now; went there after giving me directions about those cigarettes for Gordon's daughter, which he did with knees smiting together with the thought of Spanish officials jumping on him, which they'll do like 'rough-on-rats' if they catch him monkeying with any of their little games."

"Ah, your father does this from love of Gordon and his daughter."

"No," laughs Khy, "my father never loved old Don Silas well enough to prevent his swindling him at any chance he could get in tobacco or hemp. As to his daughter, what does my old man care for a child who used to pull his pigtail every chance she got." Then the young Chinaman astounds me, for he says contemplatively: "No, I think the only thing that would make my governor *dare* to do something he fears will offend Spanish officials is his undying commercial hatred of old Adolph Ludenbaum, the Manila merchant."

"How does that affect Gordon or his daughter?"

"Hanged if I know! But in some way I think my father has dropped upon the fact that old Ludenbaum has some scheme of his own in connection with that **family**, and you can bet by the Seven Dragons, if old

Hen Chick can balk Adolph's little game, Hen Chick will do it quick as fire crackers."

"Why does your father hate old Ludenbaum?" I ask astounded.

"Ah, that's a corker! That's one of the finest commercial anecdotes I can tell you!" and Khy laughs till the tears roll down his face. "Any man who can get ahead of my governor in commerce from smuggling opium to discounting bills-of-lading on tea cargoes, is what at Yale they call a jim-dandy. But Ludenbaum did it and did it good! It was something like six years ago, about the time my pigtail was commencing to attract attention at Yale," says the young man, pointing ruefully at the long and elegantly dressed queue that he wears coiled around his head and concealed under his Broadway stovepipe.

Then he goes on in an easy conversational way: "You know Chinese laws, commercial and otherwise, are rather different to those of you Outside Barbarians. Well Ludenbaum took advantage of the Chinese law to best my father in a most outrageous way. We Celestials are run on the patriarchal system. You don't notice it much here in Hong Kong, but get into the interior of China and it will be poked under your nose at every whack of the Mandarins' bamboo-men. Under this system, so long as his father lives, a son never becomes of age. My daddy would think no more of whaling me than he would if I were an inch high. Furthermore younger brothers are subservient to elder brothers. That is, if a father owes money he can't pay, his sons have got to pay it for him, and are legally responsible for the debt. In addition, if an elder brother busts in commerce or gambling, the younger brother is legally responsible for his elder brother's financial deficiencies.* It is a lovely law. Under it, how would

* This Chinese law which seems extraordinary to Western Barbarians is in force in a great part of that empire. The author has known it even carried out in San Francisco among the various Chinese companies. One young Chinaman of his acquaintance threatened to commit suicide because his savings had been taken to pay the debts of his brother who had failed in the grocery business in Oakland, California, the Chinese companies enforcing the law of old China among their various members. He has also known in China a son arrested and put into jail and compelled to pay fraudulent demands on his dead father's estate, which could not be disproved

you, Mr. Curzon, like to have an elder brother gambling in Argentines and Africans in the London stock exchange, or taking fliers in Wall Street in such fluctuating insecurities as Tobacco Trust and Sugar. You would feel infernally secure in your own property and possessions, wouldn't you? But such is the Confucian idea; and though it may be very fine for the heads of families, and may add to the credit and financial responsibility of an elder brother who is a plunger and has a rich younger brother who is a sober, saving, business man, still it comes rather hard at times upon the juveniles of the family. Now my father had an elder brother, Hang Khy, the most infernal speculator and gambler in opium, tea and other fluctuating commodities in all southern China; and by the holy poker, Hang Khy busted up; failed for a big amount, chiefly, thank Josh, to Europeans. But Ludenbaum unfortunately, was one of my uncle's creditors. He bought up all the other European claims against Hang Khy, consolidated them, and turned them over to Wah Yuen of Hop Kee & Co. of Canton. So one fine day when my father was making a little visit up the river at Canton, by the living jingo, if Wah Yuen didn't have him arrested, clapped into the Chinese jail for debt, and put through such a course of sprouts by the jailor who threatened to bamboo him to death, that he had to settle, on the Chinese basis, his brother's debts; not in full, I think, for there was never seen such kicking against the Confucian edicts and patriarchal system in China before, as my father set up in that Canton jail. But still Hen Chick had to pay a good many thousand taels to get free of the matter, and if ever there is one man who hates another, my father Hen Chick hates Adolph Max Ludenbaum with a diabolical compound commercial hatred. Some day, if I know my paternal, he'll get even, with the accent on the *even*. But here we are at the float; don't forget about the Club."

Here I seize upon him and say: "Don't you neglect to discover what you can of this matter."

"All right!" Khy can't get over the English R,

on account of the demise of the man against whom the claims were made. This actually happened upon his return to his native land, to Lee Wong, one of the leading merchants of San Francisco, who personally told the author of its occurrence.—ED.

notwithstanding Yale. "If I drop onto it, I'll send my card up to you after dinner at the English Club. That will add to my pull with any of the members who happen to see it," says Khy, warily.

"Very well then. Time is important," I mutter.

"Quite light. This very evening if I can get the pointer for you," answers the Chinese dandy, and marches away, hopefully whistling: "On the Bowery."

I stroll up to the Club—but heat and perhaps anxiety have destroyed my appetite, and fortunately I postpone dinner—no food passing my lips, a thing that perchance saves my life. I have just about made up my mind to take something light when the following is brought in to me by one of the Club servants:

Mr. Ah Khy,

Ex-Yale College.

Answering it, I find myself in the presence of this gentleman, who is now in most elaborate European evening dress. He holds in his hands a crush opera hat, which he bangs in and out with great ostentation and noise; a pair of yellow kid gloves being stuck into it, Parisian fashion; an immaculate handkerchief liberally perfumed, making its appearance just above the lapel of his low-cut white vest.

Gazing at it, I know it is about the handsomest dress suit in Hong Kong; and the gentleman it adorns, catching my eye, says pleasantly: "Yes, Bell of Fifth Avenue, New York, made this. He does all my clothes."

"What have you discovered about this?" I whisper, and hold the warning message to him.

"So much I am weak in the knees!" Ah Khy looks at me in Chinese nervousness.

"You think it means danger to Miss Gordon in Luzon?"

"Heaps! So much I am afraid to do anything about it myself. It might get my dad executed in Manila."

"Therefore you're afraid to act in Hong Kong?" I remark sarcastically.

"Light you are!" mutters Khy, warily.

"Well tell me about it. Whisper it in my ear if you're nervous," I say impatiently.

"I am afraid to whisper it in your ear. I know my governor hates old Luttenbaum with a commercial hate, but commercial vindictiveness doesn't embrace the danger of military execution; I may go to Manila myself some day, and—oh, hang it, dash it, I'm scared! I guess lack of sand was the reason they didn't put me on the Yale football team after all," he says with a sigh.

"So you won't tell me. Your chances of my vote and influence to get into the English Club are becoming gradually less, Mr. Khy," I remark.

"I darsn't for ten English Clubs, a Japanese war club and an Australian boomerang thrown in. But for Josh's sake, don't be angry with me. Here's what I'll do. I dasset tell you, but I'll take you to where, if you've sand enough to go, you'll find out for yourself. But to-morrow," whispers the Chinaman in my ear, "your *pals* who have been playing pool with you in there," he points to the billiard room, "may be your *pal* bearers. Excuse the joke; it is one I heard at a variety show in the New York Tenderloin."

"Damn your jokes!" I growl. "Does this blood-curdling mystery affect the girl I am about to marry?"

"It even affects your chances of marrying her."

"I'll go with you!" I answer determinedly.

"Very well; but I must change your rig. Come with me," whispers Khy.

A few minutes after I am following him through the half-lighted Tai-ping-shan. This is, as usual, full of paper lanterns, red and gilt signs, filthiness and burning Josh-sticks. My appearance produces no particular comment, as plenty of Europeans are trotting through the Chinese quarter at this early hour of the evening, which is as boilingly sultry as the day has been.

Two minutes after I follow Mr. Khy into a thoroughly Chinese house.

"These, you know, are not my real quarters," he says deprecatingly. "I simply do this to please my paternal. Hen Chick thinks it will hurt our Chinese trade if I cut away from Orientalism. Got a wife here up-stairs," he adds laughingly, "but she doesn't count for much. There's another one up in Canton. My old man believes my having a few scattered about will add to the prestige of the family. Now I'll try and take some of the English out of you."

This he does with Chinese deftness, chattering to me all the while in a way that is by no means reassuring. "You go on your own risk, you know, old chappy," he falters, and I can feel his hand which is painting dark eyebrows upon me, shake. "Don't blame me, if they do you!"

"Who'll do me?" I ask, impressed by his manner.

Then the whole affair comes out!

"Oh, the secret society."

"The secret society of what?"

"Of the Filipinos."

"Oh, the one the Spaniards jeer at as Free Masons," I scoff. "The fellows who have the crazy idea they can drive out Spain and set up a republic in the Philippines."

"By the yellow dragon, you needn't laugh," whispers the Chinaman. "They have their headquarters in Hong Kong. They have branches in Yokohama and Manila, Iloilo and Cebu, as well as agents in Madrid, New York and San Francisco. The band so permeates the islands the Governor-General knows he is in as much danger as if he lived on the Yellow River. It's the one that's cemented by the brotherhood of blood, with as many initiation mysteries as a Yale secret society."

"How do you know this?"

"I don't know all of this, but you will know a good deal of it by to-morrow morning, if you live. All I know is that I can put you where you will find out. My father owns the building in which part of the gang hold their meetings."

"Your father dares rent them the building?"

"Oh, the old man is between the Emperor and the Mandarin. If he gives away the Filipino society, if they ever get rule in Manila, they'll do him. If he

doesn't give them away, the Spanish government may knock him out," mutters Khy.

"But how does this affect Señorita Gordon?"

"Only this! I am certain that my father's warning sent to you to prevent Maudie's sailing, and the box of cigarettes he directed me to place in her cabin means somehow or other that old Gordon must be connected with this society."

"Impossible!" I dissent. "Old Gordon has too level a head to get mixed up with something that may cost him his life. He may fight the Spanish officials in court, but——"

"Then some one of his family is connected," interjects Khy. "I can't tell you how. No one knows the workings of this powerful league, but be sure it has something to do with that. Now if you have interest enough in the matter to discover what may destroy your sweetheart's family and perhaps bust your nuptial knot, come with me."

"Heave ahead, and make me look like your Josh, for that's about the face you're putting on me," I retort.

An hour after this, two Chinamen slip onto the street, one extremely awkward in the padded shoes of a Celestial, and whose face flushes with shame as a drunken English sailor salutes him with a degrading kick as he tumbles against him, a kick he doesn't dare to resent, though this Chinaman mutters a British "Damn you!" and clenches his fist John Bull fashion.

So dodging along the dirtiest of Chinese alleys of the filthiest part of the Chinese quarter, we come to a low house, two stories in height. Khy who has explained the matter to me, makes entry by some key of his own, muttering tremblingly: "This is the place we rented to 'em. Judging by their former actions we're about an hour ahead of 'em. Now you'll discover if you don't funk."

"Go on," I say, and stumble up an unlighted stairway, where Khy, leading me into a room which is dark, lifts up the lid of a great chest which seems to have held tea from its odor and says: "If you've got sand enough to get in and lie there; if you come out alive, you'll come out with the knowledge what the Filipinos mean to do, and how it affects old

Gordon and his daughters. You may come out dead. If so, there'll be a row about it, but it won't trouble you."

Following his guiding hand, I stumble into the large tea chest, Khy with Chinese subtlety placing several pieces of wood under the lid which prevents the trunk closing tight. This gives me the necessary air and also permits me, as I discover afterwards, to obtain a glimpse of portions of the room.

"Now, you've a 'locky load' before you," mutters my mentor, whose agitation adds to his trouble with his R's: to this he adds: "There's no wonder you English conquer, you've got grit," and gliding away in the darkness, leaves me, prey to a thousand conflicting emotions, the most vivid of which is that I am a cursed up-and-down all-night fool.

Twice I think I hear a faint rustle; once I feel what I imagine is a dagger driven into my back, but it is only a predatory rat which has taken a slight nip of me. The heat in my confined quarters is tremendous. It seems to me I remain boiling for months in this infernal, stifling tea chest.

As I think of my helplessness, half a dozen times I wish I were some Western cowboy who always carries a pistol.

I have just about made up my mind to get out of the trunk, sneak downstairs and bolt; when suddenly I hear the noise of coming steps, not the footfalls of sleepy Mongolians, but those of quick, nervous, energetic, athletic men.

A moment after, a faint glow comes to my eyes through the clinks under the lid of the tea chest.

I gaze out. As well as I can discover, three men, one dressed as a Mestizo, another as a European and the third as a Chinaman, but all smoking cigarettes, have lighted a lamp, and are seated at a small Chinese table with various papers and documents before them. One of them says: "Our comrade is late; and to-night is important, as after this we do not meet till our knives touch each other in the heart of Captain-General Ramon Blanco y Arenas."

Another answers: "He'll be here. You know that there is none of the brotherhood who can be trusted more profoundly than Señor Tonga. Some woman on

the *Esmeralda* attracted his attention to-day; some woman whom, I think, he loves."

"*Carrajo*, love is dangerous! Love has defeated a Filipino insurrection against the infernal Spanish a hundred years ago. You have heard, my comrade, the story of the woman who betrayed to the priest that her lover was to assassinate the Captain-General. May not the same ill fate come to us?"

"*Diablo!* There's only one woman I fear in all this business, the wife of Pedro Roxas. She's a devotee; she goes to confessional each week," says the other in Filipino lingo.

As I listen to these words, I cogitate grimly: "What would Blanco give to hear this?" I have grown strangely confident. The room seems quite a large one. As I look about, I see a number of tea chests in remote corners, and the one that conceals me is the most out of the way of the lot. I even debate if I could not make things easy for my sweetheart's family with the Spanish officials in the Philippines by letting this plot out to Don Ramon Blanco.

A moment after, I hear a coming step.

I catch a glimpse of a man as he enters; five feet seven in height; of lithe form and peculiar face; high cheek bones; a nose of extraordinary expression and power, its nostrils dilating and contracting with every breath; lines running up each cheek to the eyes black as coal; a wondrous nose, aquiline yet dilated. He gives me an awful start. I recognize him as the man whose words had stricken Maud upon the *Esmeralda*.

As he comes in, one of the others rising and giving him a peculiar hand-grip, says: "Welcome, brother! This is our last meeting here!"

"Yes," he answers. "It is *adios* till we clasp hands on the *Luneta* after we have put our knives into—"

Suddenly the speaker stops his jaws. I see his nostrils dilating. He glides to the door and locks it. Then his words freeze me with fear and make my blood run cold as ice even on this burning night. My hair stands on end; not the false pigtail Khy has attached to me, but my real hair. For this man as he has secured the door, drawing in his breath two or three times with wondrous sniffs, has made this as-

tounding yet awful declaration: "Brothers, I SMELL A STRANGER!"

But the others, who are not gifted with his damnable power, seem hardly to credit him.

One of them cries: "No man who loves his life would dare——"

Another, a little half Spanish creature, jeers: "Nonsense! Ata Tonga, you believe too much in your nose."

"*Santo Dios!* Did you ever know it to fail me!" And going to him, Ata takes a sniff of him; takes a sniff of the other, and then of the third. A moment after he says impressibly: "There is a fourth; I smell a fourth!"

"What smell?" And his companions spring up, now apparently convinced.

"The odor of some beef-eating race; English perchance. Certainly not Chinese or Oriental."

"Where is he?"

I know I am gone!

For the brute commences to follow the scent like a hound about the room, muttering: "It is stronger! It is stronger! It is stronger!" With a sudden movement he throws up the lid of the tea chest and I see over me a long Malay kris, gleaming in the soft lamp-light of the room.

"He is here; the spy of the Captain-General; and here he stays!" snarls my executioner.

But by sudden inspiration, even as the knife is descending upon me, I scream: "Ata Tonga! For the love of Señorita Gordon——"

"Ata Tonga! You know me?" and he staggers back surprised.

"Yes, I saw you to-day as I placed your mistress on the *Esmeralda*."

"*Santos!* It is the voice of the Englishman who assisted my beloved lady from one steamer to the other!"

In a second I am pulled out of the tea chest by an athletic grip, and stand staring like a Chinese fool into the faces of four human beings who look upon me with a distrust and hate I hope never to see again on the faces of men who have knives in their hands. One of them growls: "The silent tongue is always the safest. Englishman disguised as Chinaman, your life has ended!"

But I, inspired, whisper: "Down with your hand, Ata Tonga! How will you dare face your mistress if you slay one who would save her from her enemies!"

Looking at me, the educated savage takes a mighty sniff and astonishes me by muttering: "You SMELL TRUE! Brothers, there is still the odor of wild roses on his lips. My lady must have kissed him. This man must be our friend!"

And I, relieved from the fear of sudden death and blessing God that I have sullied my lips with neither food nor drink nor cigar since Maud's sweet lips gave sister's greeting unto mine, stammer out: "By the shades of Vidocq, what a detective you would make!"

CHAPTER V.

ATA TONGA.

AT my words, this astounding being bursts into a low hoarse chuckle of barbaric laughter; but a moment later takes two or three sniffs, and apparently following some odor to the door, remarks: "A Chinaman was here a little time ago. He probably secreted you." Then he adds impressively: "Señor Curzon—you see I know your name—to save your life you must tell us how you came here, why you are here, and then become one of us, cementing your oath even with the compact of mingled blood."*

"Join your gang—that has assassination under way—if I understood the words that came to me a few moments ago!" I reply indignantly. "You don't know me. I'm an Englishman, and do my killing above board."

"It is because we have assassination under consideration and because you have discovered it, that you must join us; otherwise——!" He waves his hand with a significant barbaric gesture.

"Hang it, you're not going to let those devils murder me?" I mutter, as I see the other three begin to

* For particulars regarding this peculiar admission to the Society of United Filipinos, see Appendix.—ED.