"Yes," I answer.

"Then if the Spanish officials know this, it is some plot to take away the shield she has seized for the protection of her father's and sister's possessions. You know the tobacco lands up at Nueva Ecija are very valuable. The political suspicions of the authorities make them nervously tyrannical, and it is so easy to accuse—so difficult to disprove—a person's being a member of a secret society, to which no one dares admit he belongs. Even to be an innocent Free Mason means absolute destruction at present in the Philippine Islands.* No accusation is too extraordinary to be made against a Filipino accused of being an *insurrecto*. If you would aid her, go at once!" commands the savage. "Ata Tonga will not be long after you."

Fortunately I find "going at once" is not difcult. I discover a freight boat that leaves this very afternoon for Manila. Upon her I take passage. To my delight I discover the English tramp steamer is a speedy one, and her charter commands despatch.

Therefore after running through the *Boca Chica* into the bay, and dropping anchor off *La Muy Noble Ciudad of Manila*, I find myself only forty-eight hours after the time the *Esmeralda* has delivered Señorita Maud Ysabél Gordon into the land where she may be made the victim of Spanish officials.

* The Spanish officials in the Philippines called the Society of United Filipinos, Free Masons, as this order has been condemned by the Catholic Church. The names Free Mason and secret conspirator against the Spanish Government in Luzon were considered synonymous.—*Appleton's Day Book*, 1896.

"It has been related by those who know, that the honor of wife or the virtue of daughter of the unlucky Filipino is held at the disposal of Fraile on demand. Resistance to such a demand means certain denouncement of the victim to the civil power as a 'Free Mason,' or a 'sympathizer of *insurrectoes*.' The civil officials know much better than to question any charge of this kind emanating from such a source, and the unlucky man vanishes forever from his family. What goes on in Philippine prisons without trial in the way of torture, thirst, starvation, misery, mutilation and murder, has been of late a common enough theme."—*Singapore Free Press, August* 2, 1898.

BOOK II.

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE EXPATRIATED AMERICAN.

CHAPTER VI.

A FILIPINO TIFFIN.

It is beyond mid-day when we come to our moorings at the anchorage, off the breakwater at the mouth of the Pasig. It is the rainy season: but not raining. The soft southwest monsoon is blowing lazily, making scarce a ripple on the sunlit water of the great Manila Bay, whose boundary mountains, the Sierra Marvieles, are visible towards the west.

To the north are lands so low they are scarce visible, through which the Rio Grande de Pampanga flows by many mouths into the bay. But to the east, not much over a mile away, lies Manila, cut into two parts by the Pasig. To the south of the river is *La muy noble ciudad*, the Old Town, ecclesiastic, military, mediæval, and despotic, its ancient batteries fringed with frowning guns, many of them planted a couple of centuries ago to overawe Malay and Sulu pirates, who didn't hesitate in the brave days of old, to raid the shipping of the bay, despite the curses of the Captain-General, anathemas of the Archbishop and cannon of its capital.

Above the old Fort of Santiago floats the flag of Spain, indicative always of a colony struggling against the oppression of the Spanish official, in haste to loot a fortune, and the Spanish tax-gatherer, relentless in his greed.

Beyond this is the great cathedral, with its two steeples, one standing, the other in ruins from the great earthquake of some thirty years before.

To the north of the Pasig, in contrast to the Old Town, whose narrow streets are filled with a population more intensely Spanish than Spain itself, is the modern Manila, that commercial emporium, which ships the immense produce of these islands to the utmost ends of the earth, the Binondo and its surrounding suburbs, Tondo, Trozo, Santa Cruz and more aristocratic San Miguel, the busy hives of enterprising foreign merchants, ingenuous Tagal artisans, crafty Chinese traders, and tireless sweating coolies.

All this is back-grounded by tropic nature, green in this, the rainy season, unto the very city's walls; paddy fields, plantations of bamboos and bananas, groves of cocoanuts and other tropic fruit, mingled with flowers of wondrous hues growing everywhere. Back of all this, the two great mountains, Malfonnso and Mateo, sink into low foot-hills that, more verdant than the higher peaks, melt into a sea of green, the plain around Manila, drained, yet irrigated by the placid Pasig River and it numerous tributaries.

Surrounding this is the whole great Island of Luzon with its fringe of volcanic mountains upon the western coast, and its three grand volcanoes, Alba, Taal and Mayon; its wondrous plants, flowers and tropic forests; its curious races of mankind, the little Negritos, they of agile toes that do the work of other people's hands, inhabiting the wild mountains of the north safe from the Spanish tax-gatherer, the subtle Tagals, many of whom have thrown away the virtues of the savage for the vices of the civilized, and come into this town of Manila to be its skilled workmen and artisans of facile fingers in weaving piña webs and molding gold and silver, also the Mestizos they of mixed race, who are neither European nor Chinese nor Tagalog nor Aetas, but a melange of blood and intellect as varied as the voices of the Tower of Babel. Though whate'er their former creeds have been, Buddha or Vishnu or Mohammed, or worshipers of that mysterious being that strikes them down by lightning thunderbolts that they call Cambunian, they all, men and women, girls and boys, carry candles and march

in religious *festins* and cross themselves and go to confession and salam to their *padres*, as members of the Church of Rome; all these hating Spain, yet bowing to the flag that floats over the Citadel of Santiago. In short, the whole Island of Luzon; in places unexplored, for there are many mountain chasms swept by rapid waterfalls and many numerous tropic forests whose matted tendrils forbid entrance save to wild beasts, and lots of jungle swamps that are but the haunt of reptiles, and other places where the foot of man seems to walk *too* near his God as he treads foothills trembling to the unceasing eruptions of the great volcanic mountain Mayon, or as he touches the waters of the Lake Bombon made tepid by molten lava from the fiery islet called the Mount of Taal.

Yet even as I look upon it, all tropical romance is destroyed by the foreground of the modern commerce of Manila; vessels are casting anchor, ships are going to sea, a coasting steamer is coming to her quay on the Pasig from Catbalogan, Cebu, and other Southern islets; a Spanish warship, the *Don Juan de Austria*, is just sending off its steam launch full of young officers whose joyous faces show they have got shore leave; crafts are moving everywhere, those of lighter draft into the busy quays of the Pasig to discharge their cargoes, larger vessels being unloaded by lighters and *bancas* managed by swarming crews of vigorous never tiring coolies, not eight-hour men, but sixteen-hour fellows, sweating but uncomplaining.

Yet this scene means nothing more to me than, "Here is the town that holds one sister whom I am, God willing, to marry, another sister whom I am, by the blessing of God, to save—save from *what?*"

Who knows?

Am I in time?

That I'll find out on shore.

Apparently something political or military is taking place even now. I think I see the gleam of arms of a regiment crossing the Puente de España over the Pasig.

This military matter is brought most rapidly home to me by little Tommy Simpson of the British Consul's office who is out in a steam launch to visit our skipper on some routine official duty.

Answering his hail and invitation, and very anxious

not only to know how the young lady for whose welfare I have come has fared, but likewise to have a kiss of my own beautiful sweetheart, I spring into the boat, and under its stern awning consternation comes upon me.

"You have heard the news?" whispers Simpson.

"What news?"

"Why, that Blanco has headed off the Filipino Society in a way that makes their hair stand on end."

"What the deuce do you mean?" I mutter.

"Well, they had intended as far as I can find out to massacre the Spaniards and capture the citadel over there," he waves his hand towards the Old Town, "before Spain could, embarrassed as she is by the war in Mindanao, get enough troops here to put them down. But their secret was revealed by the wife of Pedro Roxas, their most prominent leader who aspired to become emperor of the new nation. Roxas' wife being a devotee disclosed it at confessional to a priest, and the priest naturally revealed it to the Captain-General. Of course Roxas' wife said nothing to her husband fearing that he would murder her. Captain-General Blanco said nothing also, but quietly brought troops from Mindanao and hurried a few reinforcements from Spain also. Whereupon, feeling strong enough, Blanco has arrested Roxas, his cousin F. L. Roxas, likewise the American, Thomas L. Collins, who had an old claim against the government for destroying his business and confiscating his property in 1874, and any quantity of other people of whom the government wanted to be rid. The plan of the insurgents had been, as I understand it, to murder Captain-General Blanco on September 15th, and seize the town and citadel on the day of his funeral. But the old Spanish fox was ahead of them as usual, and soon——"

"Was B—Bully Gordon among the ar—arrested?" There is a little shake in my voice.

"Blow me if I know. This has all happened in a devil of a hurry, in the last twelve hours, and the town is full of rumors. Of course, as a British official I don't mix myself prominently in these matters, but you'll doubtless hear more about it up at the Club."

"What's Blanco going to do with the insurgents?" I ask, a little gasp in my throat.

"What does a Spanish court-martial always do with insurgents?" remarks the young Briton. "Though I believe the Captain-General, ammunition being a little short, intends to banish most of 'em to the Caroline Islands or some other place where they will conveniently die by fever or pestilence."

"Are you sure of your information?" I falter.

"Oh, certain. Look at the troops around the custom house. You can see something's going on. Blanco's making it warm for the Katipunan. By Jove, this news seems to have upset you, Curzon, old boy. You look quite seedy," remarks the young man as our boat runs up to the quay on the Pasig.

"Yes, I've not got over my—my sea sickness! I'm —I'm rather top heavy yet," I contrive to return. For looking at the frowning bastions and walls of old Manila on the bank of the river, and the patrolling Spanish troops with their light uniforms, bronzed faces and glittering Mauser rifles, an attack of shivering, ague seems to strike me as I remember that *I, too am now a Katipunan!*

As I step up the granite steps to the custom house and struggle through Tagal boys anxious to handle my baggage or call a *carromata* or get an order for my washing, immediate evidence of military alertness comes to me. The Spanish officials about the quay, lounging upon their cane rocking-chairs, smoke their cigarettes in an impressive, savage, vindictive kind of way, I think.

Though I am well known and my passport is viséed by the Spanish Consul at Hong Kong, I find it very closely scrutinized.

Consequently after getting through the official rigmarole necessary to my advent on shore, I find it is nearly five o'clock and *siestas* are about over. So, ordering my luggage sent to the uptown house of the English Club, I spring into a carromata and direct the driver to take me to the villa of Señor Silas Gordon in the San Miguel suburb. The promise of an additional *real* makes the Jehu whip his two, thick-hided, whalebone ponies into their best gait.

The city streets, as I pass through them, give no evidence of the political volcano whose fires are just beginning to burst forth. There is the same crowd of

pony-drawn carriages on the Puente de España. The Escolta's shops and cafés are just as brilliant as when I left them. The old women selling betel-nuts, cigars and *chow* are as noisy; the crowd of greasy coolies drawing carts is as active and as numerous; the Chinese jabber their pigeon patois as continuously; the Mestizos, ladies and gentlemen, seem as vivaciously merry as if some hundred of their kindred were not even now in the dungeons of the citadel, or being marched in captivity through the streets of their capital to meet vindictive military justice. The Spanish office holders are as suavely gracious, and smoke their cigarettes as unconcernedly as if Blanco had not struck his blow.

"The sure proof of a despotic government," I meditate, "the relatives of those who are *incomunicado* fear to show concern at their fate. Their oppressors do not wish, by their demeanor, to give to a suppressed emeute the dignity of an insurrection."

Leaving the business part of the city, I soon find myself 'mid the bungalows of the suburbs, speeding under the green of the feathery bamboo and beneath rows of great *arbols de fuego*, whose masses of flaming red blossoms look, under the sunlight, like the burning leaves of the fire-tree of Wolfstram.

In some twenty minutes I am driven into the courtyard of Gordon's magnificent villa, and spring out amid surrounding banana and orange trees, my mind intent upon my charming sweetheart, from whose kisses I have been divorced for four weary months.

I emit a sigh of relief as I find the place looks natural, inhabited and unconfiscated—with a vengeance. From the music up-stairs, a fête is evidently in progress. One or two carriages of Spanish officials and rich Mestizos, some carromatas of English clerks drawn by sturdy Philippine ponies, encumber the courtyard. I note from the liveries that one or two high officials must be present, and grimly comment to myself upon the unwonted popularity of old Don Silas with Spanish dignitaries.

A Tagal boy with wondrous promptitude answers my fourth summons, and says: "The ladies are receiving."

Two seconds after, I run up the big stairway to the

second story of Bully Gordon's villa, for like all Filipinos, the family live upon the floor above, the lower one being used for stables, house-servants, coolies, etc. Here in the magnificent *ciada* or hall, which is a mass of Japanese decoration; Satsuma vases, Cloisonné wares and Damio's swords being tinted by the soft light of the *concha* windows, I find Zima, a Negrita, the maid of my sweetheart, who, of course, knows me very well.

Fortunately the big hall is unoccupied, though the noise coming from the large reception-room at the right indicates it is crowded. Into Zima's hand I press a big round silver dollar, and hurriedly ask: "How are the ladies and their father?"

To this she answers: "All happy; all joyous. Señorita Ysabél come like a *festin*."

"Very well," I whisper. "Just get word to Mazie that I am here alone in the hall."

"Ay, *por Dios*, I understand, Don Juan," and the eyes of Zima, who is black as a jet statuette, only four feet six inches in height, flash like two electric carbons.

In a second she has glided from me, and the next moment I give a sigh of relief and joy; two rounded arms are thrown about my neck, and secluded by a Japanese screen I receive the sweetest of kisses from my betrothed; for though the duenna, Señora Valrigo, has followed her charge, on seeing me she has given a kindly bow and retired, abstractedly rolling up and lighting one of her omnipresent cigarettes.

"*Santos*, you're the unexpected, Jack!" my sweetheart whispers. "Maud when she arrived drove me to despair by saying you had no thought of leaving Hong Kong for a long month. What has brought you to me so suddenly?" There is a tinge of anxiety in Mazie's face.

"You!" I whisper.

The anxiety changes to joy. "*Dios*," whispers the girl, "how glad you will make us all."

"Everybody's well?" I ask eagerly.

"Oh, yes, papa seemed a little shocked by Maud's sudden return; the joy of meeting her was so great. You see Ysabél has changed so."

"How?"

"She went away a simple Filipina; she comes back a lady of the great world and—*such* a flirt. When she drove on the *Luneta* last afternoon two Spanish generals and ten colonels doffed their caps to her. She has as many admirers as if she were a countess from Madrid; such airs, such graces, I am in the shadow. But I can beat her in music," laughs my sweetheart. "*Santissima*, there's nothing like us Filipinos for music. Even Maud admits that the artillery band on the *Luneta* plays a little better than Señor Seidl's orchestra. And I know she is right, for our Filipino boys put their souls as well as their bodies into Verdi and Donizetti and Wagner. Have you ever heard our grand artist of the artillery band on the bass-drum? Who can whack pig-skins into pathos like he? Tears fly into my eyes at his every thump in Chopin's funeral march or the Death of Seigfried. But *Dios mio*, Jack, how can I talk to you when you kiss me so much. Step into the salon. Maud is astounding a number of our friends who have come to be fascinated by the foreign airs my sister has imported."

"Ah, she has a concourse?"

"Well, yes. Old Don Rafaél Lozado, Corregidor of Nueva Ecija is here. He has come to Manila. Papa isn't pleased at that. Also *Padre* de Laviga; likewise two or three young Englishmen, and Maud's old friend, Herr Adolph Ludenbaum. She is playing the queen amongst them," says Mazie proudly. "Come in. You shall have *bunuelos*, tea, chocolate, dulces and, of course, cigarettes and *cigarros*."

I am eager to see my fair charge of Hong Kong, and rather anxious to put eyes upon *Padre* de Laviga, who I believe is Mazie's confessor, and whom she sometimes calls the *Cura;* likewise to see the Corregidor of Nueva Ecija, who, I have heard mentioned, is equal rascal to any Spanish official in the Philippines.

Therefore, following Mazie I step into a typical Filipino gathering, mixed with the hidalgos and military exquisites from the Old Town of Manila which represents Spanish supremacy.

The concha windows of the big reception room are thrown open and blinds drawn up. The breeze from the Pasig comes floating in through palms and sweet smelling flowers into an apartment whose wooden

floor is as hard as iron, glistening as ivory and slippery as glass. Light cane seats, chiefly rocking chairs, and bamboo tables are mixed with hardwood cabinets and covered with Eastern ornaments and lots of plants; an image of the Virgin Mary and pictures of various saints and martyrs decorate the high walls; though these are leavened by a portfolio of magnificent photographs, mostly of streets of New York City, these the elder sister has apparently brought with her from America as I have never seen them in the room before.

Two or three musical instruments are thrown carelessly about on chairs and couches, a violin, a guitar, a banjo; a grand piano stands in a corner of the room, a harp in another.

Backgrounded by this last romantic instrument and a palm tree, Señorita Maud garbed in some summer dress from American modiste, from which her white arms and shoulders gleam like ivory, is playing the fine lady *à l'Américaine* and doing the grand fan act *à la Filipina* for the benefit of a gentleman to whom I am introduced as Don Rafaél Lozado, the Corregidor of Nueva Ecija. As I greet him, I note his age is sixty. He has the airs of a senile Don César, the beard of a Duke of Alva, and the heart, I imagine, of Sancho the Cruel; though this is covered up by a suit of immaculate white drill, cut tropic fashion, garnished with patent-leather boots and a flaming Solferino necktie.

This gentleman on our entrance, leaves the Señorita Maud and turns his attention to my affianced, seating himself placidly beside her and indulging in a *bunuelo* and chocolate as he smokes his cigarette and gazes upon my darling who is looking like a bird of Paradise in a frock of imported muslin with some feather effects that her sister has brought to her from New York.

The others of the company I note are the general run of Manila society, rich Mestizos of the upper class, struggling European clerks who squander all their salaries in living like princes at the English Club, old Ludenbaum who, in what is considered the worst of taste in the Philippines, smokes a meerschaum pipe, and the ecclesiastic who is the confessor of my sweetheart, a man I am prepared to hate, for I think he stands in the way of my happiness; though I am

agreeably astonished at his appearance. For though austerely clerical, garbed in his church vestments, *Padre* José de Laviga has a face that seems to me soft and kindly; his eyes anyway are that, albeit at times they light up with the fire of monasticism.

I have scarce made my bow when Señorita Maud, extending her hand American fashion, whispers: "Welcome to Manila," then laughs uneasily: "Is hemp going up that you, Señor Jack, have come so hurriedly here to buy a cargo or two?"

"Yes," I reply carelessly. "In Hong Kong we think your troubles may make a short crop."

"*Dios!* never talk politics to a lady," laughs the girl and taps me with her fan. Then assuming a lightness, to which her eyes once or twice give the lie, she picks up the banjo, and cries: "Inspect this novel instrument I brought from America. You like coon-songs, I am told, at the English Club, Mr. Bob Partridge, and you, I believe, adore them on the mandolin, Señors Antonio Florez and Roderigo Cabalo. Listen to this! You have never heard this one before. It came out just as I left New York." And she commences to sing, accompanying herself very prettily on the banjo, "Louisiana Lou."

While the bulk of the company gather about Señorita Maud and go into raptures over her song, I drift into a conversation with the ecclesiastic who asks me the current news at Hong Kong, and if any late advices have come from Cuba, and also, this last I think with perhaps greater interest, if my stay in Manila will be a long one.

This I parry with: "Who can tell the exigencies of commerce?"

While this conversation is running along, my eyes have not left my darling sweetheart, who, dressed in European style, looks as pretty as a canary bird, though I think Mazie was even more beautiful in the light *pina* garments she used to wear when I first knew her. Gazing on this, I notice that Don Rafaél, the old Spanish official seems equally interested, and in a way I don't like. For his eyes light up in a proprietary, Don Juan way, as he inspects the vivacious loveliness of my affianced who is asking him about her old home under the great Montes de Baler, and questioning him if old Señora Goozeman still insists upon her husband sitting upon the duck eggs and helping the ducks incubate them; if Pedro, the hunter, kills as many wild buffalo and deer as he used to; if the big snake in the swamp that used to frighten everybody has come to an untimely ending; is Carranglan up in the mountains as wild as when she was a little girl; how the village band of Jaen is progressing; has Zumy succeeded in making a new trombone out of kerosene cans? is Ponto yet married to Tema? and all the other local gossip of a typical Filipino village.

But this is broken in upon by a strange exhibition of Mestizo musical ability and mercurial temperament. Señorita Maud has just finished her song to the bravas of the surrounding men, Herr Ludenbaum being the most uproarious of the lot, when young Señor Cabalo of Imus, whose sugar-cane has made him rich, cries out suddenly: "The banjo! Pha! It is an easy thing; I can play it at sight. Permit me!"

Bowing before the young lady he takes the instrument from her hands, and receiving two or three hints as to the register and tuning of the instrument, he cries out: "Behold me!" and without more ado goes about the room playing the banjo with as much ease as if he had been born on a Louisiana plantation or was a member of Christy's minstrels; then breaking into "Il Bacio" he dances round the room singing the air and thumbing the strings and kicking his little patent-leathers over the furniture like a can-can artist.

"They're a curious race," mutters Jim Barton, one of the only four Americans in town, the representative of Perham & Co. of Boston in my ear. "Here are two girls who are laughing and chatting with us, and God knows what may happen to their father now this trouble has broken out, and there is that ape Cabalo dancing about the room when his uncle was put *incomunicado* to-day in the citadel. Hang me, if I can make them out!"

"Yes," I reply grimly, "they dance just as lightly in their villages at the foot of blazing Mayon, which never cease trembling, and where they are always in danger of being burnt alive. They're a curious crowd."

Evidences of this come to me even more strongly, for they all get so very merry and melodious that I

think I am in a conservatory of music. One young fellow goes to playing the harp ; another picks up the guitar, and a third proves himself a *maestro* of the violin.

Mazie, anxious, I think, to get away from the attentions of Don Rafaél, throws herself upon the piano stool, and attacks that instrument, and Maud makes a pretty picture with the harp. Then after a moment young Cabalo cries, striking his banjo *à la* musical director : "Now all together ! Li Hung Chang march ! *Presto ! Forte !*"

And they all break out with tremendous impressment into that most popular Chinese melody of the Philippines, and go marching about like an opera bouffe chorus, young Señor Cortez improvising a triangle from two Japanese wire ornaments, and Señor Alphonso del Monte producing gong and drum effects from a couple of pieces of Chinese armor that he grinds together, and his fist with which he pounds a heavy table. A boy of sixteen of languid air and girlish face, little Pablo Runildo, with childish carelessness and artistic eye breaks off all the growing flowers in the room and tosses them over the fantastic crowd with tropic grace.

So they all get merrier and merrier until finally young Cabalo, who, despite his uncle's jeopardy seems to be the most light-hearted and light-headed of the lot, sends them all into an ecstacy of laughter by playing a violin solo, holding the instrument like a 'cello and thumping out an accompaniment on the piano with his nose, which he uses in a vivacious comic way that would make the fortune of a French musical clown.

But soon, like children wearying of their sport, the young men go to smoking cigarettes again very placidly, and finally the whole concourse of them take their leave, the *caballeros* whispering to their young hostesses about coming festivities ; that there is to be an opera in the winter, and many balls. Thus they go off to their homes in this city as if there was no political volcano whose outbreak might destroy them ; dear, fascinating, brave, merry, little Filipinos : a race with man's muscle, but woman's nature, brave as women ; impulsive as women ; vindictive as woman ; fickle as women ; who love like women, hate like women, and

fight like men ; who are sometimes fierce as devils and at others tender as nursery rhymes.

The drifting out of these children of passion is soon followed by the older and more sedate members of the company. Don Rafaél hints he has some business with the Captain-General, and smoking a cigarette goes upon his way, though I note he lingers over Mazie's little hand, and, curse him, gives it two romantic yet tremulous kisses. The *Padre*, blessing the young ladies, takes his departure contemplatively waving his cane and smoking his cigar.

Old Ludenbaum would probably remain did I not suggest to him that the steamer on which I came has brought some mail for him from Hong Hong. He has a German's devotion to business, but seems loathe to leave the beautiful young lady who has come from New York, fondling her hand till she pulls it away, and murmuring with friend-of-the-family familiarity : "I haven't seen you much, Maud, but you remember der old times. Ah, mein little fraulein hasn't forgotten Papa Ludenbaum ?"

Apparently Maud has not forgotten Papa Ludenbaum ; for her face is as pale as a lily as she mutters : "Oh, no, I remember."

"But don't be afraid, little Gretchen, Don Rafaél and I will take care of you," mutters this gentleman, and with this ambiguous remark, takes his way to his offices on the Plaza de Cervantes.

Respecting the convenances of Spanish life, I would probably take my leave with him, did not Señorita Maud even as I offer her my hand, seize it appealingly in her delicate fingers and press it in a way that indicates she wants another word with me.

Perchance noting this, Mazie looks a little piqued, but says half laughingly : "I know you hurried to Manila to see Maud, Señor Jack. You were not coming for a month. You beheld her, and *diantre*, you are here by the next steamer ! Maud has added to her Filipina graces the cultivation of another and more foreign talent ; a little of the flirt, eh ? Ah, she o'ershadows me."

"Not in my eyes," I reply, and give the dear girl a couple of kisses behind the Japanese screen. "Still I want to see her for a moment."

"*Cierto*, in that case, Señor Jack, you shall have her ear. You already have her eyes," says Mazie pouting, for her sister is looking at me in an eager anxious way. With this she leaves me a little astounded, for my sweetheart has a tear in her eye.

But I have scarce time to think of this before Señorita Ysabél is at my side. I look about and note we are alone. Señora Valrigo is fanning herself languidly on the balcony. "Only a few words," whispers the girl, a ripple of anxiety running over her mobile face. "Do me this favor. Contrive this evening to step into Hen Chick's place of business on the Rosario—you can find it easily—and just tell that dear old Chinaman that Señorita Maud Ysabél Gordon has smoked the last of his cigarettes. Be careful—the *last* of his cigarettes!"

"What do you mean?"

"That I shall not tell you," she whispers. "But, Señor Curzon, go back to Hong Kong."

"Never, without her!" I am looking at her sister who is tapping her fair hand with her fan impatiently, as she watches us from a distant sofa.

"I think it will be now impossible for you to take Mazie with you," Maud says, and gives a little shudder. "The infamous Corregidor has come down from Nueva Ecija."

"Be assured I shall never leave her. What the devil has the Corregidor to do with my sweetheart? What does old Adolph Ludenbaum mean by asking you, if you remember?"

Here a spasm of agony flies into Maud's eyes; though she says bravely: "That also I shall not tell you for your safety, for that's what it means. Leave us for your own welfare, Señor Englishman. We are a doomed family. But don't fail to give my message."

"Nonsense," I whisper. "You're not doomed. Mazie has a lover who will save her. So have you."

"Oh, my God, don't talk of him, my far-away sailor boy!" murmurs the girl, with a kind of dry sob in her voice. Turning from me she wrings her hands, and runs back through the hallway, while I, certainly impressed, though, thank God not crushed by her prophecy of doom, stroll out into the garden to take my way to the English Club to pick up what other news I can gather of Blanco and the Society de Filipinos.

But in the courtyard I am not made more easy by the words of the father of the family. Almost at the entrance under a big fire-tree I meet old Don Silas. He has just returned from the town and apparently, has been drinking, as his eyes are blood-shot, and his voice a little thick. He glares at me savagely, and says: "So you didn't keep my one lamb out of the fire, eh, my Englishman?" then implores: "Why in the name of God didn't you hold her in Hong Kong when you got my cablegram?"

"Your cablegram came too late—one day too late."

"Ah, detained by the damned infernal censor, by Heaven!" mutters the old sea-captain. "By old Ironsides! It will be yard-arm to yard-arm this time. I knew it ever since that infernal scoundrel Don Rafaél came down. He knew this cursed Filipino rumpus was going to take place. This is the Spanish officials' grand chance to do up any one against whom they have a grudge. They arrested old Tommy Collins, the American, last night because he had a claim against them for the destruction of his property and business in 1874; and you mark me, before this political trouble is over, though I never heard of the damn society until a few weeks ago, I will be arrested and done to death as a Katipunan. Oh, they are going to make it warm for that brood here now. You'd better get out and leave a drowning man whom twenty life preservers wouldn't save."

With this unpleasant suggestion he leaves me.

And I stagger down the street under its arches of fire-trees with my brain as much ablaze as any flaming blossom as I remember with a sinking soul that *I, too, am a Katipunan!*

CHAPTER VII.

THE WAR OF TORTURERS AGAINST DEMONS.

My mind isn't made more placid by seeing march past me a detachment of Spanish infantry escorting a cart in which two bound and manacled prisoners are lying. "Probably some of my brothers of the Filipino