

mein leedle pupa," and she commences to imitate the German's Teuton dialect with great archness and success, as I hear the genial Prussian's voice in the courtyard crying: "*Mein Himmel!* Is dot you, Ata *mein knabe*. So you have come back to our leedle fraulein. Hold my ponies. *Donner und Blitzen!* It looks like ole times now. Don't you vas remembering. Don't you envy Papa Ludenbaum, who is going up to kiss der Señorita's pretty leedle marble hand."

On hearing this, the Señorita gives a derisive little laugh, drops upon the piano stool, and commences to play and sing, "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ra," in a wildly extravagant, yet curiously excited manner.

"Aha, Papa's favorite tune," cries Ludenbaum, putting his head into the parlor, and he joins in the ditty, dancing with uncouth steps; then Mazie, child of nature, running in, commences to flip her pretty feet about also, and the old Corregidor comes shuffling after her with rather stiff steps. So they all go dancing about and singing that popular melody, while I, stolid Englishman, look at these children of nature, and think: "Oh, idiot Filipinos, singing when you should be sighing; dancing upon the rocking of the earthquake."

But after a wild romp, Maud suddenly springs from the piano, and cries: "Let's all go to the opera! Music's got into my head. To-night they sing 'Fra Diavolo.' I adore Auber; Ludenbaum, you like music; Don Rafaél, so do you. Mazie—a night at the opera, my darling—look your prettiest."

"It will take too long," I dissent gloomily, "for you ladies to dress."

"*Santos!* Behold *me!*" And Maud throws off her piña gauzy scarf, which is draped over her bodice, and steps forth in full European evening dress, her ivory shoulders gleaming under the soft light of the room like a fairy's.

"Mazie, you have on your best foreign bib and tucker also!" she cries. "Off with your *pañuelo* and show how pretty you look!"

El Corregidor would assist her, but I brush his senile arm away. With eager hands I remove the gauzy drapery, and my own sweetheart with dimpled shoulders, white as snow, stands beside her sister.

"Don Rafaél, you have influence with the director; precede us, and get the best box in the house. We should be admired," laughs the elder girl.

"I am always at the order of beauty," murmurs the Corregidor. "I shall have the pleasure of assisting you from your carriage when you arrive at El Zorilla, Doña Yzabél." And the old Spanish Hidalgo after elaborate bows, trips down the stairs and calls his coachman.

Curious enough, their duenna Doña Valrigo wanders in about this in full old-fashioned Spanish evening dress—though, as usual, she is smoking a cigarette.

"You—you have some reason for—for the opera?" I whisper significantly in Maud's ear.

"Possible!" she half laughs in a low voice. "They say one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Manila loves music." There is a strange hint in her tones. Then she calls: "Herr Adolph, if you are to take me to my carriage, come here, but keep your stupid feet out of my laces. Jack, make your peace with Mazie. The foolish child is pouting because we've been whispering together. *En avant!*"

And humming the Li Hung Chang March, Señorita Maud trips down the steps to her carriage her eyes blazing like the stars of the Southern Cross in the heaven above her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OPERA AT EL TEATRO ZORILLA.

The girls seem in great spirits as the ponies prance along with our over-crowded carriage, for Spanish etiquette compels the young ladies to take their duenna with them. As usual Señora Valrigo says nothing, but smokes continuously. She has a cigarette between her gums even as we drive under the lights at the entrance of the Zorilla.

As Herr Adolph and I spring from the carriage to assist the ladies, we are joined by Don Rafaél, who comes striding out between the two native firemen who stand at the entrance of the edifice ready to turn

their hose on anything that catches fire, and announces: "*Gracias à Dios*, I have obtained for you a box nearly as conspicuous as if you were the daughters of the Captain-General."

"*Cielo*, I hope we will do you honor!" laughs Señorita Maud, who is apparently in an excitedly nervous mood, as she places her delicate white glove upon the dark sleeve of this Spanish gentleman, who conducts her into the foyer, while Mazie slips her little hand into my arm, I permitting Herr Ludenbaum to do the honors to the duenna, which he does with a very bad German grace, snarling once or twice to himself, and muttering a disgusted: "*Mein Gott!*" as the old Spanish lady pauses in the entrance to reluctantly throw away her cigarette.

A minute after we are all in an open box separated by light railings from the rest of the single line of *loges* that make up the box-row of the Teatro Zorilla, and I, gazing over the auditorium, think it is a pretty sight; the whole place being gracefully circular in form, a huge segment of it cut off to make the stage. In front of us are the orchestra stalls, in which lounge a goodly portion of the *jeunesse d'orée* of Manila, a tinge of barbarism in the gentlemen's evening costumes, the younger ladies generally pretty, the older ones *passé* before their time, but all exquisitely robed, the warm climate permitting frocks of lightest gauzes, laces and muslin de soie, from which peep out many dazzling white arms and shoulders that seem all the whiter from the contrasting copper-sheened and bronzed beauties of their Mestiza neighbors. For in no place, this world over, is the cast of color so lightly regarded in social life as in the Philippines; priests at country inns sitting down with Chinese pedlars and Spanish officers taking their dinners alongside of Tagal head-men, and Mestizo planters, *ad libitum*.

In proof of this, seated near some Spanish lieutenants, I see Ah Khy in accurate evening costume, Bell & Co.'s, of Fifth Avenue, dress suit, making a fine showing and his single eyeglass doing good work for this Americanized Celestial dandy, who would stroke his moustache, if he had one, in imitation of the Spanish officers, as he gazes about languidly over the ladies in the boxes. His eye catching mine, he smiles; and then as it rests

upon the exquisite loveliness of Maud and Mazie growing knowing. Still I note the wonder in his face at their enjoying the opera so debonairly under the circumstances, for Maud seems the embodiment of light-hearted merriment, though once or twice a little quiver of her arms indicates the nervous tension that is wracking her soul.

Between the audience and the stage, is fiddling an orchestra that would do credit to any theater on earth, native-born Filipinos, who in a careless though artistic abandon of shirts not tucked into their trousers, play their music *con amore* with an accent, rhythm and passion, and at times, a fury that would probably delight Auber himself. It certainly does the Italian conductor, who has a genial smile on his face, as with waving baton he gives the *tempo* to the March of the Carboniers, the dashing finale of the first act floating out over the audience.

Behind us are the tag-rag-and-bobtail of the capital, tier upon tier of them, growing more tag-rag-and-bobtail as they reach the upper levels. For every Filipino loves music—perchance more dearly than his stomach, though every man of them is provided with *chow* and betel-nuts to soothe the long waits between acts, and every one of them has a pair of willing hands and a shrill voice to give his plaudits which are loud and long, as the performance from a musical standpoint is generally a good one, though I can't help grinning at the ballet. Filipina girls every one of them, with their bronzed skins well-floured to give them European flesh tints, and their graceful limbs in pinkest tights and stockings, and their feet, accustomed only to *chinelas*, cramped into high-heeled French slippers and bottines, which would produce an awkwardness of movement had not the poor girls been rehearsed *ad libitum* this very day in wearing the unusual foot-gear.

Mixed with the gilded youths of the Philippines are a number of Spanish officers, civil and military, quite a little contingent of them being from the fleet, one or two white-headed veterans wearing decorations received for campaigns in Andalusia against the Carlists, and Cuba in the Ten Years' War, and in Mindanao against the Morros, which combat has only slackened slightly since the rebellion in Luzon. These

are mostly officers of the garrison of Manila, the bulk of the troops being still engaged at Cavité against the Insurgents under Aguinaldo, and in Bulacan and Pampangas against Santallano and the ex-village-school-master Ensebro, now known by the more high sounding title of General Dimalerga, who though worsted at Santa Maria, is still making a guerilla combat of it.

This gives the whole place a military and official appearance, for a good many of the civil dignitaries of Manila are present, professors of the University, judges of the courts, under-secretaries of the Captain General's private office and customs department.

Among these, I note, especially, Don Amadeo de Torres, chiefly because he looks so often towards our box, and once or twice smiles and waves his hand to El Corregidor, who gazes out upon the audience over the white shoulders of the two lovely girls in front of him.

As the prima donna, an Italian *Diva*, is very pretty, and makes a great hit, as the tenor is fair, as Beppo is giving a new comic deviltry to his rôle, and as the chorus and ballet are well up to the average, the orchestra magnificent, and everybody loves music, the whole place is in a good humor, even stern-looking General Rios, who has just come from the field of battle, smiling and humming to himself the pretty waltz song of Zerlina who has an exquisite figure and displays it most liberally in the celebrated disrobing scene.

This portion of the performance appeals to our German companion in a way that makes him roll his eyes about and shriek "Brava! Bravissima!" though as his gaze leaves the stage I note his eyes roll more as they light upon and linger over the beautiful arms, shoulders and bust of Señorita Maud who sits just in front of him and whose beauty has drawn upon her the *entr'acte* attention of the house.

So the performance runs along, everybody apparently very happy, and the pretty little Filipina flower girls who come down the aisles robed in their *jusis*, do a great business in selling flowers between the acts, Don Rafaél buying a lot of the fairest blossoms and tossing them upon the ladies of our box in his extravagant Spanish fashion.

All this time I, sitting at the rear notice a peculiar

change in the bearing of Señorita Ysabel. Before this, in public, the girl had seemed to rather shrink from the attention that her beauty always attracted. Now on the contrary she sits in the full blaze of the lamps overhead, and lets them halo her loveliness; her exquisitely modeled shoulders and arms, and rounded bosom gleaming white as snow and glistening as ivory under the lights of the auditorium; her glance running over the audience as if seeking someone. Finally it seems to me, she has found him. She taps lightly with her fan, for it is now between the acts, El Corregidor, and murmurs: "That is Don Amadeo de Torres, is it not, the gentleman to whom you just bowed? Ah, he is coming to see you; an old friend of yours? Wave him to the box, I grant you permission."

"Yes, he is Don Amadeo. He is a very old comrade of mine," replies Don Rafaél. So a moment after, this gentleman, who is one of the judges of the Supreme Court of Manila enters the *loge*, and bows before the two pretty sisters.

"You have not honored the opera before, Doña Ysabel," remarks the gentleman of the law, as he bends before her, his eyes coldly critical, as if they were inspecting one of the decisions of some under judge.

"No, we have only been once, to hear 'Lucia,'" says the girl. "Papa hasn't been well."

"Oh, yes, I know, old Don Silas. His name comes up before us in the court quite frequently," mutters the official, his glance growing a little more precise and sterner, "but we forgive him the trouble he has caused us, because of the beauties he has presented to Manila society."

With this, the judge, who has a soft voice and grand black eyes like those of a Spanish student, who though he adores books also adores the devil, unbends his almost official punctilio and enters into a light conversation with both the girls, for Señorita Mazie has murmured to him, a little blushing from behind her fan: "Don't you think La Amati, the prima donna, is rather free in her stage manners?"

"*Dios mio*, it is quite natural," laughs the gentleman of the ermine. "If she played her rôle coldly, who would believe she was an Italian soubrette. Be-

sides how would Beppo and Giacomo do their imitation in the last act of her disrobing, singing: 'Ah, what a pretty little figure!' did not La Diva give the two good-humored villains a glimpse of her charms, my innocent young lady."

"Yes," remarks Maud, biting her lips and growing a little red in the face. "All stage villains, I believe, love ladies. I wonder if they are equally susceptible in real life?" There is a little sneer on her face, as she gazes meditatively towards Herr Adolph and the Corregidor. Then her eyes flame as they glance into the face of the gentleman, whom she knows has been one of the court who signed the order commanding her and her sister's attendance at Nueva Ecija, a location that will place them far away from outside aid.

"Oho, you must not judge everybody by the stage scoundrel, Fraulein Maud, otherwise what would become of poor Papa Ludenbaum," grins the German.

"Still I can imagine no greater temptation for an ardent villain than the eyes of beauty," interjects the judge. Though his tone is guarded, his orbs for one moment lose their icy luster and glow like fire. I can see by his glance that by the eyes of beauty he means Maud's eyes.

Apparently the girl guesses this also; her delicate fingers clutch themselves upon the ivory sticks of her lace fan and her face grows red.

"Is it a blush of modesty or the flush of triumph? Perhaps it is both," I cogitate.

Just here the curtain falls upon the second act, and several *caballeros* enter the box to do homage to the beauties of its young ladies. Among them I carelessly note Don Miguel Robles, Colonel of the *Carabineros Rurales*, a body of native troops recruited from the Indians, and at present doing duty as home guards in the Binondo and surrounding suburbs. For the Spanish garrison has been greatly weakened to make their field force effective. Robles is an officer of handsome presence, adored by his men, and popular with the ladies.

I rather smile as I see him enter the lists for Maud's glances against the potent judge who has a kind of Julius Cæsar appearance, his eyes being coolly commanding, his forehead high, his nose of pronounced Roman power and form.

But just here, remembering that I have had no dinner, I take advantage of the *entr'acte* and getting away from the heated auditorium, step across the street to sit down in a cool little café opposite the theater, and indulge in a hurried cup of tea, a bunuelo and a cigar.

While here, a few snatches of conversation coming to me from a couple of neighboring Spanish officers, turn my mind upon the judge with a start.

"*Caramba!* Did you see Don Amadeo this evening?" laughs a lieutenant. "The Julius Cæsar of the law-books has got ahead of the Don Cæsar of the army."

"*Cierto!*" answers a grizzled captain, who is his companion. "But this is quite unusual. Don Amadeo is said to be the most *difficile* gallant in Manila. He is ice, till he is fire. He is cold as Julius Cæsar till a Cleopatra seduces him. Then like Cæsar he makes short work of her enemies. You know I have been in garrison in these islands for many years. It is now ten of them since the judge became a widower, and but twice has he been susceptible to the 'bribe-of-Paris,' and then it required a very Helen of Troy to mesh him. One, the beautiful Dona de Guzeman, won her case even against the whole power of the order of Augustins after he came upon the bench. But she was more lovely than a hashish dream, and had a very complacent husband. The other, Señora Mirande, the prettiest woman in Ermita, but nineteen, with the form of a Venus, the graces of a Psyche, the wit of Ninon de L'Enclos, the morals of a Pompadour, had her claim allowed even against the Spanish Government. But that was only *after* she had smiled as sweetly on him as Eve did to Adam. Then, *Diablo* how His Honor smashed the witnesses against her. Contempt of court, perjury, malfeasance in office ruined them."

"*Por Dios!* Then it is better to be a judge for the love of ladies than to be a soldier," growls the lieutenant.

"Yes, we get the smashes of the bolo and the impact of the bullets; they get the arms of beauty and the impact of silver dollars," remarks the captain. "Lieutenant Conti, if you are born over again, throw down the sword, pick up the pen, and become the lawyer not the soldier. Even the dashing Robles' sword is an impotent weapon against the judge's quill."

But the curtain will be going up, and I wouldn't miss the opening music of the Hermitage for even another whiff of a cigarette." With this the two officers hurry out.

I would stride off to the Theater after them, to take another look at the judge in whom I have inquired a sudden interest, did not Ah Khy stroll languidly into the café.

"By Hookie, Jack," he laughs seating himself at my table, "do you know I adore Manila. None of the infernal race distinction of Hong Kong. If I had dared to walk into the stalls of the Theater Royal on the Queen's Road when they give a performance 'by command,' which is generally a bad one, I would doubtless have had my head knocked off for my insolence. Even in Yankee land, Chinamen have more rights than in Hong Kong, where, despite my New York dress suit and European bearing, I have been asked infernally impudent questions by the damned Sikh policemen when I have strolled the streets a little late at night, and yet they wonder at our populace in Peking throwing mud at Europeans. But here—have another cigar,—I feel, by Bunker Hill, at least a human being. Exquisitely pretty girl, that *Senorita Maud*, though she always was a promising kid," he runs on. "Tell you what I'm going to do. My father's been infernally liberal with me since I came down here. I'm going in for that *prima donna*; she's a beaut. In that take-off-her-clothes scene she was a corker. Reminded me of what I saw as a Yale rounder at *Koster & Bial's*."

What the deuce *Koster & Bial's* is, I can't guess. Before I have time to question him, he breaks out again: "Say, do you know anything more about old *Ludenbaum*?" this last in a whisper. "What makes the old Dutch duffer so infernally busy when there is so little business going on. You don't keep your eyes peeled. You hate him, you fear him, and yet you let him alone. My father hates him like a Mandarin does a Yellow-jacket, but he keeps his eye on him ready to smash him. You English go through the world and don't see what is poked under your nose; you don't even see the game little *Miss Maud* is up to. I dropped on to it half an hour ago. Big suit of her dad's in the Supreme Court, eh?—The iciest justice on the bench

is unbending, eh? She's deeper than you or I. Look out for her little sister also, the one you're spoons on. She gave you one or two curious glances when you leaned too closely over *Maud's* glossy shoulders. Jealous little beggar, *Mazie* always was. Hit me in the eye with a cocoanut when she was a kid because I wouldn't let her pull my tail and cry 'Ding! dong! Bell!' like the verger in the cathedral."

At this I laugh so heartily that *Khy* rises in a huff and mutters as he walks off that he won't tell a duffer like me a point that'll make my eyes blink.

But I have enough points this night to make my eyes blink and my heart heavy. I walk over to the *Zorilla*, and getting to our box again, find to my concern that *Maud* is still playing her game with the Spanish judge.

This gentleman, who is not over forty-five, has by this time favored her dazzling loveliness with one or two sparks of fire from his cold judicial eyes. Perchance his passions are inflamed, perhaps his heart interested by the delicate touch-me-not badinage of the girl, who is treating him in an American-off-hand manner which entirely astounds him.

It is a new sensation to the judge of the Supreme Court of Manila to be told he is "a wicked old boy," and have his fingers rapped smartly yet coquettishly with a fan, when under the shadow of the box rail he has attempted to take possession of the pretty little gloved hand. He has also been very much astonished when he has begged the privilege of paying his respects to the young lady at her villa, to be introduced to the *duenna* by *Miss Maud* and told with a roguish glance that *Doña Valrigo* will always be at home to him after siesta.

"And you?" murmurs the judge of the all-powerful court, who now is apparently pleading at the bench of beauty—his eyes being entreating.

"I?" says the *señorita* archly, "I will probably be preparing for my drive. "But still, it won't do you any harm to try, you can take pot luck with the rest of the boys."

"*Santos*, take pot luck with the rest of the boys?" ejaculates *Don Amadeo*, whom *Maud's* translation of the American idiom seems to mystify—"That means?"

"If you come early and stay late you may have a chance to kiss my hand when you say adieu. I'm popular with the *caballeros!*" laughs the young lady lightly.

This kind of badinage, to which he is utterly unaccustomed, seems to astound yet fascinate Don Amadeo. He forgets about the music. The prima donna on the stage ceases to attract his eyes, though she has as pretty ankles as were ever flipped over the footlights in Manila. He forgets even the impassioned music of that great last act, where to the tolling of the hermitage bell, the brigand chief is lured to his destruction; those strains so full of a man's death that they carry tears in every melody of the voice and each chord of the orchestra.

Some of these get into the girl's mind, for as the last strains of the orchestra die out with a wail, as Don Amadeo bows before her, Miss Maud gives him an awful shudder; and as he tenders his arm, mutters an affrighted: "No, no!"

But, seeing El Corregidor offering effusively to cloak Mazie, she says in light though forced voice to his again suggested call: "You can try; that is the best invitation I ever give anybody, Don Amadeo," and favors him with a glance over her shoulder that makes the face of the judge which is cold as ice upon the top of a volcano till the eruption comes, blaze red as the lava of Mayon.

Noting this, Ludenbaum snarls under his breath to El Corregidor: "*Donnerwetter*, you have brought a new complication upon us, mein friendt."

To this I hear Don Rafaél whisper: "Courage, *hombre bravo!*" though apparently his mind is perplexed at this new situation that is opening to him.

As for Señorita Maud, she chats quite excitedly as we drive home from the opera, but one of the questions her vivacious tongue asks, rather astounds me. "This Don Amadeo is a big-wig of the law and very rich, is he not?" she murmurs contemplatively.

"Rich? *Donner und blitzen!*" breaks in the German, "He has been a judge of the Supreme Court of Manila for ten years; that should be your answer, mein fraulein. Rich? Don Amadeo is rich as a *Croesus* and avariciously greedy as a hog!"

"Aha," laughs the girl merrily. "Then Don Amadeo must be financially very fat." There is a little ring in her voice that makes me glance at Miss Maud, but in the semi-darkness of the carriage I can only see a pair of bright eyes. Just at this time Mazie breaks out: "What are you patting your foot so viciously on mine all this time for, Maud? My toes have feelings."

Though I break out laughing at this, even Mazie's light voice doesn't make me very cheerful, and after we leave the young ladies and their duenna at the Gordon bungalow I stroll away to the English Club to put down four or five pegs in a distracted manner as I lie under the flapping punkah, and fear for the happiness of dashing young Phil Marston of the U. S. Navy.

A moment later I mutter: "Pish! If a man can't trust Maud Ysibél Gordon then he'd better bag his demned head."

Then I think of Mazie, and with that stride up to my room and have another awful night with mosquitoes and the "embracer."

CHAPTER X.

AN AFTERNOON ON THE LUNETTA.

But commerce has no respect for love, passion and anxiety. I am compelled to be in my office in the Plaza de Cervantes early the next day, to get a cargo of hemp cleared in time for my afternoon siesta, something in which everybody in Manila indulges, even the condemned in his cell, even the executioner on the day he twists the neck of the condemned with the garote.

The siesta finished, I take a carriage and crossing the Puente de España drive to the sea breezes of the Luneta, thinking to forget my difficulties in the superb music of the artillery band.

It is six in the afternoon. In that great oval driveway shaded by its tropical trees, the fashion of Manila takes its afternoon outing.

Grouped with a lot of Mestizo dandies, haughty officers of the local garrison, officials of the Spanish