

"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

civil service, and a sprinkling of everybody masculine in Manila, I, seated in a comfortable chair, through the haze of a cigar look at the passing show. Then getting restless I march about inspecting the showy panorama, where every one comes to kill a tropic afternoon. I even note Ah Khy stroll out of one of the little wine shops at the turn of the promenade, a languid smile on his Mongolian face, his high hat polished to perfection. He has a big cheroot in his mouth, but takes it out as he passes me to whisper: "I've an eye-opener for you, Jack! See you to-morrow!"

Spanish ladies of black eyes, raven hair and pearly complexions, natural and artificial, gowned in the light robes of the tropics—these very prettiest of afternoon costumes that permit glimpses of white arms and dazzling shoulders, and whose floating jupes of fleecy gauzes give enchanting hints of petite slippers and silken hosiery that adorn Andalusian feet and the ankles of Seville—reclining languidly in their low victorias glide past me.

Mestiza doñas, some of them of great fortune and tropical luxuriance of form, lolling on the easy cushions of their equipages, often accompanied by pretty children, dark-eyed boys and girls, hold my gaze in one continuous stream.

Among the handsome turnouts, one rolls past me bearing the two beautiful sisters. Beside their coachmen, in place of their usual footman, in high glossy hat and immaculate duck livery, rides Ata Tonga as solemnly dignified as any flunkey in the crowd.

Catching Maud's bright glance and Mazie's loving eyes, as their spirited ponies prance on, I mutter: Can it be true that disaster hovers over these creatures who seem too delicate for even the hand of Heaven to fall upon them, in anything save caress?

Spanish officers doff their caps to them deferentially; Colonel Robles, magnificently mounted, bends to his saddle bow. Don Amadeo, driving in judicial state, removes the hat that covers his scholarly head. Whenever their carriage stops, gallant *caballeros* gather about it. The young ladies' laughing words are answered by the ardent glances of the gilded youth of Manila.

But though the throng is laughing, chatting and

loving with the vivacity of the tropics, the music of the band soft as that of a fairy dream, the breezes cool and refreshing as they play among the feathery palm trees, and the slow ripple of the surf coming into the great bay from the China Sea is soothing as a cradle lullaby, I know that to the south only some fifteen miles away, Spanish cannon are being fired at rebels, and at Bulacan, not much further to the north, the fighting and butchery is going grimly on; and that here by order of the infamous Supreme Court are these two hapless ones, kept helpless to the intrigues of their enemies, while their father Don Silas is drinking himself to death in his despair at the fate he thinks is coming to his family.

Still, as I look musingly on, I note one brave daughter is making her fight for the safety of her fire-side in a manner that frightens me; for after his first round in the course, Don Amadeo has stepped from his carriage near me, and stands waiting for Señorita Maud's low victoria as it circles round the great oval some half mile in extent. The music seems to have got into his Spanish eyes and given a romantic sensuous glow to them.

It is some amorous Italian love song of Verdi, something with passion in it, something with death in it, the music of that great last act of *Un Ballo en Maschero*, when the Duke is murdered while the dance is going on. This seems to get into Don Amadeo's head. His eyes lose their coldness, and give out flashes of fire, as the carriage of Don Silas's daughters comes opposite the band, its speed being checked, for nearly everyone here drives slowly, as if to linger as close to this divine music as possible. Taking advantage of his opportunity, the judge steps out, and, bowing over the little hand extended to him, whispers words too low for the placid duenna to catch, though they make Señorita Gordon's face flame with a blush that adds a rosy brightness to her loveliness. Then the Spanish Julius Cæsar of the law removes his hat, bows again, and steps back into the throng to speak to General Aguirre, who is standing looking impatiently on, as if anxious to get to his bloody work once more in Batangas.

Somehow—I can't help it—I think of the gallant young officer, wearing the uniform of the United States,

who is pacing his quarter-deck up north in China waters. I step to the carriage, and after greeting my charming Mazie, whisper lightly in her sister's ear a scrap of warning: "Beware of playing with the fire!"

At my words, Maud's blush grows deeper, and her eyes droop as if she were ashamed.

Then dismay comes to me. Mazie, in her quick, impulsive way, leans over her sister and whispers: "What did you say to Ysabel that makes her ashamed to look me in the face?"

"That's our little secret," I laugh uneasily.

"It's always secrets now!" My affianced straightens herself in the carriage, and her charming retroussé nose goes haughtily into the air. As the victoria moves off, she says, in parting warning, though her eyes are full of tears: "Some day, Señor Jack, I may have a secret from you."

During this the Tagal, seated on the box in front, betrays neither by motion of his head nor body that he has any interest in the interview.

But after I have gone away from the Luneta breezes, I spend a by no means comfortable evening trying to play whist at the Club, and revoking once or twice to the rage of my partner; also attempting pool with almost equally unhappy results to myself and my pocket.

The next morning, however, Ata Tonga strides into my office, and states loudly to my clerks he has a message to deliver me from Don Silas. Then I, guessing there must be something more for him to say to me, close the door after him.

In my private office he breaks out upon me in this manner: "Senor Curzon, remember the Tagal proverb: 'what a woman sees, she believes.' Now I know, and you know, what you whisper to Señorita Maud are not words of love, but words of wisdom, caution and warning. But Señorita Mazie fears they are what the beauty of my loved mistress might call to the lips of any young man. Therefore say and do as little as possible to give your affianced the pangs of jealousy—"

"Take Mazie into our confidence?" I whisper. "You know her child-like nature. You know what we tell her might, with her innocent confidence, some day become the property of our enemies."

"No, I can't counsel that, but beware how you excite her jealousy. She has within her veins Spanish blood. I knew her mother, gentle and loving; but after her coming, Don Silas had to walk a different line, amid the huts of pretty Mestiza girls. Even that old sea-bully——"

"And what has made you tell me this?"

"My nose!" says the savage grimly.

"Oh yes, your infallible nose. What has it suggested to you?" I say jeeringly, for his warning has made me irritable.

"This! When Señorita Mazie looks on you alone, her perfume is that of orchids. She smells like corianders, which tells me her love for you is true. But yesterday when you whispered to my loved lady, Señorita Mazie's perfume came to me as musk, which means distrust, jealousy, sometimes even hate."

"How the devil do you know women's varying passions from their scents?" I snarl.

"*Basta!* that is simple. All animals have glands, so likewise men and women. Even your languid, inert nostrils, were you in the presence of a peccary or wild boar, would tell you he was enraged by the fœtid odor coming from the glands within his neck. To my delicate sense, when a woman loves, the glands in her neck, as she lifts her lips to her adored, give out a perfume that would be naught to your nostrils, but is apparent to mine. So likewise when rage inflames her, other glands cast out their odors, and I know that **fury** possesses her."

"By Jove," I laugh jeeringly, "Ata, my man, a French **cocotte**, with her half hundred extracts de Lubin and Pinaud, her *Bouquet de Jockey Club*, her Pachouly and Essence of White Violets, for her kerchief and lingerie, would keep your nose guessing as to the true state of her passions, even more than she does the first favorite of her thousand amours."

"It is only a word of warning, Señor, but I think a wise one," returns the savage with dignity. "Hold as little private converse with the sister of your affianced as is possible under our cruel circumstances. Still, one of our reasons for secrecy may be destroyed to-morrow—and for that reason don't fail to meet me at the Gallina de Tondo to-night."

As he whispers this he turns towards the door.

"What do you want to do with me at your infernal cock-fight?" I ask curiously.

"That you shall learn when there," replies the Tagal. "You English never believe what you do not feel or see yourselves. You know you are true, therefore your sweetheart should never doubt you. You have a dormant, worthless nose, therefore there is no perfume on this earth. If you were blind, there would be no color. Were you deaf, sound would have left this world."

"Hang it!" I mutter, "I've got a pretty decent nose anyway."

"Pha! A nose that doesn't tell you,"—Ata steps to my desk and sniffs rapidly over my correspondence—"that everyone of your private letters is inspected by Antonio, your half-caste shipping clerk, who probably has a commission from the *Corregidor* of Nueva Ecija. He was once in his employ. I smelled the fellow as I came in. *Adios*, Señor, may you escape earthquakes." And the Tagal strides from my office as I gaze astounded after him.

Fortunately my correspondence has been all mercantile, so I don't fear Antonio's discoveries, though it gives me a hint to be careful in all things, and increases my suspicion of Don Rafael's interest in my lovely fiancée.

With this I turn to my commercial work, but owing to the ineffably indifferent laziness of Spanish custom-house officials, I am unable to get my bills of lading approved during the morning business hours. For everybody works almost from sunrise in Manila to about nine o'clock in the morning. Then, compelled by the heat of the day, not only the merchant, but his clerks and attachés lounge about and sleep until perhaps four in the afternoon, when they take the reins of commerce or society once more in their hands, and the city becomes very lively and active, the Escolta shops being brilliantly lighted, and cafés doing a fine business, betel pedlars and *chow* dealers and cigarette vendors becoming lively upon the Puente de España, and all through the main thoroughfares of busy Binondo, until late in the evening.

So I return to my office about five o'clock in the

afternoon to finish up the cargo of hemp. I have about completed the bills of lading for this, when the Chinese dandy puts his head into my private office and says: "The clerks told me you were disengaged, Curzon; so I thought I'd step in and tell you of my success with the prima donna."

"Ah, La Amati smiled on you?"

"Great! She's already accepted from me a magnificent bracelet of Sulu pearls; though Alvira—that's her pretty name—doesn't know who sent 'em. They were anonymous. I have, however, written that I'll wear a single eye-glass the next evening at the opera when she plays Lucia, a bunch of orange blossoms in my buttonhole, and will occupy the third seat from the aisle, the second row. I don't think she'll be able to miss me, especially as I have also informed her that I'll wear on my wrist a mate to her bracelet, and that she can make her set complete by removing it her with own pretty fingers. I have her billet-doux in reply. How is that for high!" He tosses me a little scented note that reads as follows:

"ADORED THOUGH UNKNOWN SEIGNIOR:

When I sang last evening I knew that *you* were listening to me. Perchance that gave me the triumph which came to me. Was that magnificent wreath of orchids and orange blossoms, the one containing the diamond solitaire, also from you, or have you a rival? I hope you have many. *Grand Dio* I love to be popular.

Yours forever, with a kiss for each pearl.

ALVIRA.

P. S.—Generous cavalier; there is also a necklace to complete the set, as well as a bracelet. I saw it at Zimpany's on the Escolta yesterday."

"Do you know who sent the diamond ring?" I say laughing.

"I have a pointer on that," replies the Chinaman gloomily.

"Who?"

"Colonel Don Miguel Robles!"

"How do you know that?"

"Well, we have half a dozen bazars on the Rosario and Escolta; one sells jewelry. Lal Foll, the Parsee who runs it for my governor, told me with tears in his eyes that the savage-eyed Colonel honored us by purchasing a similar diamond of us yesterday *on credit*.

Of course, we shall never dare press the collection of the bill. So I fear I'm kind of running opposition to myself," mutters Khy ruefully. "Besides," he falters, "that bloody Robles would think no more of spitting me than he would of eating his dinner;" then bursts out savagely: "I had hoped that old scoundrel Don Amadeo, who had his eyes on Alvira for the first two acts, might bust up Robles, but when the judge saw—you know whom—the girl that's playing the deep little game, nothing else suited him in the theater. He's a chap like our Chinese emperor who looks over a hundred beauties before he picks his mash, but when he does, she's gone! You'd better warn Señorita Maud that a volcano like that fish-eyed judge of the Supreme Court is apt to swallow up little damsels who trip along his crater. Nice simile that, eh? But in Yale we've got a better one: 'Don't monkey with the buzz-saw.'"

"How will your father like your expensive amour?" I suggest savagely, for the fellow's remarks about Maud are so wise they irritate me.

"Oh, I guess the governor won't kick, if I do his business all right."

"Yes, capturing prima donnas was the errand for which he sent you to Manila," I jeer. Then my voice growing serious I ask, inspiration in my tones: "On what business *did* your governor send you here?"

"That's the reason I dropped in to see you," remarks Ah Khy languidly. "You can help me. Suppose we hunt in couples, old chappie."

"Hunt in couples?"

"Yes, my old man thinks," the Chinaman's voice has grown very low and very cautious, "Ludenbaum has something to do with Aguinaldo and his crowd. By punk-sticks! I don't know how he discovered it, but Hen Chick drops on nearly everything. Holy poker! how he hates Ludenbaum. Now, if I can catch Herr Adolph doing the conspiracy act with members of the Katipunan and give him away to the Captain-General, things will be made very lively for Papa's vendetta. By the Lord, the German Consul'll have to hustle to get 'Ludy' off with his life! Do you take me, pal? You fear Ludenbaum means some deviltry to the girls. Supposing we hunt him down

together—amateur detective business and all that kind of thing—catch him if possible, then BIFF! report him to Polavieja—and *Bang! Bang! BANG!* firing party!"

To this I answer in Khy's own slang: "Not by Josh!"

Rising from my chair, and pitying the loneliness of this Americanized Chinaman, I suggest: "Come out with me over to the French café and have dinner with me."

"Yes, let me pay for it," he says eagerly. Then this lonely declassé, whose education prevents his caring for Chinese society, and whose nationality bars his enjoying European, mutters pathetically: "It's so damned seldom I have a fellow to chat with at meals."

So I escort Ah Khy to dinner and at the French café on the Escolta we make a very pleasant hour of it over cutlets of *Curbina* fish from Laguna de Bayo, a duck from the Pasig, perchance of human incubation, an olla of chicken, garlic, and vegetables, also we have ices and coffee, a bottle of French claret, and some very fine *cigarros Ilegitimo* that equal the finest Havanas. Though the place is thronged with a jabbering crowd—cigar smoke being thick enough to cut—under the bustle and clatter of the place and somewhat apart from the rest of the throng, we are as much in private as people can be in such place.

Over his wine Khy again broaches in cautious whispers a subject that seems to be uppermost in his thoughts. "Why can't you chip in with me, Jack?" he pleads. "If we can down him, you'll get 'Ludy' in the soup and I'll make a regular 'straight and place' winning with my dad. Keep your eye on 'Ludy'. Business is slow here, but Dutchy seems to have something on his mind. I know he meets with some kind of shady Mestizos."

"What makes you think that?" I ask eagerly.

"Well, I've seen him. Last night at the opera, while you were at the café opposite, Ludenbaum was in a *tienda* next door where he bought a cigar and said two words to the fellow selling *chow* behind the counter. Besides, why has the Dutchman gone twice this week to the *Teatro de Tondo*? He can't understand their infernal native Tagalog lingo; at least not enough of it to permit him to enjoy the performance. If it had

been to a cock-fight, something that appeals to any man's sporting blood, there might have been some sense in it. The trouble with you English is that you never see anything except what hits you in the optic. We Chinese have much wider eyes."

"So you have!" I remark, gazing at Ah Khy's almond slits, and remembering that he had had them very open on that never-to-be-forgotten night in Hong Kong.

But a moment's reflection tells me that Ah Khy is by no means a safe partner in anything that may bring us under the suspicion of the Spanish Government; captured, he will be very apt to make a clean breast of everything,—even to his suspicions that I have been compelled to join the Katipunan.

Therefore when he says: "What do you say to my proposition, old fellow?" I look at him wisely and quote his own proverb to him: "Don't monkey with the buzz saw!" Then with my lips very close to his Mongolian ear, I go on with a few words that make Ah Khy squirm uneasily upon his chair: "Don't you mix up with this insurgent business in any form! Trying to push Ludenbaum into the claws of Spanish justice may get you too near to them. Polavieja would make mighty short work of a Celestial. They shot a Chinaman, Ah Kow, on the Plaza Major yesterday."

"Yes I—I heard of it." Under my ominous suggestion the Chinaman grows pale, wiggles in his chair, mutters: "Then you won't help me?" and rising, wanders to the door.

A moment later he comes back to me and pleads: "If you would do it, I think we could nail 'Ludy' to-night. I've got a line on him——"

"Of what do you suspect him? Out with it;" I whisper commandingly.

He waits till the clatter of dishes and conversation about us is highest.

Then the Chinaman's breath just fans my cheek: "ARMS!"

"Pooh! Nonsense! Rubbish! He **darsn't** do it!" I break out.

"Then you won't help me?"

"Not a bit!" I say sternly. "Good-bye, I've got lots of business myself to attend to this evening."

And Ah Khy going timidly away, I sit reflectively smoking my cigar, though I have still a little time; for the Chinaman's conversation has reminded me of my appointment with my brother Katipunan, Ata the Tagal, at the Gallina de Tondo.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE COCK-FIGHT IN THE TONDO.

TURNING my steps northward, I march along in the gathering gloom of evening till the tile and iron-roofed masonry of the business quarter merges gradually into the bamboo huts, thatched with nipa palms, of the native classes, the filth of the unkempt streets gradually increasing. As I cross the canal or creek which separates the Tondo from the Binondo, its waters are so full of decaying vegetable matter and the refuse of an unsewered city, that they make me hold my nose. Finally, however, getting further into the Tondo, the odors are not so virulent, and, even as I walk, I think with ordinary cleanliness Manila would be a healthy city.

Two minutes after, the Babel jabber from a crowd of Mestizos, Tagals, Negritos, Chinese, Malays and the crowing of numerous chanticlers tells me I am near the *Gallina de Tondo*.

From the shouts, cries and yells in Spanish, Tagalog and Chinese that come from the interior of the building, apparently an exciting, interesting, bloody and savage combat of chickens is going on. But the jabber outside suggests that this one is nothing in excitement and interest to an approaching one. A combat—so I gather from remarks in pidgin Spanish—between a celebrated *talisain* or white and black spotted chicken, the pride of the Trozo, the suburb in which he has been reared, is to be pitted against an unknown, a dark horse, as it were, in racing parlance, a *lubuyo* or wild cock caught somewhere in Pampangas and lately brought into the town. The prowess of this latter bird, an outside contingent of Tagalogs are backing with every silver dollar or copper *centavo* they can