

Pasig, and about six o'clock in the evening I find myself in Binondo.

I have been absent from my sweetheart thirty-six hours. Seizing a carromata, I direct the man to drive hurriedly to the bungalow of Don Silas Gordon in the suburb of San Miguel, and am in so great a hurry that I do not place any importance at the fellow growing pale at my order.

God knows what joy is in my soul. I am driving to the arms of my loved one, the girl who will be my bride upon the morrow. My blood courses through my veins in a kind of insane ecstasy. In a few moments Mazie's sweet voice will greet me.

But some three hundred yards from the entrance of Gordon's villa, the man suddenly pulls up and says one of his ponies is too lame to move, though he demands his fare.

Too impatient for the sight of my sweetheart to dispute with the fellow, whose face bears the stoical smile common to the Filipino race, which conceals the stubbornness of an Andalusian mule, I pay him and make the short distance on foot.

As I tramp along the street under the shade of the bamboos and fire-trees, I hear the rattle of the half-crazy vehicle I have come in, and see the man driving off like the wind. For some occult reason his pony has suddenly recovered from its lameness.

My mind is only upon my charming sweetheart. I have been away for two days—in four more minutes Mazie's kisses will be on my lips. I enter the pretty little garden of bamboos and tropical plants, and cry out lustily: "*Oy bata!*" some half a dozen times. No one answers but I think little of this, for native servants will let you call forever.

Impatient for my sweetheart's arms, I run up the big stairway, open the front door—Filipino houses are never locked—step into the magnificent *caida*, and cry out again: "*Oy bata!*" but no boy, nor girl, nor servant of any kind makes their appearance.

I step into the reception-room. The appearance of the place astounds and shocks me. It is growing dark; though the lamps are not lighted, I can note that things have been tossed about in apparently reckless disorder. Maud's banjo is lying broken on the floor.

The New York photographs in her portfolio are strewn about the room.

"What the deuce has happened?" I gaze about. The place seems deserted. "By the God of misery! *I am in an empty house!*"

CHAPTER XXVII.

"FINE NEWS FOR PHIL MARSTON OF THE U. S. NAVY!"

THEN I call: "Mazie! Mazie! Maud, where are you?" and run into the dining-room.

Here by the light of a kerosene lamp I discover, with his two slippered feet upon a magnificent inlaid table, smoking a *cigarro*, the perfume of which I remember as one of Bully Gordon's finest *Incomparables*, and drinking a bottle of champagne which I remember as Bully Gordon's favorite *Cliquot*, a Spanish gentleman in white linens and official costume, who, rising, says in haughty languor: "Señor, permit me to ask you not to make such a disturbing noise, and to introduce myself as Don Emilio Gonzalo de Monaldo, one of the under-secretaries of the Supreme Court of Manila. What do you wish?"

"I called to see Don Silas Gordon and his family. Where are they?" I ask hastily. "This is his house!"

"Was his house. Senor Gordon is under arrest in the Citadel of Santiago!" He waves his hand towards the Old Town.

"His daughters; are they not here?" My voice is hoarse with astonishment and dismay.

"Certainly not! *This is confiscated property!*"

"My God, are they arrested also?"

"I don't know. I think not. If the Señor will kindly apply to the office of the general-staff in the Old Town, he may learn more."

"Is Gordon executed?" I gasp and support myself by grasping a chair.

"Perhaps, but I think not—not yet." Then the Spanish official says suspiciously: "Your name, sir, and your connection with this suspect."

"Certainly," I answer, for I know boldness is the

best way with these fellows; "I am John Talboys Curzon, manager of the English house of Martin, Thompson & Company. Here is my card. If you wish any further information about me, apply at the English Consul's."

Stunned, I stagger away, and fortunately finding an empty *carromata* on the Calzada, mutter to the driver in broken voice: "English Club, Ermita!"

From the breezy veranda of the cool club-house I gaze with dazed eyes over the ripples of the bay, and receive some details of the infernal affair that make my head reel and my heart grow cold as ice and heavy as lead.

To my excited and anxious queries little Simpson of the English Consul's office, taking me aside, whispers: "Yes; they took old Gordon safe enough. But here is something that I tell to nobody but you. You're engaged to one of his daughters?"

"Yes."

"They not only took Bully Gordon, but they killed him."

"My God! Impossible!"

"Yes, the trick was done very neatly. They arrested him last night at twelve o'clock, a time old Bully Gordon was *sure* to be *fighting* drunk. Of course the inebriated old sea-dog resisted; of course that was the end of him. Nobody asked why that volley of musketry was heard last night at twelve o'clock; nobody with common sense in the San Miguel suburb. They'll probably tell you he is over in the citadel in Old Manila, but old Don Silas is under ground. He always was banging his head against the Spanish bayonets. Then of course you know the poor fellow was a subject of Spain, the officials down on him, lots of property and two beautiful daughters—I beg your pardon." And little Tommy Simpson nervously buries his mouth in the glass that is in front of him.

"But his daughters? My Heaven! what have they done with them?"

"Oh, they're safe enough, under the care of old Ludenbaum."

"Under the *care* of Ludenbaum?"

"Yes. Don't look so wild, old man. He is kind of guardian for them now. You had better drive

around to see him. He can tell you, of course, better than any one else. I advise you to take a peg too before you go; you look as if you need it." And Tommy, after ringing the bell, raises his voice, and cries: "Here, boy, order one *carromata* and two *stingahs* quick!"

I take both of Simpson's prescriptions. After bolting the liquor I fly to Ludenbaum's offices on the Plaza de Cervantes, in a kind of half crazy state.

As I drive my brain whizzes at the infernal cunning of attempting the arrest, at twelve o'clock at night, the hour they knew old Bully would be *fighting* drunk. Some one interested in Gordon's taking off had given them that point, and some official must have been very willing to see the hint was taken.

At Ludenbaum's big commercial establishment as I arrive, they seem to be closing early, apparently for some kind of a fête. I see a supper table set out in the big back room. Champagne seems ready to flow. Some of the clerks have white flowers in their button-holes. The table has floral decorations. I dreamily note this as the boy at the door shows me in.

My face seems to impress the boy. I am ushered at once into the inner office where the blue-eyed methodical German cashier is adding up columns of figures in his placid Teutonic way.

"What can I do for you, Herr Curzon?" this gentleman says politely. "Our esteemed Herr Adolph will not be here for several weeks."

"Not here—for—for several weeks?"

"Yah, he left Manila early this morning. May I be permitted to offer you a cigar?" remarks the cashier, lighting up.

I refuse the cigar, and sinking into a chair, ask: "Where has Herr Adolph gone?"

"To Nueva Ecija!"

"To—to—Nueva—Ecija?"

"Yes, the Rebels having laid down their arms, the court will open soon."

"Never mind Herr Ludenbaum," I mutter. "I called to inquire for poor Gordon's two daughters, the Senoritas Mazie and Maud."

"They went with Herr Ludenbaum."

"The—the deuce you say!" I stammer.

"Certainly; Herr Adolph is the guardian of the

younger, Mazie, by her father's will. They say old Papa Gordon died in the prison from heart disease or drink or something, last night, and, of course, my principal is naturally the guardian of the elder."

"The—guardian—of—Senorita—Maud—Ysabel—Gordon?" I repeat slowly in an imbecile and faltering way.

"Pardon me, Herr Curzon," remarks the clerk with Teuton preciseness, hitting me with a mental sledgehammer, "that *was* the Fraulein's maiden name."

"Her—maiden—name?" My tongue is lolling out of my mouth, my eyes are rolling in their sockets.

"Certainly," he continues suavely. "Did you not know that Fraulein Maud Ysabel Gordon is the *wife* of Herr Adolph Max Ludenbaum?"

With this a pile-driver seems to come down and strike my dazed brain. I shriek: "WHAT?"

"Certainly! Fraulein Maud has been the spouse of my honored principal *for seven years.*"

"WHAT?"

"Married to him by the *Cura* of the church of Caranglan in Nueva Ecija. Herr Adolph wishes the news of his happiness spread about social Manila so that there can be no gossip nor scandal."

"And his—his wife, and her sister have gone with him to Nueva Ecija?"

"Yes, praise to God. It is, I believe, the beginning of our esteemed Herr Adolph's honeymoon. The child was very young when he married her."

"Yes, they do marry young in the Philippines," I mumble.

"Certainly. Herr Adolph did not press for his marital rights before. Will you not drink with us to the bride? Our principal has given his employes a wedding supper. My toast will be: A great love and many children!"

I catch the last of this as I stagger out into the Plaza de Cervantes, a kind of boiler shop in my brain, which is whirling in a comatose despair. "Mazie the ward—Maud the wife—of that infernal old German villain!"

I stand in an idiotic way, jostled by the few people who are passing in the dusk of the evening. "This girl whose whole soul and whose young heart are that of a brave young fellow in the United States Navy,

married and on her wedding tour with that old fat rascal. *I know it is a lie!* I—Good God!"

My reverie closes with a bang. I have received the secret sign manual of the Katipunan from a passing Mestizo. It wakes me as from a dream. I look closely at the man who has given me the signal. By Heaven and Earth, it is—can it be?

I see he wishes me to follow him. I do follow him—straight to the bazar of Herr Chick & Co. in the Rosario into a dark and gloomy room, where the savage sniffs about and finally says: "All is safe, my Brother!" and brings Ah Khy, who is faltering and very much excited, in to me.

"Ata Tonga, you have come—?" I break out.

"For the same purpose that you are here. To save my beloved mistress and her sister, she who loves you."

"You know?" I ask savagely.

"That old Ludy has done you, old boy," remarks Ah Khy placidly. "But I am going after him to avenge my governor and smash old Ludenbaum with those receipts for arms." Then he says with Chinese cunning: "I've found out that Captain Chaco, who commands the one hundred men that make the Spanish force in that out-of-the-way place is the bloodiest patriot Spain ever had. Chaco shall do Ludy for me, do him, till he's planted in a sugar field!"

"Yes," says Ata Tonga commandingly. "Khy my brother, can now use those receipts without damage to our insurrection. Our cause is no more. Our rebellion is—is sold out. The great Aguinaldo will go to Hong Kong to receive money enough to make him rich. he and a few others," he jeers. "As for the rest of us, we must bow to the Captain-General before the 27th of December, or die."

"And you die?" I whisper.

"No, I bow."

"That's good sense."

"I bow until I rise again. But it isn't that which fills my heart with fire now. It is the despair of my adored lady, whose father is surely dead."

"How do you know that?"

"I have smelt his grave!"

"The devil!"

"It is under the gravel walk just in front of the steps

leading to the front door of his bungalow. The Spaniards were in a hurry and did not dig deep."

"Do you know anything of Señorita Maud's cursed marriage?" I whisper with a sigh.

"Nothing except—a lie! It is said here that she has honored by the glories of her hand a man she loathes. But, Brothers, I will be your guide up the river across the great lagoons, over the wavy grass plains, unto the edge of the grand mountains, into the land of wonders," he says. "By the aid of the Tagal you shall be safe not only from the guns of the few Filipinos who remain in arms, but also from the poisoned arrows of the lurking Negrito. You come?"

"I come as I love Mazie Gordon!"

"Then we start to-night!"

"At once! As a merchant I can engage a craft to carry us to the Pampanga River," I answer. "This would be difficult to you."

"Dios, then here in half an hour!" And we three grip hands and know we mean it; notwithstanding Khy's clasp is clammy, and our conversation has been in lowest whisper, and the gloom of the room is such that we only catch each other's flashing eyes.

From this I stride away to Martin, Thompson & Co.'s to make quick preparations for my journey, and send a messenger to tell young Budlong to take charge of the business while I am absent.

In my downtown office, I, fortunately have a good shooting suit and plenty of sporting ammunition. I light up the room, for it is now quite dark, and am just rigging myself in a good serviceable jungle costume, and seeing that I have cartridges enough, and getting down an old sporting rifle, when suddenly there comes a thundering rap on my door.

I hear young Simpson of the English Consul's office outside. He shouts: "Jack! Are you there?"

"Yes!" I answer.

"Let me in, quick!"

And I opening the door, Tommy comes in with a very troubled yet official look on his face. He has a naval officer's boat cloak over his arm, though the night is warm.

"What do you want, old man?" I say testily. "I'm in a hurry."

"So am I. I've just got sixty seconds to save your life. A file of Spanish soldiers will arrest you in two minutes. You're mixed up in that damned Katipunán business. Some one has reported it. Walker sent me down here to get you out of the country to dodge a diplomatic row."

"I won't go!"

"Ah, thank Heaven, Jack, you're not mixed up in that cursed society. Stay here and we'll protect you if the *Daphne* has to open her guns upon Manila to do it," says Tommy, eager to uphold British rights. "By the Lord, we'll cable and have half the China squadron in this bay in a jiffy."

To this I make no reply. I am putting cartridges in my revolver.

"What the devil are you doing that for?" he asks; then goes on: "You're not connected in any way with the Katipunán?"

"That's none of your business."

But I don't bluff little Tommy. Suddenly Simpson assumes an official air, and cries commandingly: "I charge you to answer in the Queen's name!"

"I am a full-fledged blood-brotherhood Filipino!" I say savagely. "Look at my arm!"

"Good God! Then you've got to get out of Manila."

"I won't till I've blown out the brains of that infernal Ludenbaum."

"You must! You're crazy. I have six sailors here behind that door from her Majesty's *Daphne* to drag you down to the boat if you make resistance. We're not going to have our Government and Spain at loggerheads about an English subject dying a dog's death before a firing party in the Luneta. Here, this'll disguise you!"

With this Simpson throws the officer's boat cloak over me.

Perchance I am weak from the thundering smashes that have come upon my brain, within the hour. Anyway, after a fruitless struggle, in which my strength is as naught, four great big stalwart English jack-tars half drag, half carry me down to a man-of-war gig which is waiting at the Pasig landing. Under the Consul's privileges and those of the English Navy the boat has no custom house examination.

Little Simpson springs in beside me and whispers to the coxswain, who is steering: "Tell your men to hang on to him. Look at his eyes! He may jump overboard!"

"You needn't fear that," I answer in half maniac despair, "I'll live until I send that infernal German to Hell ahead of me!"

So I, a dazed, smashed-up mental wreck, am, despite my struggles, hoisted up the side-ladder of Her Majesty's *Daphne* and turned over to the surgeon of the ship, who jabs into me a hypodermic syringe, and, curse him, takes all the senses out of me.

The next morning I wake to find myself in a cabin just off the wardroom, the *Daphne* driving through the blue waters of the China Sea—and think in a half dazed way the whole thing is a nightmare.

But the noise of the machinery and the motion of the vessel shakes me into a kind of sentiency. Then some scraps of conversation coming from the wardroom mess, drive daggers through my aching head.

"It's deuced cheerful, that young cock sparrow in there has given us a trip to Hong Kong," says a nautical voice. "My wife will meet me on the Praya."

"Yes, jerking Jackie Curzon out of the grip of Spain has given us a run to 'sweethearts and wives,'" laughs another.

With a horrid groan—I remember!

Every revolution of that accursed propeller, churning under the stern, is taking me away from her I love, she who is being dragged into the recesses of the great tropic island—for what purpose—to Nueva Ecija—where El Corregidor is nigh omnipotent! The place Maud has warned me of!

Then words come to me again from the wardroom breakfast table in a horrid jumble.

"I say the girl that got young Curzon into this mess is deuced pretty—old Bully Gordon's daughter."

"Yes, I had my eye on the little lady one day as she was driving on the Malceon."

"Yes, but her sister; she's the stunner!"

"Married to old Ludenbaum, the fat-eyed German; lots of money though."

"The very day her father died."

"It is said old Gordon expired of the D. T.'s just as

the troops arrested him. A Tagal conspirator had been in his house disguised as a flunkey."

"Oh, but that's nothing! Six months ago, I had it from a Yankee officer the bride was engaged to a man in their squadron. You saw him in Hang Kow, dark-eyed chap!"

"By Jove!" I laugh. "The news I bring will make Phil Marston dance a sailor's hornpipe on his quarter-deck!"

Am I becoming delirious again? I must be! For now to me come words that seem to put pandemonium in my brain.

"The skipper's carrying on like blazes. He's got a wife on Mount Austin. Fifteen knots, isn't it, Chief?"

"A little better."

"Fifteen knots an hour from her I love?" I scream. Then springing up I stalk like a ghost in pajamas into the wardroom, pale, disheveled, my eyes blazing like searchlights—at least that is what the surgeon told me—and astound them all by commanding: "Stop those engines, chief engineer! Fifteen knots from her I love! From the girl I was to have married this morning! Damn it, I am captain now! Stop your engines!"

Then, for they have all sprung up, the surgeon flies at me and jabs his hypodermic once more into my arm, and, God bless him, gives me—*nothingness!*

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THAT'S A YARN FOR THE MARINES!"

I WAKE in a room of the Hong Kong Hospital something like six weeks after this—at least that is what Doctor Tomax, the surgeon in attendance, tells me after I have become sufficiently convalescent to be permitted to talk; but not permitted to talk upon the subject that flies into my brain with every throb of returning strength. Each additional drop of blood that nourishment puts into my attenuated body seems to be another drop of bull-dog determination that I'll not be beaten in my love.