

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.

But linked with this is the awful feeling embodied in that disheartening Americanism: "What are you going to do about it?"

Apparently nothing—while I am in the hospital. For Tomax, who is as considerate a surgeon as ever cut off a man's leg, will make no answer to my inquiries in a voice that trembles from the weakness of the fever. They say it is jungle fever. I know it is brain fever. Manila is healthy; I *was* strong! No more ardent bridegroom ever looked forward with pulses bounding with the vigor of youthful love to his wedding day than I, before that pile-driving succession of surprises, chagrins, horrors and despairs, capped by the climax of the British consul kindly shanghaeing me out of Manila to save my life, knocked me into a mental cocked-hat.

To my whispered: "The news from Manila, for God's sake!" the surgeon says: "Wait till you are stronger, my boy," and I can get nothing out of him.

So I take his advice and get stronger, the doctor says, *very fast*; but to me it is slow as Chinese progress. For it is two weeks more and pretty well into the middle of February, 1898, before I am on my pins and able to be moved to some pleasant rooms on Mount Austin, which Thompson, one of my chiefs, a hard-headed but kind hearted old Scotchman, has engaged for me, the firm having shown their friendly feelings towards me by many attentions during my illness.

To my inquiries as to news from Manila, Thompson, as he settles me in my quarters, remarks: "Wait till you're stronger, me lad."

"Is it so bad as that?" I falter.

"No, it is *good* news."

"Good news?"

"The best! Hemp has gone up! But don't you excite yourself. The two last cargoes you shipped, our cables tell us, arrived in England in very good shape. But I'm afraid from what the Spaniards say about ye, we'll nae be able to send yer back to Manila for some little time. They're making a deel of a row about ye down there. Young Budlong writes me the Spanish officials say ye were connected with that chiel Aguinaldo in some way, furnished his arms and munitions o' war. A sma' private venture on yer own

account, eh, me bra' laddie? Aguinaldo is in Hong Kong now shrieking out that the Spaniards ha' nae paid him all the hush money they agreed to. Has he settled with ye in full, mon?"

To this I give a kind of hideous laugh, and ask: "Aren't there any private letters for me from young Budlong?"

"Hoot, yes. But Budlong wrote us nae to gi'e 'em ta ye 'till ye were as strong as a brayin' bullock. Budlong likes ye, and particularly begs we'll keep an eye that ye do nae come back to Manila. He says yer life would nae be worth a groat if the Spanish Governor General got his clutches on yer wind-pipe, me bra' arms smuggler.—Don't fret about getting to business, when ye're strong enough, yer desk is waiting for ye."

But all this makes me doubly anxious to read Budlong's private news.

Probably thinking that my health will not be improved by anxiety, and that I will be able to bring my mind down to business with greater rapidity if I know the worst, about the middle of February, Thompson sends to me the packet from Budlong which seems to have dodged the Spanish censor, by being brought by the captain of one of our trading vessels. It has no postage stamps on it.

I open it to find two letters.

One of these makes me start with astonishment. It is addressed to me in the German script of Ludenbaum, a penciled note on the envelope by Budlong stating it had arrived at our Manila office the day I had spent in Cavité, had been left for me on my desk and apparently had been unobserved by me in the hurry of my rapid flight.

I tear it open and grind my teeth over the following:

BINONDO, December 14th, 1897.

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND:

You will, I know, congratulate me on my nuptials to a young lady for which you have always asserted a friendship, Fraulein Maud Ysabel Gordon, who, as a child, became my wife ~~seven~~ years ago. The completion of these happy nuptials I now take the honor to announce to you.

Also it is my sorrow to relate the death of my valued friend, the late Captain Silas Salem Gordon, who came to an end that he, I am

sure, was pleased with, a painless expiration from the pleasures of Bacchus.

By the last wishes and also the last written Will and Testament of the deceased, my old comrade, his youngest daughter, Fraulein Mazie Inez Gordon, is placed under my sole control, direction and guardianship, to which, of course, is now added my authority as the husband of her elder sister.

Acting by this authority for Fraulein Mazie's best interests, I am resolved to cancel and annul some feeble hope of marriage the child has held out to you in her innocence of the world; your situation as clerk hardly warranting you in looking towards one whose fortune is so much beyond yours.

Therefore upon my return, in case I should deem it best to bring Fraulein Mazie Inez Gordon with me to Manila, I will esteem it a favor if you will kindly withdraw from any persecution of the innocent child, whom I shall not permit to receive any attentions or visits from you.

Fraulein Mazie being still well under age by Spanish law, do not doubt the child in my house will be kept closely guarded and before my return to Manila, will also have been taught to be thoroughly obedient to my command.

A sharp German governante will not be so easily hoodwinked as the old imbecile Spanish duenna who used to permit her charge to accept your attentions. So please keep your distance.

These suggestions I make with the greatest esteem, wishing to save you any further trouble in a matter that is now entirely finished and obliterated.

Yours, with extreme friendship,
ADOLPH MAX LUDENBAUM.

To
JOHN TALBOYS CURZON, ESQ.

This fishy, cold-blooded epistle makes me half insane with a kind of hopeless yet fiendish rage. "By the Lord Harry, he will not permit Mazie to receive my visits! He will coerce my darling! He has got a stern old German governante for her who will *teach* her to be obedient! This infernal Teutonic authoritative brute says my love for this girl, who should have been my bride two months ago, is finished! By Heaven! This means *El Corregidor!*" As I shiver at the thought I determine to go back to Manila, Spanish firing party or not." No sharp German governante can keep me from seeing my darling! No Dutch guar-

dian shall prevent my making Mazie Gordon my bride!"

This raving, idiotic in its impotency, dies away as I think of the hopelessness of my situation, of Mazie's. I can't go back to the Philippines without becoming the victim of Spanish military law. My sweetheart is in Nueva Ecija far in the wilds of Luzon, where the handful of Spanish troops which make its garrison is headed by some martinet captain or lieutenant who will, of course, give his authority and aid to her enemies and mine. The judge of the local court is doubtless a friend, probably the tool of *El Corregidor*.

With a sigh of hopeless misery I open the next letter. It reads:

ENGLISH CLUB, ERMITA, December 27th, 1897.

DEAR OLD BOY:—

You've got yourself in a devil of a mess with the Spaniards. They say you're a full fledged Katipunan and have been furnishing arms to Aguinaldo; besides being mixed up with one of his lieutenants who came in disguised as a Pasig boatman to bring about that mutiny of the *Carabineros*.

I simply tell you this to prevent you coming back, no matter how great your temptation on account of your love for the daughter of old Gordon, who report now says, died of alcoholism just about the time he was arrested and taken to the citadel.

His daughter, the fascinating Miss Mazie, has naturally gone away with her sister, whose wedding is announced to that fat German Ludenbaum. The bride, Maud, must be a kind of fast-and-loose creature, flirtatious as the very devil, an accomplishment she probably picked up in the United States. Report here says she was engaged to an American officer, and yet for seven years had been the *legal* wife of old Ludy, who had always, as you know, played papa to her.

From the clipping which I enclose, from the *Diario de Manila*, you can see that apparently at a very tender age the dashing Maud was united in marriage to Herr Ludy. The extreme youth of the girl, you know, is no bar to matrimony in the Philippines. You, yourself, have seen them mothers under thirteen years old.

Everybody is talking about you here. You'd be quite the hero of the Club if you came back. But I imagine it would be a *dead* hero.

All is going along well in the office, so you needn't worry about business. The *Ladoga* came in yesterday from Singapore, likewise the *Boneta* from Iloilo, Her Majesty's *Daphne* is in the Bay again;

but no officer of 'em knows anything about you or will acknowledge to ever having placed optics on you, though I think the Spanish Government suspect they had something to do in your Egyptian-Hall-mysterious-cabinet disappearance.

Drop me a line, old fellow, so that I can tell the inquiring chappies of the Club that after making your exit by Maskelyne and Cook's spiritual-cabinet in Manila, you were displayed to slow music in Hong Kong alive and kicking; so that they needn't put you up on the deceased list.

Yours most sincerely,
JAMES C. BUDLONG.

P. S.

No news from Ludy, though his German cashier looks very knowing. When I ask him about Dutchy's nuptials, he says his esteemed Herr Adolph is enjoying the delights of a tropical honeymoon up in Nueva Ecija, having gone there to look after his bride's and his ward's estates in that province.

With this I pick up the clipping from the Manila newspaper. It reads, translated into English, about as follows:

"We have the extreme pleasure of announcing that the distinguished merchant of the Plaza de Cervantes, Don Adolph Max Ludenbaum, has kindly permitted the registration of his happy nuptials to the beautiful Doña Maud Ysabél Gordon, daughter of the late Don Silas Salem Gordon, to be made public; the tender age of the child who had given her hand to him preventing his assuming the rights and joys of a husband until now. The sudden death of the bride's father from those disorders which high living brings upon old age, our columns contained yesterday.

Don Adolph has permitted us to print a copy of the certificate of his marriage taken from the records of the province.

PARISH OF CARANGLAN; PROVINCE OF NUEVA ECIJA.

This is to certify that this day appeared before me and entered into the holy bonds of marriage by sacrament of the Church of Rome, Herr Adolph Max Ludenbaum, subject of the German Empire, aged forty-seven, and Maud Ysabél, daughter of Don Silas Salem Gordon, aged fourteen, the father's consent for same having been reported to me as being given verbally.

Fra Roderigo Anselmo,
Cura of Parish.

Dated the 14th day of September in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety."

This so-called marriage certificate I scan aghast, and think: "This is a very nasty thing to show to poor Phil Marston when his ship comes in here some day from North China."

"By Heaven," I mutter, "how in the name of misery shall I tell this dashing young salt water dandy his affianced is the wife of that accursed German?"

I have little time to debate this, for within an hour my Chinese boy brings in to me

Philip Preble Marston.

Ensign, U. S. Navy.

I stagger up and find myself pale and trembling, not with the weakness of my illness, but at the thought of my revealing.

A minute after a pleasant-faced, hearty-mannered, stalwart young fellow—the one I have seen in Maud's photograph—with very bright eyes and cheeks bronzed by the sun of the China Seas, is shown into my rooms.

Bringing the sunlight with him, he says breezy as a typhoon: "You're Jack Curzon, I believe? You're to be married to one sister, I to the other. I've heard so much of you in Maud's letters that I feel as if I knew you already." With this he offers me a cordial hand.

But as I put my poor weak white fingers into his bronzed grip, he suddenly starts, and looking at me, mutters: "Your pardon for intruding. I'm afraid you're not recovered from the fever they told me at your office had fastened on you in the Philippines."

My face perhaps quivers a little at his nuptial suggestion, which has put a pang into my heart.

But now I'll have to put a pang into this bright, breezy young lover, probably more unnerving, because his torment will come sudden as a stroke of lightning.

"You'll excuse my running after you," goes on the sailor, "but I grew so anxious about Maud that I got

leave to run down to Manila, and en route walked into Martin, Thompson & Co.'s offices here, thinking they might have letters from you in the Philippines. I have not heard from Miss Gordon for two months, and she always wrote to me once a week. I'm—I'm afraid something's happened to her." His firm lip trembles beneath his long drooping mustache. "You left Manila about that time?" he asks.

"Yes," I say.

"Maud, when you saw her last, was well?" His voice is very anxious.

"Perfectly well when I—I left her."

"You have of course heard of her, by her sister's letters since you left?" he goes on eagerly.

"Not—not a word."

Here my face speaks to him, and he cries out: "Good Lord! What is it you're afraid to tell me?"

For answer I hand him the little note that Maud charged me to give her sailor-boy, the last night on which I saw her.

This he tears open hastily, though I can see, reverently, and runs his eyes in a kind of gloating ecstasy over the handwriting of his beloved—for the first few lines—then his brow becomes gloomy and his eyes surprised. After he has read every word of it he thinks deeply for a minute, and passes his hand over his forehead in a troubled kind of way. Then he turns to me and says, pulling his mustache nervously: "I don't entirely understand this. This letter seems to be written by—by my darling with a premonition of some—some misfortune coming to her. It seems to me," the poor fellow's lip is quivering now, "a—a kind of farewell."

"Yes," I break in. "Won't you take a chair?"

My voice startles him; he looks at me a moment; then mutters: "You—you have something more to tell me. Worse than this?"

"The very worst!"

"Good God, my darling is dead!" And this stalwart young fellow's breast begins to pant, and his face grow ghastly under its coating of typhoon tan.

But I break in: "Maud Gordon," I can't bring myself to give the accursed German's name to the loved one of the poor fellow. "is alive, I believe."

"Thank God!" His voice grows commanding; he says: "Out with it! The greatest kindness you can do me is to tell me what you say is the worst news I can have from my affianced."

"Do you read Spanish?" I ask.

"Yes. My—my sweetheart taught it to me. Great Heaven, man, get under way!"

"Then read this," I falter; and hand him the clipping from *El Diario de Manila*, and watch Phil Marston in his agony.

As he reads the marriage notice the stalwart frame of the young ensign begins to tremble. His eyes become bloodshot, and a kind of horror gets into them. Then he grips a chair with one hand, and reads the thing again, though each sentence of the *Cura's* certificate must be a kris thrust in his heart.

But the thing over, a sudden flush flies into his face, he says to me, a confidence in his voice that makes me love him too: "I'll believe that damned lie about the truest girl on earth when this world turns upside down!"

Ye Gods, how Maud Gordon would have adored her jack-tar boy could she have seen the glorious faith in her, this lover shows, as he cries: "THAT'S A YARN FOR THE MARINES!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DATE BOOK OF THE CHINAMAN.

THEN after pacing the room about as if it were his quarter-deck, Mr. Marston says sharply: "You know more about this than I; tell me all about it. But remember that I no more believe what is in that newspaper than I believe in—in the Flying Dutchman."

"Very well," I say, "let me give you some whisky."

"No, nothing to blur my brain—only your news, which will require a cool head to analyze and a—a strong heart to bear," he adds with a sigh.

So I tell him the story of Herr Max Ludenbaum and his affianced, and incidentally, of course, my own hapless love affair.