

"My life! *Caramba!* where is the traitor?" and the ferocious captain springs off his pony.

Then breaking into a hoarse laugh, the bride cries jeeringly "CABIN-BOY MAX, COME HERE FOR PUNISHMENT!"

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### DIVORCE BY COURT-MARTIAL.

BUT Cabin-boy Max doesn't seem to be frightened at these words.

Stiffing a curse at interruption, Herr Ludenbaum stepping to his visitor bows ceremoniously, remarking: "You come rather late for the wedding feast, Herr Captain, to which I suppose my bride has invited you. She is a little nervous and hysterical now, the agitation of the wedding day. But I'll entertain you!" and turning, he speaks with the voice of a man on his own hearthstone: "Maud, go into der house!"

"Not till I've given you military punishment. There's your prisoner, Captain Chaco!" Her white hand points straight at her spouse.

"*Mein Himmel*, Chaco, der poor leedle girl has gone out of her head!" mutters the astonished German.

"Don't fear, I'll keep my senses till I have destroyed you!" cries the bride determinedly. "You have been wedded to me by decree of law. I now claim from you divorce by court-martial! You have publicly proclaimed to the world you are my husband. I shall now by military law make myself your widow!"

"*Mein Gott*, she is insane! We must have a doctor for my hysterical darling. My dear Captain Chaco, you have a surgeon at your barracks?" And Ludenbaum would hold consultation with the officer as to medical advice, for in truth he thinks the girl has gone crazy.

But the crazy one is now speaking words that make her legal spouse open his eyes with a start.

"I can prove to you, Captain Chaco, by written receipts, that this man as agent for the German Trading Company furnished the rebel, Aguinaldo, with modern rifles in great quantities, and rapid-fire guns and fixed

ammunition with which to shoot your brothers down. Without him the rebellion would have been a flash in the pan. Now it has cost the lives of twenty thousand Spanish soldiers."

"I will accept your proofs, Señora Ludenbaum," replies Chaco, bowing before her, his eyes lighting up at the sight of her ecstatic beauty that gleams from a toilet that has been made to charm him. "But," he adds sturdily, "they must be convincing and convicting ones."

"More than papers?"

"Yes. I am a patriot, but an honest patriot. I don't shoot upon doubt!"

"Will you give safe conduct to the men who can explain how they came by them and prove the documents must be true?"

"*Diablo!* Are the men rebel outlaws?"

"Of that you must judge for yourself."

"Humph!" He thinks a minute; then says sharply: "If they can prove the things you say they can, *Por Dios*, yes! Safe conduct for a day; but no longer."

To this Ludenbaum has listened, not quite believing his ears. He now breaks in severely: "This is rigmarole and bosh. *Verdammt*, it is idiocy! Maud, go into der house! I'll teach you to jabber such nonsense. Captain Chaco, I bid you good evening."

But the Spanish patriot has now got into his head not only the vision of a beauty that he loves, but the thoughts of bloodshed which he adores. He heeds not the man, but simply says to the woman: "Señora Ludenbaum, as commander of this district I accept your offer. I'll call a court-martial, furnish me the proofs."

"You're crazy, fool!" cries the German savagely. "Apparently you don't know who I am. I am trusted by both Captain-Generals, not only by Don Primo de Rivera, but by Don Basilio Augustin, the new one. I am their intimate, their friend."

To this diatribe he gets no answer. The captain simply says: "I have brought some twenty men with me, as your words suggested, Señora Ludenbaum. Sergeant Lopez, Corporal Sanchez and myself will make a drum-head."

A grave sergeant of gloomy and morose appearance and a corporal, agile, active and fierce, step from the ranks, draw up and salute their commanding officer.



"*Gott in Himmel*, you're mad! I am a subject of the German Emperor."

"Your witnesses, Doña Ludenbaum!" says Chaco sharply.

And Maud raising up her voice, cries to the forest: "Ata, come to me and risk your life for your mistress's honor!"

For a moment there is no answer and the German jeers: "Didn't I tell you she was crazy."

"Ata, my God! are you not there?" screams the girl, an agony in her voice. "Ah Khy, come here and tell your story—for vengeance on your father's foe!"

At her words, from the jungle, Ata, the Tagal, glides, kisses her hand reverently and mutters, "Here, my mistress of the wild-rose breath!"

To him she says hurriedly, "The Chinaman, is he not anxious to avenge his father's wrongs?"

"He is," replies the Tagal, "but frightened for himself. Has safe conduct been given?"

"It has," answers Chaco. And to Ata's assuring call, Khy the Chinaman falters from out the thicket where he has been trying to smoke a cigarette.

"You, Doña Ludenbaum, accuse this man to me, as officer commanding this district, of having aided and assisted the rebels under Aguinaldo?" says Chaco tersely.

"I do! I swear it!"

"You are my prisoner, Senor Ludenbaum!" Three Spanish soldiers at his beckoning place themselves behind the German with ready weapons.

"This is a damned farce! You don't know me, young man! I am the subject of the great German Emperor!" breaks in the Teuton who seemingly won't believe; though hot passion now has left his face and it is growing pallid.

"The great German Emperor doesn't command the district of Carranglan," says the Captain grimly. "The court will listen to the evidence! Hold up two torches, men; that we may read!"

"Then," says Maud, producing them, "here are three receipts written in this man's own hand and signed by Atachio, Aguinaldo's lieutenant!"

"*Mein Gott*, dose papers!" This is a suppressed gasp from the German.

"Aha!" cries his accuser in triumph. But Ludenbaum now snaps his jaws and gazes on in faltering, astounded silence; once or twice remarking in a dazed way: "*Ist's möglich*."

"The first," goes on the girl consulting the papers, "is for five thousand stands of arms for Aguinaldo and three field-pieces, delivered from the *Alucia* steamer near Batangas, November twenty-fifth, eighteen hundred and ninety-six."

"*Diablo!*" snarls the sergeant between his teeth.

"The second, for four thousand rifles and one hundred cases of ammunition delivered to Atachio in Manila the 25th of February, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven."

"*Caramba!* the day before the *Carabineros* mutinied and killed my brother," mutters Sanchez.

"Shut your mouth, Corporal!" commands Chaco, "or I'll blow three teeth out of your jaw with my pistol. Proceed, Señora." And he stands grimly listening as Maud goes on:

"The third is for one hundred cases of small arms and three rapid fire-guns landed at Subig Bay and given to Santallano and Del Pila."

"Del Pila! the murderous brute who burnt up poor Fra Roderigo Anselmo and the *Padres* over there!" snarls the captain in very nasty voice. "Let me read these papers!"

By the light of a burning torch which one of his men holds up for him, Don Roberto's face grows very grim as he scans the receipts. "These are true upon their face!" he says.

"God be praised!" cries Maud in ecstasy.

"But I want evidence how these were obtained. I want to know that they are genuine!" remarks Chaco, suspiciously. "Jealous women," he looks searchingly upon the fair accuser, "sometimes don't hesitate at little things for putting out of the way inconvenient husbands. I am an honest patriot!" and he glares in a bloodthirsty way at Ludenbaum, who has several times opened his mouth as if to speak, but seemingly his throat has been too dry for the effort.

"So are we!" asserts the sergeant. "Both Sanchez and myself!"

"Silence in the court!" orders his commanding officer. "Neither of you talk till I give you leave. Listen to the



evidence and vote as I tell you! I want to know how these came into your hands, Señora Ludenbaum."

Then comes the bravest act the Tagal ever did. Ata Tonga stepping forth before an enemy he knows is merciless as death, condemns himself as rebel a dozen times by telling all about the mutiny of the *Carabineros*.

Twice during the recital Chaco's hand goes to his pistol abstractedly, but the click of a gun-lock from one of his men reminds him. He sternly says: "This rebel has my word for his life. The man that injures him without my orders dies by my hand. Proceed, Señor Tonga. You say you tracked this man at night by scent. I have heard wondrous tales of the noses of your wild mountain tribes, but never tested one, because I shoot all wild mountain Indians upon sight. As for this Chinaman, let him tell his story, only let him beware he tells the truth."

And Ah Khy, setting forth the reason of his father's hatred for Ludenbaum, gives account in rather trembling voice of how he stole the receipts from the two frightened conspirators.

To this, Chaco says suddenly: "Señor Ludenbaum, I want your pocketbook!"

"*Mein Himmel*, there's not much money in it, Captain. Let me fill it for you."

"I want your writing."

"Read it, inspect it! It will show my innocence!" cries the German, joy in his mercantile face.

Glancing over the papers in it, the simple Spanish Captain looks astounded, and mutters: "The writing in the body of the receipts is *not* the same as this man's letters in his own hand." Then breaks out: "You Tagal liar testified he said they were written by his own hand. You Chinese scoundrel, for private revenge, would have sworn away this man's life. Señora, the court is not made an instrument of fraudulently getting rid of unpleasant husbands." He glances at Maud's astounded face scornfully despite its beauty. "Señor Ludenbaum, you are free. Take good care of this lady, your bride. She will probably lead you a very merry dance," he sneers.

"*Ay de mi!*" comes from Maud in despairing sigh.

"I like not false witnesses!" goes on Chaco sternly.

"Neither do we!" growls the sergeant.

"Take these two scoundrels off and shoot them!"

But Ah Khy, who is fighting for his life, grabs the mili-

tary autocrat by his knees and screams: "You sabé! Ludenbaum heap deep scoundrel! Ludenbaum no damn fool! Him no write as him write other t'ings. Him used disguised hand!"

"The court has heard enough upon that point! Señor Ludenbaum, you are free," repeats the Captain, turning his eyes away from the loveliness that is beaming despairingly upon him as if to allure him from what he thinks is *not* his duty. Then he orders: "Shoot those men at once, and bring me my pony! Here's your pocketbook. *Adios*, Señor."

The soldiers turn from Ludenbaum and seize the silent Tagal and the shrieking Chinaman.

With a bound Maud is beside Ata, and on his brow puts kiss of farewell muttering: "No devotion could give more than life, my faithful one."

"Ah, were it not in vain, mistress of the wild-rose scent!" sighs the Indian, as he is dragged from her.

And the scene becomes a hideous tableau. The men, save the firing party, are standing at ease some few steps away awaiting orders, though one is leading his pony to the officer. The half burnt torches still illuminate the place, bringing out the shadows of the jungle coming down from the mountains at each side of the little garden. Further up the glade there is an open space on which grows a gigantic banyan tree, to which they are leading the condemned, whose arms are now bound behind them.

"Thanks, Captain Common-sense," cries the German laughingly, the joy of victory in his face; adding in Teutonic grandiloquence: "Herr Captain, don't be afraid. I'll not report this matter to mein frendt Captain-General Augustin. But as for you!" His stern grip is upon his wife's bare shoulder, he is whispering to her: "Mein devil, *mein hexe*, into the house! To-night you shall sob out your penitence under the weight of husband's arm!"

"Yes, that's kinder!" she gasps. "Better your blows than your kisses."

"You shall have both!"

"O God of mercy!" But all the time she is thinking for her very life. She knows there can be no happiness for her with this man alive. She knows her only hope to go back to the arms she loves as Maud Gordon immaculate, is by this man's death *right here*—as he stands before



her triumphant, grinning, his rage turning into passion as he looks upon her beauty.

Then suddenly a Yankee idea flits through her mind. She tears herself from Ludenbaum. Running to the Spaniard, she places a despairing grasp upon Don Roberto's arm, even as he would step into his saddle and pleads: "You don't believe me, because you think I was this man's wife for eight years and refused to acknowledge it. Even in the court to-day you flaunted me with this. I never entered the bonds of wedlock before Padre Anselmo. Your eyes were deceived by this forger then, as they are duped by this same trickster now!"

"That's impossible! I know poor Fra Roderigo's signature as well as I know my own," mutters Chaco gloomily, feeling for his stirrup and resolutely keeping his eyes from a loveliness that makes him half mad with anguish.

"Of course you know Roderigo's signature; but the change in the document *isn't* his signature. Look!" She has the marriage certificate drawn from out her panting bosom. "Order a torch! I insist you examine it. You have a field-glass on you. Quick, give it to me!" She unscrews the lens nearest the eye, then reversing the instrument puts it over the document, and cries: "Look through it!"

"*Diablo*, a magnifying glass!" gasps the captain.

"*Santos*, by the torchlight, SEE!" screams Maud. "The names of the two contracting parties erased and over them written my name and that of that villain there!"

"*Caramba*, your words are true! Without words of priest over you, that villain claimed a husband's rights upon your beauty! *Santa Maria!* it would have been pollution." He makes the sign of the cross over her. There is a look of rapture on his medieval face as he mutters: "*Dios mio*, I ask your pardon humbly for ever doubting you, honored lady!"

A clicking of gun-locks and wild screams from Ah Khy, call his attention. He orders "Don't shoot the Tagal and the Chinaman till I say the word! Keep that man here!"

He points to Ludenbaum, who answers with an astounded snarl: "*Gott Allmachtiger!* You are going to try an innocent man again? Dat devil's eyes are bewitching you!"

And so they might, for never were more pleading yet enchanting glances thrown on any man than upon this Spanish captain, as he meditates on life and death.

A second's thought and Chaco commands: "Unbind and bring here those two witnesses! The court is in session again, is it not Sergeant, Corporal?"

"If you say so, Captain!"

"Beware, fool! Don Basilio Augustin y Davila, the new Captain-General, will reckon with you if you harm a hair of my head," threatens Ludenbaum.

"Still," mutters Chaco, "I want more evidence; something to prove beyond a doubt."

"How can more be given?" cries Maud. "Didn't you hear that scoundrel's exclamation of affright about the papers? That showed his guilt. Haven't you learned how the receipts were obtained?"

"Yes. It is a strange story tracking a man by scent like pointer dog. Of course, I've heard the Tagals do it."

"Pooh, dis is damned nonsense! In the name of the German Emperer I defy you!" sneers Adolph drawing himself up in proud supremacy. For Germans have some funny ideas about the power of their erratic Kaiser, in other countries than his own.

"Look at his other papers in him pocketbook!" begs Khy. "Gib him me! Me sly as Dutchy." And made brave by fear the Chinaman grabs the pocketbook from the German, before Ludenbaum half guesses what's being done to him.

"*Herr Gott, Mein Himmel!* You don't know who you are robbing, lunatics!" cries Herr Adolph. And he would struggle for it.

But the Captain says hoarsely: "See what you make out of it, Chinese fox."

At this Ludenbaum's face, for a moment ghastly, grows scoffing. He mutters, "You are crazy, Captain Chaco!" but turns away as the latter signs for one of his men to hold a flambeau for the despairing Khy who goes through the documents with trembling hands but very searching eyes.

"What do you find?" asks the Captain.

"Nothing—so help me Josh—nothing!" sighs the Chinaman.

"Aha! Oho!" The Teuton is guffawing.



"Stay! Here's a letter in German,"

"*Caramba*, who can read it?"

"I can!" screams Khy. "Took the first prize in Dutch at Yale!"

"*Ein tausend Teufels.*"

"Say! What you want better than this! This letter just received from German Trading Company says in consideration of lost receipts they have at last audited Herr Adolph Ludenbaum's bill for arms and ammunition. They don't say whom they were delivered to; but here's a detail list corresponding to receipts! You sabé, Captain Chaco!"

"Do you swear to this?"

"By the Rooster's head! If you don't believe me, Captain Chaco, there's a German woman in the house, ask her."

Twice the German has raised his hand to interrupt the reading of the letter, but all the time, though his face is towards the Spaniards, he is gradually shuffling closer to the dense clump of guava bushes matted with coffee vines that runs down from the mountain side in tangled thicket, to within some five paces from his back.

As the Captain inspects the letter the Chinaman places in his hands, and the corporal and the sergeant to indicate they can read German gaze over their commander's shoulder from respectful distance, Ludenbaum with shuffling feet, though he keeps his face turned upon his judges, backs slowly towards the jungle.

"*Caramba*, these prove his guilt beyond a doubt! Don't they, Sergeant? How say you, Corporal?" asks Chaco sternly.

"I always knew he was guilty!" mutters the sergeant gloomily.

"I was sure we'd have to shoot the villain!" laughs the corporal savagely.

But Maud screams suddenly: "My God, he is escaping!" For Ludenbaum now feels the thicket brushing his back, and suddenly turning, with a bound disappears into the jungle.

"Shoot him!" cries Chaco.

But what are they to shoot, in the thick foliage of the virgin forest masked by the blackness of a tropic night,

The Captain and three or four soldiers spring into the canebrake, but after a minute reappear, cursing the

thorns that have torn their hands and faces, without the fugitive.

"*Santa Maria*, it's like finding a winner in the Manila lottery!" growls the corporal.

"*Carrajo*, even at daylight under these infernal trees it is black as midnight," rejoins the sergeant.

"Now for the man responsible for the prisoner's escape!" snarls their commander with such awful eyes that both the corporal and sergeant tremble. He wipes the perspiration of exertion mixed with blood drawn by scratching prickles from his brow, for he has been struggling through the undergrowth.

"God of Mercy, the court has decreed I was his wife! I have assumed in his house the position of his spouse. If that accursed villain gets to Manila, *save as his wife*, my good name is forever gone!" shudders Maud.

"Don't grieve, *mi querida!*" whispers Chaco. "I, the man who loves you, know your innocence. That's enough for me. It should be enough for you, *nina de mi alma!*"

At this the girl gives a little broken, jeering cry, for it is not Chaco's good opinion that she wants. Phil Marston will now believe she has been *de facto* the wife of Ludenbaum. If he's got a man's brains he can't help it!

As she thinks this, a shiver, cold as ice, runs through her veins, the hot air of the tropics cannot warm her.

"Dear mistress of the rose breath, you want this villain found?" cries Ata Tonga, who has looked on sneeringly at Spanish jungle-craft.

"By every hope of future happiness! I want his death now—right here! I CAN'T LIVE AS HIS WIFE!" screams the distracted bride.

"Then, I'll find him for you!"

"Pha, impossible! In the darkness of this trackless undergrowth what glance could follow an elephant?" jeer the Spanish captain.

"Not by gaze, but by scent! You sneered at the power of my nose, Spaniard. See what it will do in the impenetrable gloom of a forest night."

"*Caramba*, try it! His capture is free pardon for you and this Chinese of trembling hand and broken patois, but who reads letters easy as any clerk or monk."

"Ata, you sabé, catch him! For the love of Josh, catch Ludy!" falters Khy.



Into the jungle, taking scent like blood-hound, glides the Tagal.

They all stand breathless listening; but to them come no noises save the sounds of the forest, the chattering of some awakened monkeys, the cries of birds disturbed upon their roosts.

Suddenly from out the jungle, but a little way down the path, bursts Ludenbaum, running, and screaming: "God of Heaven, some wild beast is tracking me by scent!" And the Spanish troops spring up and seize him as the Tagal comes on the path like a hound.

"That settles it, you're a dead man, aider of Rebels! That's your vote, is it not, Sergeant, Corporal?" commands Chaco, hoarsely.

"Of course, *Don Capitan!*"

"Take him to that tree!"

But here the German seeming now to understand the dire extremity in which he is, the scene becomes an awful one. His eyes are bursting from his head; he is crying: "You fool, you idiot, you dare not shoot me, der friendt of the Captain-General! Lunatic imbecile, it would be your death."

"I dare shoot anyone I condemn. Prisoner Ludenbaum, I'll give you five minutes if you wish to pray. But I have learned military discretion under Don Valeriano Weyler. His motto was: 'Do what you think best; and see that the government at Madrid never hears of it.' I am patriot enough to shoot you; and I have discretion enough never to let the Captain-General know I did it. No word goes from this district save by my permission. Say your prayers if you have any God, which Germans often have not. If you are a Catholic, here's my rosary and crucifix."

"*Verdammt*, you don't understand! *Mein Himmel*, I am one of der richest men in Manila. I am der friendt of the Captain-General. Ten thousand silver dollars; let me send a message to Judge Pico."

"I care not for the judge. I like to give the law a slap in the face."

"Twenty thousand thalers! I am very rich!"

"Don't tempt a poor man!"

"Fifty thousand!"

"It is not enough!" cries Maud, savagely. "For I'll give you, Captain Chaco, his whole estate when I am made his widow; my own, besides, if necessary!"

"But you will not be his widow?"

"I shall be by decree of court, and as such, take all his property, to which I add my own."

"And yourself?"

"*O Dios mio!*" shudders the girl, "myself?" Hope leaves her face; her eyes grow haggard.

"I mean you true as ever knight meant lady. You shall be my bride, *Cruz de Cristo!*"

But the German is faltering: "Take everything, let me escape."

"*Diablo*, you might go to your friend the Captain-General; besides I am a Spanish patriot."

Roberto turns his stern glance from the trembling prisoner; his eyes grow soft and tender as they rest upon the accusing goddess. Ah, never were scales of justice so heavily weighted down! A girl-widow, beautiful as the tropic scene in which she stands, a fortune colossal, not only the dying man's, but hers. By Heaven, it would take a hundred Kaisers to save a friend of rebels with such a lure against him from a bloodthirsty Spanish patriot soldier.

"Take him away, but as you love your lives, see he doesn't again escape. Let me hear the rattle of your rifles within three minutes! No, I'll go with you, it's safer thus!" commands Chaco, as his men handle their arms.

"Not before my eyes!" falters the girl.

"No, *mein Gott!* Plead to him, Maud! *Mein Himmel*, der captain loves you!" shrieks Laudenbaum.

"Five thousand stands of arms for Santallano and Del Pila. Remember your burnt-up priests!" cries the bride desperately.

"I avenge their sainted ashes!" answers Chaco crossing himself reverently, then orders hoarsely: "Let ten men form the firing party!"

"A hundred thousand devils, are you crazy! Dolt, you're killing yourself. Mercy for Ludenbaum the great man of Manila! Mercy for the friendt of the Captain-General! Mercy! You don't understand! Girl, I'll swear in court of justice, dis forgery has been done by me! I'll put you free before the world, I'll——"

"Take him away!"

Then, as they drag him from her into the obscurity of the forest, up into the night goes a hideous shrieking German cry: "*Herr Gott! Mein Himmel! Donnerwet-*



ter!" And a tiger-cat up the cañon answers it, thinking it is the howl of his mate, cubbing in her cave.

The Tagal and the Chinaman, not daring to press Chaco's mercy farther, have disappeared. Maud's heart is beating as if it would force its way from her bosom. She stands shuddering but deathly calm—to be made a widow.

From out the gloom of the forest night comes faintly to her the hoarse-voiced Spanish command: "*Apunten!*"

"*Mörder!*" This is a German howl.

"*Fuego!*"

On the breeze floats the rattle of Mausers and an unearthly shriek!

The girl claps her hand to her heart, gives a kind of gasp: "Philip!"

Two minutes afterwards, Chaco standing before her, doffs his sombrero and says: "Dear lady, I have the honor to announce you divorced by court-martial! How long will you wear mourning?"

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

"DEAR ONE, YOU LOOK NOT ON MY DYING FACE!"

BUT Maud answers this only by a plaintive cry and shudders: "Not now! Within this hour, I have had a lifetime's suffering. Take me in the house, but don't let them know that Ludenbaum is dead."

"But he is!" says Chaco grimly. "They are burying him beneath the big fig tree;" then suddenly pauses and mutters: "*Dios*, curious how so many women shrink at thought of blood." For the girl has reeled and fallen fainting.

In his arms, as he bears her to the house, her lips are at his mercy, but are sacred to him; for this man has the old-fashioned Don Quixote way of regarding the lady of his heart. Perchance as he looks upon the wondrous loveliness of the fair face and feels the glorious contours of the exquisite form he carries, the temptation would be too great, did not some words murmured hysterically reach his ears, that make him shiver and cry out: "*Car-*

*amba!* who is this Filipino Marston? *Diablo*, have I another man to kill?"

But having aroused the sleepy household, most of whom have been awake but have not dared to venture out with Spanish troops in sight, and have lain tremblingly in their hammocks, Chaco gives his orders very sharply as they come towards him: "Arouse the sister of this lady; also that German woman! Tell them to revive the mistress of this house, Doña Ludenbaum."

"Her husband, Herr Adolph?" questions the Teuton governess in sleepy voice, as she comes upon the veranda.

"Oh, the Dutchman went first to the cock-fight, I believe, and from there journeys to San Isidro; thence to Manila. He had a letter, this mercantile man, and for a time leaves his bride for care of commerce."

"But the awful noises that I heard?" asks Mazie, getting her sister in her arms. "Those cries, those shots! and Maud fainting?"

"Oh, *por Dios*, we rounded up a Tagal conspirator and a Chinese rebel. Did you hear the poor devils crying as I gave orders for the firing party? *Diablo*, your sister doesn't love blood as well as I do. She fainted when she saw me shoot the men. Take good care of Doña Maud, Señorita Mazie. Tell her, her most obedient servant Roberto Chaco will call to-morrow to ask her commands and wishes."

So with one longing look at his love, whose blue eyes have opened dreamily under her sister's caresses and attentions, Chaco mutters: "*Buenas noches*, Señoritas," and makes a stiff military bow. A moment later he cries to little Zima, who has crept out of some tamarind bushes from which she had viewed the doings of the night, "*Aquí*, Negra! Here's a *peso* for your swift feet. Come hither!"

And the girl going to him as he sits in his saddle he leans down and whispers: "No word of this to any one on earth. If you open your mouth Chaco cuts off your tongue!" and rides away, followed by his men, save some half-dozen that he leaves under Corporal Sanchez to keep order on the premises.

The next day Chaco is back again, and striding up to the bamboo balcony, finds the widow of his hands looking lovely, as all widows should—despite herself! For now