

hours sooner than I expected, and I should be glad to accommodate our friend if he doesn't mind writing to Manila a brief account of the accident."

"Senor Capitanio, you are ungenerous! I will the letter write to-night. You shall have no fear of an examination at Manila. Santissima have not I the casualidad myself seen?"

"Muy bueno, padre; I will land you safely at Tanapag in the morning, and, gobernador, I hope to see Guajan again before the compania's regular boat resumes the service. I feel as though you people were old friends now, and when the Countess is withdrawn I may never happen to return; so I'd like to keep on running here until your term expires, anyhow."

"You do us la gran honra, capitano mio. We are made rich by your friendship; and it shall be that a word is spoken in the administracion de la compania. Villabos will cable Barcelona, perhaps—" and so on, with many assurances of regard and influence, until Halstead seemed in a fair way toward arranging matters as he chose. It was exceedingly well-handled, the whole affair.

Finally the whistle sounded, and we stepped into the boat alongside. Halstead said merely: "So long, old man, be good to yourself;" but there was a good deal in our parting handshake. Much was to happen before we saw each other again. The pilot was so cautious in getting clear of the port that we were driving to Agana before he rounded Calalan bank; but as we approached the town the good old Countess, her lights reflected in the water, caught up with us and blew three long whistles by way of good-by.

That night, in my quarters at the governor's house, I tried to arrange a plan of action, going over and over the various points until my brain was in a whirl. I had little doubt of being able to find the reef, but it was a matter of considerable importance that I should do so as near the wreck as possible. For this reason it seemed obvious that an examination of the document in Fray Ignacio's coffin was necessary. The church was in charge of Padre Bartolomeo and three brother priests; good-natured, easy-going churchmen they were, who could sing, drink rum, or wager their pesos upon a cock fight with the next man; and, as some one had mentioned a mass which was to be held at sunrise, I determined to hear it. Anxious to be on time, I rose half an hour too early, but was amply repaid by the freshness and quiet beauty of the little town.

Looking north, a spur of hills cut off the view of the bay; and at their base flowed a little creek which bounded the town on the east and north sides, crossed by two stone bridges, near the lower of which stood Fort San Rafael. Beyond the fort and along shore to Port Apra, the view was open to the sea. On account of the shoal water for half a mile out, there was no surf, only ripples which showed the direction of the breeze. Between the church and the infantry quarters there was a small open square; and west of the barracks, between them and the artillery magazine, was a broad plaza which separated the bamboo native huts from the more pretentious buildings of coquina, or coral limestone, inhabited by the Spanish element. Outside of the town, the valley and hills were covered with tropical vegetation indescribably beautiful in its wealth of color and delicate tracery against the sky line. The streets, laid out in regular pattern, were wide and clean. At the right of the governor's house, looking east, stood the church, a small chapel, and the college of San Juan de Latran; at the left, between it and the plaza, were San Ramon quarters, the administrator's office, the pharmacy and the tribunal; on the southerly side of the plaza, the military hospital and prison. A few miles back of the town and its foothills rose the peak of Mount Tiniquio; and at the southwest the peninsula of Orote poked its nose into the ocean. I looked at Orote, its rocks and palm trees glowing red in the early sunrise, for several moments. It was to be the base and starting point of all my calculations.

A few of the natives were lazily sauntering into the church as I stepped across the square, and mass was just beginning. There was a girlish form kneeling by the pillar nearest me, and I recognized Senorita Dorotea, who greeted me demurely as she rose from her devotions, expressing surprise and pleasure that I should have awakened early to attend mass. My appearance that morning was a fortunate one in several ways. Padre Bartolomeo was complimented, for one thing, and exhibited his satisfaction at my supposed Catholic tendencies by showing me what there was to be seen about the place as soon as the service was over.

After inspecting the college buildings and cloisters, we went through a narrow door into a room back of the chancel, where there were a number of votive images in wax, representing either miraculous escapes from violent death, recoveries from mortal illnesses, or the cures of foul diseases. Although it was as thoroughly unpleasant a collection as one could look upon, some horrid fascination induced me to examine many of the figures. One, for instance, was dressed in cotton breeches and shirt, over which gouts of blood from a fearful knife cut in the side were flowing, the supposition being that it represented the donor at a moment when the blessed Santa Catalina interfered in his behalf and enabled him to recover from a wound that would have killed an exaggeration of the injury being presumably the essence of compliment to the blessed saint. Another recumbent figure had a gangrened sore over its wither bone that would have made death from blood-poisoning a certainty in a civilized country; yet the blessed San Ambrosio had attended to this little matter for the victim and had got him a larangay to collect from in the bar-

gain; though, as it usually took the form of a remitted consideration in which Bartolomeo was the medium, no embarrassing recognition of the latter service appeared. Hanging upon the walls were arms with festering sores upon them, legs with slashes which laid them open to the bone, torsos rotting with leprosy, etc., each with its appropriate saint ticketed thereon. It didn't occur to me at the time that I should have occasion to remember these things; so when Padre Bartolomeo lifted an iron trap in the floor, and descended a short flight of steps, I was more than willing to follow him without further examination.

The steps led to a series of vaults which seemed to be directly under the chancel, some of them being stored with various church appurtenances and others having the appearance of secret tribunals. I afterward learned that in former days a faint reflection of the inquisition had given the island a nameless horror to sundry travelers between Acapulco and the Philippines—governadors who had grown too suddenly rich, and the like. The vaults were connected by narrow and foul passages, after going through several of which we came to a chamber that apparently served as the church catacomb. There were a number of niches around the walls, and in each was the mummified figure of a padre in a semi-reclining position, similar to those in the Capuchin cemetery at Rome; the cowls and gray robes indicated their connection with the Franciscan order, so I was not surprised at this; though, from Halstead's story, I had expected to find the bodies inclosed in sarcophagi.

While we were looking about the place, Padre Bartolomeo gave me a general introduction to the figures in the niches, as brothers who had held his position in former years. It was an easy matter to appear interested—I was really afraid of seeming too much so—and I asked the name of a venerable mummy with an iron-bound chest, rusted and blistered with age, resting upon his attenuated stomach.

"That is the blessed Fray Ignacio, senor," he said, "the most worthy of all the brothers who have lived in the islands. Because of his great goodness and his labors among the natives, it was ordered by the lord bishop at Manila that he should forever be the guardian of our sacerdotal records. We do not make history very rapidly here; so that box which he holds is sufficient to contain them all. Possibly, a hundred years from now, we shall construct for him a larger chest upon which he may recline."

"But have you no fear that your documents may some day be stolen, under the impression that the chest contains valuables? These islands were named, as you know, with some reason."

"Very true, senor; but he would be a rash man who would brave the vengeance of Holy Mother church by such a sacrilege. There are none in the archipelago who would attempt such a thing; besides, the records would be of no value to an heretic; they are but our secret history."

"And that, I presume, your orders would forbid your showing to even so profound a student and churchman as the Padre Sebastiano, unless you were so directed by the bishop?"

"Well, one would scarcely say so much as that. To a layman, or an heretic, no—under no circumstances. But el Padre Sebastiano—that, you see, is different. It is la gran honra that he does visit us."

"I see, I see. I had forgotten for the moment how near he stood to the bishop." This was a chance shot, but I could see by the padre's deferential manner that it had gone home.

We presently retraced our steps to the upper world, and when we saun-



She must have been embarrassed.

tered out into the sunlight I had plenty of food for thought. A document, for instance, which would be utterly beyond my reach for consultation, seemed to be at Sebastiano's disposal whenever he chose to call for it. That there had been no time for him to do so while the steamer was in port, I felt sure; but that he might return from Saipan at any moment was something more than a possibility.

The sight of that box lying across the dead fray's lap would keep running through my mind, and I thought of innumerable excuses which might induce Padre Bartolomeo to give me a peep at its contents, especially if a sufficient quantity of good wine were under his skin. But one and all seemed too risky to attempt. The finding and recovering of the treasure were but minor difficulties; the secreting of and the getting away with it, afterward, constituted the most serious details of the undertaking. Sauntering along toward the plaza, I became more and more convinced that I must search that box without either the knowledge or the permission of my fat ecclesiastical friend; and the dangers involved in such an attempt so filled my mind that I scarcely heard the senorita calling me from the portico. She must have been embarrassed by the effort to make me hear, for her face was scarlet when I approached the house. "Is it because el padre would not ab-

solve the senor," she said, "that he has no appetite, and would walk away when the breakfast does wait? Ah, but he must be the sinful man! Perhaps he did not present el padre with a contribution for the good of the church? It is the custom."

"Well, I'm afraid I did overlook that, senorita. But I'll make it all right with him later. Joking aside, though, the padre treated me very nicely—showed me all over the place. He seems to be a very learned man. No; I was thinking of other matters when you called. Please forgive me."

"Possibly it is that the senor feels sad because la Senorita Palacios has gone away in el vapor? She is muy hermosa."

"Yes, but not more so than Senorita Dorotea. I often compared them from the photograph which you gave el capitano."

"Ah, but how can I believe the senor? Come, let us see if you have el apetito; and afterward you shall spend the day with me as you like. Come."

I often look back to those breakfasts at Agana as among the most delightful hours of my life. Kipling has echoed the heartfelt longing of many a man to get for awhile outside the bounds of civilization—to exist where society is still in a rudimentary state, "where the best is like the worst; where there ain't no ten commandments, and a man can raise a thirst."

If you've 'eard the east a-calling, you won't never 'eard nothin' else. No! you won't 'eard nothin' else but them spicy garlic smells, An' the sunshine, an' the palm trees, an' the tinkly temple bells.

Until the wet monsoon set in the table was usually placed under a clump of banana trees in the patio, opposite a grilled gateway through which there was a glimpse of the sea. Sometimes we were joined by the two sublieutenants and their ladies, sometimes by Padre Bartolomeo and his brother priests. Often the colonel, Senorita Dorotea and I dined by ourselves, idling deliciously over the coffee and cigarillos as we talked. It was a lazy little town. The natives worked as seldom as possible, and spent most of their time day-dreaming in the shade, fishing from the proas, swimming like so many fish and occasionally going off on catamaran visits to such islands as could be seen while the peak of Tiniquio was still above the horizon. They seldom took the chance of navigating beyond sight of land.

The senorita seemed to consider me her personal charge, and the gobernador placed the entire menage at my disposal with a courtesy as charming as it was rare. If I chose to stroll by myself I might have owned the island, so entirely was I left to my own free will. If I wished for company I had but to clap my hands and the colonel's orderly, Pepe, would appear somewhere in the near distance, with the information that I would find the colonel or the senorita in such a place. It seems, as I look back upon it, that I must have idled away a great deal of precious time; but this was really not the case. When they asked me what I would like to do, that first Monday morning, I mentioned being very fond of sailing, and in a few moments we were in one of the proas, with a native who sailed the thing like an arrow across the smooth water and along the coast to Orote.

It was rather a primitive affair, as far as construction went, but strong enough to stand pretty heavy weather. The hull had been hollowed out of a tree trunk and was pointed at each end. On the lee side it was rounded like any other boat, but to windward it was perpendicularly flat. Lashed across the gunwales about four feet from each end were two straight limbs of a tree that looked like teak, eight feet long; and these at the outer extremity were lashed to a rounded and sharpened boom of the same wood. The sail, of cocoa matting, was a triangular one, which seemed out of all proportion to the narrow hull beneath it. There was a stout bamboo mast in the middle, and from this hung a smaller and a longer pole which formed the upper side of the sail's triangle, meeting the lower one in a point at the bow, where they were secured like a jib. The immense spread of sail pulled us through the water at such a rate that I feared we might upset, but the colonel laughed at me.

"'Eet ees impossible to upset him, Senor Stefans," he said. "I haf seen the wind lift him clear out of the water, even the outrigger also, but he does come down every time upon his feet. The hull so light is that the outrigger booms cannot tear of themselves loose."

"But isn't it very difficult to sail in anything like a straight line? I should think she'd make an awful lot of leeway."

"Not so, senor; eet ees not so. Turn you yourself around and watch the top of Santa Rosa mountain. You will see a piece of yellow rock on Punta de los Amantes, just below. Pedro will sail him ten miles into the sea, yet the peak and that rock shall be exactly in line all of the time. Do you but watch him verra close."

For half an hour I did watch, and I am bound to say the two points didn't budge an inch to the right or left of the vertical line. This settled the leeway question in my mind, and I took such a liking to the craft that I determined to own one. I asked the colonel what they were worth.

"What, one like this? But a few pesos, senor. But I never have heard of one being sold. Each man builds his own."

"Hmpf. Did you ever build one, colonel?"

"I—el gobernador! Por Dios, you do but laugh at me! Pedro, how many of the proas have I at Agana?"

"All are the gobernador's, excelencia."

"And how many has el Senor Stefans while he remains at Agana?"

"All of the gobernador's, excelencia."

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