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A CHILD OF SORROW

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A CHILD OF SORROW

BY

ZOILO M. GALANG

Author of

*"Life and Success" and
"Tales of the Philippines"*

Manila Edition



MANILA, P. I.

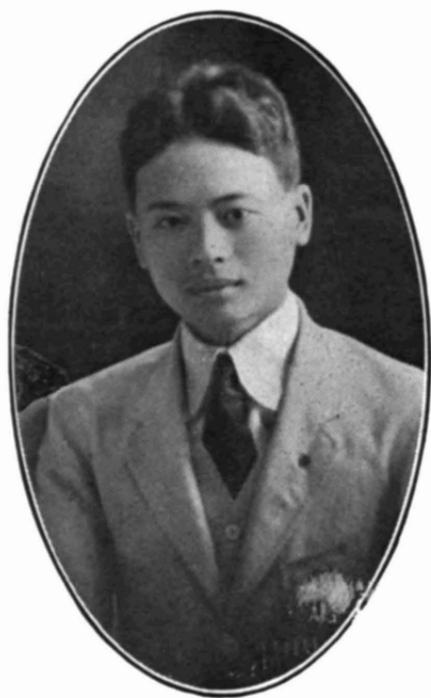
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PREFACE

I wish to depict conditions as they exist and reflect them in my writings. In fact, "*A Child of Sorrow*" is a fragmentary page of real life, with a distinct morale and personality. I believe that personality transcends technique. There is no doubt but that we are all after truth and sincerity, and not dream and fantasy. I have woven a native story of a local color, imbued with modern and foreign elements,—as I want the best that is *local* and the best that is *foreign* harmoniously blended together to form what is known as our National Literature. However, I implore silence as to the real names of some of the personae of the novel, for they are still living, and probably you have once or twice met or talked with them. Silence, you know, is golden.

THE AUTHOR.

Manila,
December 16, 1921.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	III
CHAPTER I	
VACATION DAYS	1
CHAPTER II	
"TILL DEATH DOETH US PART"	23
CHAPTER III	
THE TRANSFORMATION OF YOUTH	43
CHAPTER IV	
CUP OF SORROW	73
CHAPTER V	
THE CITY OF OPPORTUNITIES	101
CHAPTER VI	
AT THE CARNIVAL	141
CHAPTER VII	
BLASTED DREAMS OF HAPPINESS	165

A CHILD OF SORROW

CHAPTER I

VACATION DAYS

Those who already awaited the coming of vacation days with keen anticipation could undoubtedly better understand and imagine what delights Lucio had in entertaining the thought of spending his vacation with his friend out in the province, just as soon as he had received his sheepskin diploma from the Provincial High School, and laid up his dust-covered books on the shelves in order to resume the happy role of youthful life.

In one of the rural and sequestered plains of Central Luzon, called the Fertile Valley, where the rice-fields yielded the cup of joy to the industrious farmers, and where the harvest filled aplenty the barns of the poor, there lived simple, homely people, free from the rush and stir of city life.

It was during one Friday morning in the month of April when the *sampaguita* began to open its buds to receive the soothing dew of the starry evening hour, which diffused fragrance and sweetness all around; it was when the *dama-de-noche*, that charming and most fragrant native flower, profusely embalmed the atmosphere at the magic touch of the night which gave it perfume and life,—it was in such springtime, merry and

blithesome, when we found Lucio at home and his friend, Camilo, who, before the closing of school days, invited him to take his vacation at their town and then to their Hacienda.

Lucio and Camilo were school chums, members of a recently graduated High School class.

“Lay those worm-eaten tomes of romance and history, and come with me, and we will gleefully spend our vacation time in the bosom of the fields, and there could you realize real life and be in close touch with human nature,” nonchalantly said Camilo, smiling and looking him straight into his eyes as if wishing to convince him.

But meekly replied Lucio after meeting his eyes, and then returning his gaze upon his book again which he was reading:

“Why, confound it, man,—I’d rather remain here in this cell and read and drink of the wisdom of many great minds than linger in the fields uselessly.”

“Don’t you know that a sleeping dog catches no bone?”

“I do,” replied Lucio.

“Then, come!” Camilo took hold of the book and saw the title—“Sorrows and Happiness.” Then he remarked, after giving the book back: “Mine! So you got that old idea—where there is sorrow there is joy. Well—you may be right, your author may be right, but joy is not always for man—the world is cold—nectar is not always in women’s lips—it is everywhere—for

it is the discerning eye which sees beauty everywhere.”

“You speak just eloquently,” said Lucio, and then put a thumb mark on the page he was reading and closed the book and laid it up carefully in his bookrack, and leaned on his chair and posed as if all attention to the nice chats of his true friend. “Well, what would you wish me to do—you bore?” said he smiling, in that peculiarly amiable and attractive manner of his.

“What I am driving at, dear fellow, is that—let us take our vacation in our town. Know that our town is not big, it is not grand—it is not beautiful, I wish to say,—but it is full of life. Even though it is void of gaiety, but to a man of your temperament, who is not after selfish things, such as youth is wont to enjoy, it is just full of sporting pleasure that will enchant you. Girls there are not in plenty, but you may find one to your liking. Beauty of nature is abundant and prosperity is flourishing in the veins of the fields and in the meadows green, and how the afternoon landscape will charm you—grand with all its splendor—just as the poets say; and make you forget your romances and come to real business. It is just the place where you can bring your book, lie down on the soft carpet-like grass and contemplate silently and thoughtfully on the bounties of God to man. There shall you find a truly human paradise, where there is peace, solitude and poetry in every nook of our farm, for the terraces are colored with the verdure of vegetation and the sweetness of the wild flowers. . . . And—oh, mine, I cannot

find words and really picture all to you as you oftentimes picture to me the beauties you see in life and in fiction! . . .” And he waved his hands high up in the air as if lost in the ecstasy and flight of his imagery.

“Well, that sounds something . . . I’ll tell father and tomorrow we shall know.”

“Good! I bet you’ll love it more when you behold it. Remember it, Lucio, and please keep in mind that there are many good things in store for you there, and it will widen your mental sphere on human nature—the more useful to you because you are inclined to literary pursuits, while I am more after material things than ideal ones.”

With a sweep of his hands, he departed, saying:

“Good day.”

Lucio was left alone.

He sighed and then gazed through the window of his room by the left side and listlessly stood looking there for about five minutes without moving—his mind wandering and his heart beating high with the strange hopes of seeing the real picture portrayed by his friend there in their hacienda, full of singing birds and fragrant flowers of the valley.

What things are more attractive and pleasing to youth than colored life, easy and beautiful life—full of rosy dreams and sweet imaginings!

Truly youth is the time when the mind loves to dwell in painting air castles in a maze of wonders,—picturing himself surrounded by greatness and honor—

and thinking of a nymph or a muse to grace the whole existence of his life and thus make him happy and glorious, from thence and forever.

Lucio was one of those who painted brilliant lives on the nice canvas of memory, and one of those who wanted to make true at the same time what he sketched on canvas as well as in words. At heart he was romantic, but in soul he was ambitious. For he thought of life, even when as a child, seriously, for ever since he knew the value of time, he kept on pegging day in and day out in reading whatever book came into his hands, and thus at this time of writing he had been able to gather a lot of invaluable knowledge—science, art, and literature.

Sometimes he was only fond of philosophizing and his mind was full of lovely things, yet he did not wonder why he did not see those in real life even though he so often saw them in print. Yes, for he very well knew that sometimes there appeared the irony of fate.

That same night he went over to see his father working in their small farm. He told him that he was only desirous of accompanying his friend for an indefinite length of time in spending and enjoying his vacation days in a certain town nearby, about two hours of carromata riding.

The father, who was kind and obliging, consented and added that he hoped he would make the most of it, for he was looking up to him for everything sometime in later life as he was then fast growing old.

That night Lucio silently reviewed the scenes and labors of his past childhood, for now he was budding forth into the state of manhood. He also recalled to mind the words of his father, which fell into his soul like manna from heaven.

The next morning just shortly after breakfast time, and this time in the provinces is usually at half past seven in the morning, Lucio went away to see his friend Camilo. He found him still sleeping in his uncle's house.

When Lucio showed up, Camilo awoke; but before taking his fill, he greeted his friend and said:

"Good morning, Lucio." He took hold of both his hands, and looked him up scrutinizingly. He swung their hands together up and down and further added:

"What now! Are you going with me to our town?"

"Oh, yes. I will. My father told me so. He gave me his consent. So I am but glad to go with you."

"That is the good boy! For you will not, I am sure, repent in going with me to town. Fine, then, be seated, my dear old boy," said Camilo joyfully. "Now let us prepare ourselves for the trip today or tomorrow as you like."

"Yes. But I would better go home and prepare my trunk. . . . Say, how long should we stay there, by the way?"

"Well, as long as you like—say a month or so—it is up to you."

Camilo knitted his brow and then continued:

“I’ll leave up things to your discretion. For that depends upon what you see there—your impressions and personal likings. I reserve that matter for your own judgment. Come! Let us rush and be ready. Early birds catch worms! Isn’t?...”

“Certainly! So I’ll just hold myself ready.”

After talking about their preparations and what so many promises the journey held for them, Lucio departed and went home, happy and expectant. But while on the way, he discussed the whole situation in his mind. A smile curled on his lips, which foretold that he was satisfied, and his heart leaped with happy expectations.

As soon as he reached home and finished cooking dinner—boiled rice and roasted fish and fried meat—he paced up and down the kitchen singing in his mellow voice that famous, romantic song of bonnie “Annie Laurie:”

I

Maxwelton’s braes are bonnie,
Where early fa’s the dew,
And ’twas there that Annie Laurie
Gave me her promise true,
Gave me her promise true,
Which ne’er forgot will be—

And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
I’d lay me down and dee.

II

Her brow is like the snawdrift,
Her throat is like the swan;
Her face it is the fairest
That e'er the sun shone on,
That e'er the sun shone on,
And dark blue is her e'e,

And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
I'd lay me down and dee.

III

Like dew on th' gowan lying
Is th' fa' o' her fairy feet,
And like winds in summer sighing,
Her voice is low and sweet,
Her voice is low and sweet,
And she's a' the world to me—

And for bonnie Annie Laurie,
I'd lay me down and dee.

Had a full-blooded Scotch ever heard him sing the passionate ballad, he might have envied him in his sentimental voice of love and longing and cheered him up and made him love just as loyal and just as faithful and sincere as ever man loved woman.

He was full of emotions. There he was. Slender and well-built physically, with auburn hair, gay and graceful demeanor, and dark brown eyes. He was wearing native-spun clothes, and homemade slippers. His eyes were fascinating, and his face was oval and manly handsome, among his people,—his skin was white-brownish in complexion.

His look was thoughtful, and his actions, slow and becoming, and his bearing, noble. He was a man who loved solitude, for he often told his friends that man was not at home unless he was in solitude with himself.

His mood was calm, silent and poetic. Oftentimes he went rambling or musing in the meadows alone, sometimes singing, or else declaiming some common passages of Shakespeare, Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," Rizal's "My Last Thought," or Mabini's "Decalogue," singing "Dulce son las Horas," or "Old Folks at Home," or humming in low tunes "Philippines, My Philippines," "Rigoletto," or some other native and foreign airs.

He had some local bits and foreign touches of literature and music in his heart. These he confessed made him happy, and inspired him to be a man, one who lived to work and to serve, that others, not he alone, might be happy, and thus make the world better than he found it.

The next day both friends hand in hand set out to the home town of Camilo's family. On the way, just like ordinary schoolboys for they were yet as they were fresh from school, they were curious merry-makers, all the way through, until they reached their destination in about two or three hours' rigging.

The highway was rugged and ran zigzag, as some of the provincial roads were not always up to standard as they should—especially when some of the biggest floods and storms had just wrought their heavy ruin

and havoc upon all crops and farm life and on the streets, inundating everything and carrying away the nipa houses—literally levelling things to the ground.

“What a rotten road!” observed Lucio.

“Yes, they are the worst I ever passed,” answered Camilo.

“Why so?”

“They represent the broken and unfulfilled promises of the Governor of the Province of the Plains, who like a Jew pockets every centavo he gets from the people and the Government. There’s politics in it, you know.”

“But what has politics got to do with roads and the shelter of these destitute people?”

“Yes, what has it got to do? But it has taken root already in this section of the country. So you see that a foolish leader leads his people to destruction and retrogression instead of to civilization.”

But the country scenes they saw—the local bits of color—were just as fine as could be. There were the brooklets by the roadside, and some paths crossing here and there, like small streams meandering their ways into the bosom of the sea. These grassy paths led their ways into the hearts of the meadows green, thickly grown with wild fragrant flowers and made joyful by the merry tunes of the hopping birdies.

At twilight the whole town changed its aspect.—all the varied expanse of rich fields of corn and rice was bathed with the last bright glow of the tropical

sun, and it gradually grew dark and the shadows flitted till lost in the gloom.

It was evening when they alighted and reached the home of Camilo with his family. The house of Camilo was one of those hospitable Filipino homes. Their hearts flowed kindly towards Lucio. They were good-natured and loving people, frank in their manners and simple in their ways of living. They were farmers and landholders, their family being one of the well-to-do in Merry Town. That accounted for the reason why so many of their tenants gathered around them, as is customary among provincials when a stranger arrives, especially so as Camilo was one of the pet boys in that village.

Lucio was given every kind attention and brotherly treatment possible, for Camilo looked upon his visiting friend as a brother and an equal, nothing more and nothing less. They were still mere schoolboy friends of the same class in school.

The people gathered around to welcome them. The young ones spread the news around town that a certain good-looking chap came down with their master's son to spend his vacation there and study farming life and local conditions. Many other favorable sayings spread along about his manners and his ways of treating others. This gossip covered the whole village of Merry Town.

In that town there lived also a Governor, who failed thrice in election contests but succeeded at the

fourth through fraud, they, the people of Merry Town, said. People had got it into their heads that he was corrupt—practising graft in the government property. Rumor also had it that he was not fair—he was a petty official—who recklessly used and expended the people's money and who did not render the services as everybody expected him to perform. He was one of those guy officials who thought that office-holding was only a matter of money-making proposition instead of manly shouldering the responsibilities of the dignified office to which he was elected and conscientiously running the ship of state of the province, of which he was, by law, father and governor. So he led, they said, and that is what they said, a truly easy governor's life in an easy way, ay, in the truest sense and meaning of the word—fine, luxurious and care-free and extravagant—his favorites and *compadres* bringing him gifts and presents every now and then. The story also circulated that before assuming the governorship he was soaked in debts but now he became a money-lender and a wealthy merchant and landowner besides. But the people around in the neighboring districts just complained, complained of his many unfulfilled promises to do this and that. But that was a thing of the past. That was no longer the question at issue. He was already elected. He was, at the time of opening the story, governor—what more? He got and obtained what he wanted through means fair or foul. Yes, what matters—when he was already governor? For how

nice, how dignified and how sweet does the name Governor sound, indeed!

The name of this famous Governor was *Don Pancho* Ismael. Yes, that *don* meant everything—the title suggested its meaning—an easy life. More, he was a dangerous man to dally with, Mery Town heard him often blow his own horn, especially since he had been inaugurated as a *de facto* governor of the Province of the Plains.

There was another current story told that he once had during his troublous gallant days a paramour—hidden somewhere, nobody knows.

In the same province there were peaceful, law-abiding citizens, among whom was Juan de la Cruz, a benevolent-looking, hard-working, and liberty-loving man, common among the many types of Filipino younger element. He was a restless citizen, roving and discontented; and, therefore, well known to every one. Furthermore, he was one who could keep no secrets. He was without a permanent residence—no *cedula*—and, consequently, he had been a townmate of everybody.

In not a far distant *barrio*, there also dwelt a family of the middle class: a middle-aged woman called Felipa—on whose careworn face Time had obliterated the beauty once her own, the pride of her younger days. She had a child bred in the government public schools. She called her Rosa Garcia,—a blooming flower was she. She was fair-built, of white Malayan

complexion, with curly hair and graceful steps. She was kind-hearted and modest in character. Her manners were simple and artless. Her beautiful body harbored a pure heart and an honest soul. Everybody loved her for her sweet disposition. She was simplicity personified in womanhood. Her bonnie face was like one of the lovely virgin creations of Raphael.

Among the wealthy caciques was the family of a young man named Oscar Ramirez. He was a fellow educated in the Spanish schools in the city of Manila, from childhood up to youth, and he was said to have finished his secondary training, but did not continue despite the fact that his family persistently urged him on to get a title. For it was the pride of the people in many provinces, in general, to have a title, reasoning that it was a sign—a degree which bespoke highly of one's attainment in the educational field. Whence one was looked upon with awe and admiration, and what was more averred to by many, was that one was looked upon by the fair sex with favor. That was the pride of some people of importance hidden somewhere in these fair isles of the Eastern Sea.

But Oscar was not so exactly of that type, and not so bad as that, inasmuch as he tried to, but completely failed; so he looked squarely upon everybody. He loved everybody who loved him; he was rather a conceited patriot in spirit, and whose feelings and desires were only manifested in words. He tried to spread and advocate the democratic principles of government

he smatteringly read in books about France and the United States, for which he was hardly and strictly chastised and admonished by his father, who was so conservative and so old-fashioned just like the hispano-friar type, that the boy stopped it all hopelessly. But this Oscar was radical—thinking that he wanted to engage in the business field rather than in educational or professional life, firmly believing that business men nowadays earn more money and are looked upon with more dignity than so many ne'er-do-well professionals. Oscar, in short, was of the aristocratic set.

And it came to pass that, in one or more than two occasions, Camilo took Lucio to the home of Rosa, his friend and neighbor. There they met Oscar. It was during the birthday of Rosa when she informally entertained her close friends with tea and rice cakes and puddings and other native dainties and sweets. She had just finished her schooling.

Lucio and Rosa met in the ordinary course of human events, and they were happy to be acquainted.

When Lucio departed, his mind felt uneasy, knowing not why. He suffered an unknown pang of heart and uneasiness of mind. Lucio became more and more inquisitive of things pertaining to Rosa after that. She, Camilo told him, had been a dilligent and bright class-mate of his in the intermediate school.

Camilo, the observer, took note of Lucio's change of thoughts from peaceful and studious occupation to

sentimental and literary outbursts. One day he took him aside and jokingly said:

“So, my dear old boy—you found your damsel, eh?”

“When there is nothing harmful about it!”

“Harmful? But, ay, from a tiny acorn grows up a giant oak.”

“Then,” replied Lucio, “watch the outcome.”

They laughed and forgot about it. But that night Lucio dreamed of another being and his heart throbbed the faster and with stranger emotions.

Camilo, the good friend, followed Lucio’s trend of thought, for he divined it all but kept silent.

Lucio’s interest in his studies was flagging and fading almost abruptly until he left it altogether. His manners became calm and pensive, and we found this passage entered in his diary:

“Met a young girl, scarcely a flower-born—called Rosa Garcia. She is as fair as the April morn—fresh as the morning dew—lovely as the June flower—not like her name’s flower. But her mild look into my eyes burned into love and kindled the ambers of passion; sweet and disturbing, but soothing, wild and penetrating, but exhilarating. I do not contain myself. Let me think—I am lost—lost—lost in love... Love! How sweet, how mysterious!...”

Awaking up from his day-dream, he clasped his hands and folded them on his breast; and closing up his eyes, murmured:

“I wish to see you again before I leave, angelic beauty. You are a vision, born of love and sweet fancy. I am yours—I will lay down my life like a cavalier of old and die for you, for you to win your love, Rosa, my adorable Rosa! While some people venture all for learning, others live to consummate a great work of art or literature,—Rosa, I—I will venture all to love you and live for you, Rosa...”

He mused around and thought long. His poetic spirit aroused him from his lethargy and forced him to reproduce his strange feelings in some form. That day he showed Camilo one of the loveliest lyrics he had ever written.

The next day while Lucio was lugubriously going on his way from the farm to Camilo’s house, he was suddenly tapped on the shoulders, followed by: “O! Lucio, you are here also in Mery Town?”

Turning back he met Juan de la Cruz.

“Oh yes! You surprised me, Juan, for I never thought of meeting any other acquaintance here.”

“Yes, we meet old friends when least we expect them. How long should you stay here?” he inquired looking him up from head to foot as if wanting to pierce into his inner feelings.

“Well, during vacation time at least. And you are on your way to where in heaven?”

“Ay—to Fertile Valley. Any message for your old father?”

“None just now, thank you—except that I will prolong my visit perhaps a little longer.”

“Hem! I was told you were introduced to a beautiful girl here?”

“Oh yes—I was. And do you know her?”

“Why not? I know her—for I know all people that attract attention, supposing this seeming man of importance—this Governor Ismael; well, I know him well up and down; and this other plutocrat of an Oscar. Just the same thing, I saw him when he was born and ate with his mother when he was baptized by Padre Tolentino—and a lot of others—and why not know this Rosa—when she is the promising beauty of this town? Do you suppose I am so ignorant of what is taking place in the Province of the Plains?”

“And now what have you to say?”

“Nothing except that—hem! I’d better be silent. For when the tongue is closed, there would be no flies entering in.”

“Well, are you sincere, Juan?”

“Certainly, my dear boy, I am sincere. I know what I am talking about.”

“And you say now that you know this town very well, that I believe, but what is that suspicious air of yours—since I was introduced by Camilo to Rosa—have you any objection at all?”

“Confess, young man, young man of pride! Confess! Were you not struck at heart deeply by her charms? Tell me and I’ll do what I can to help you. Tell me, for what you say now is all bunk.” He spoke in such a confiding tone, that the most skeptic would confide all, but the proud Lucio kept guard.

“Well?—Suppose it is so—what then? Is it a sin to love—a sin to be acquainted with a young girl—especially when there is nothing in it? I am a young man. In what you allude to, I am innocent. Do you mean I am not a fit acquaintance or friend of her’s?”

“Well, you are young and sometimes you need the advice and counsels of your elders. To say the least—Rosa is all love and all goodness, oh—my dear boy! Your warmth of feeling and rashness delude your reason.”

Then he tried to go away but he was detained by Lucio, who asked temerously: “Say, stay a while, Juan. We are on familiar terms, aren’t we? Then, as I told you my feelings you tell me your remarks. Is there any danger in this thing?”

“I may as well say that you are lost—lost in a broil of feelings, but as to some suspicious persons here, beware of ’em. That is all I can do at present. Of course, I’ll tell you the truth there is no harm in being acquainted and it is only a pleasure and an honor to be introduced. Anyway, go on and know yourself. Till we meet again.” Juan paused and then added: “Why, Lucio, Rosa is—”

“Stop there! Say no more. You go your own way.”

“A woman without a father,” continued Juan as he sauntered along, leaving Lucio to ponder on his last words.

Lucio was left in such a pensive way. He gathered up his courage and tried to realize what he had been after, and then went home. Ah! the music he loved to sing he seemed to forget, and the promise he made his father he seemed not to mind.

“What am I after all? This old bird Juan knows better than I do. But if there is any truth in what he says, let me know it later. . . . For the present, it is safe. He is only fond of making a humor on life. He is not serious. O, Juan is only such a talkative fellow. He loves gossip, that is all. Since there is no harm, as he says, I see nothing to fear and no obstacle to encounter, except my own conscience; and since my conscience and my heart are silent—I am on the right plane—and I’ll just go on and see—and then discover all. If a man dares not—how can he learn—if he does not see the world as it is with all its coldness and its pleasures—how could he ever learn? For we grow wise as we are taught by examples by mother experience in her most cruel moods, when she speaks in her universal language. Bah, what does Juan, I wonder, know about her?”

Juan de la Cruz, it must be understood, was smart and an expert on delicate matters affecting the heart.

And Lucio forgot it—for he thought only of her good-naturedness, her incomparable sweetness and simple natal beauty. Only that and nothing more—for he was in love.

CHAPTER II

“TILL DEATH DOTHS US PART”

It was during one summer morning, fraught with the intoxicating fragrance of the *ylang-ylang*, when Lucio went down musing alone in the fields, singing to himself, and trying to reproduce his impressions in hack poetry.

He tried to force a high note out of his heart-lyre, but it failed him as he drew the strings too tight.

He tried to inhale all the fragrance of the flowers, but he could not for his heart was already full of the florescence of another heart diffusing the darts of sparkling love.

He was gay. But in going on his morning rambles, the thought of some one haunted him and bade him follow the path to the house he had dropped in, where dwelt the woman without a father, as someone told him.

That he did not believe, for he only believed in the beauty and purity of the soul that that heart concealed. He believed and trusted in the goodness of man.

Truly, love is blind. For he was blinded already, when the flaming arrow of Cupid had pierced his heart so deep, now lying ableeding, day and night.

The world, which was once so cold and dreary to

him, now seemed to be fairer and more interesting and beautiful than ever. He saw beauty in every petal of flower and life and a lesson in every blade of grass.

Nature meant to him more than what he beheld in her common mountains, valleys, plains, flowers, bubbling brooks and singing birds. It meant something greater, yes, greater than all—the love of a woman.

That was what made him uneasy, knowing not where to go,—but his better self got hold of him.

He paused. He stopped humming, for, lo, in the distance he saw a shadow. Ah, what a lovely shadow!

Nay, was it really a shadow? The shadow of a woman? What a lovely vision!

No, it was Rosa herself coming and bringing an earthen pitcher in her hands going down to the brook to fill it with water.

She was lovely beyond compare like the morning, in her dress of fresh green and light rose, the folds of which made her look so serene, and virgin-like.

Ah, to him—in his dream only—she was all the world, just like the embodiment of the description of the woman in his favorite song—“Annie Laurie”—“the fairest that e’er the sun shone on.”

He was lost—how to approach her, he had no time, or the least idea to think about. He was lost in admiration.

The figure glided along and came nearer, unconsciously knowing that any one was looking at her. Unexpectedly she heard:

“How are you this morning?” What a mellow sweet tone!

She looked up surprised and bewildered.

On seeing Lucio, she blushed—thus her face became roseate in hue. Indeed of all women, she seemed to be the fairest!

He saw her beautiful hair as she drew nearer falling in ringlets caressingly on her white arms and breast. Their eyes met. She dropped her’s.

“Very well, thank you,” she replied, smiling and then silent.

Lucio begged her to give him the pitcher and fill it for her, and after much courtesying she at last yielded. And when he went further to his request of bringing it home for her, she bluntly evaded and refused in her womanly way. So he let her do it, but ere she was about to go, Lucio said or shouted, he did not remember which, something like—“Why are you in such a hurry?”

“Mother is waiting for me.”

There she tarried a little, looking him up when he did not look at her with the pitcher on her hip. While he, he dared not approach her, his courage of speech departing entirely from him. He was no poet to match this poetry herself.

Gaily the birds on their perch sang and luxuriantly the flowers wafted their delicately treasured fragrance and profusely did the wind blow it to the two young

and passionate souls in pain dumb in giving utterance to their feelings, seeking outlets to come to light.

Such was their attitude. They were silent, but their very silence was so eloquent that the pen trembles in attempting to describe such sublime silence.

There they stood, silent and speechless. No one seemed to break the reigning silence.

Unconsciously Lucio moved towards her, took the pitcher from her hands and said timidly:

“Ever since I saw you I have felt the longing to see you and be yours for life. Yes, how far, I cannot say—but this is what I can assure you that while I live I will love you. Ay, lovely soul, I love you!” He emphasized his last words, and encouraged by her look and shy smile, he continued more vehemently, burning with emotions deep and uncontrollable: “Rosa, believe me—I—I love you and let me die adoring you and you alone while I live. . . .”

She did not move, she did not answer. Her gaze was fixed on to the ground. How lovely she looked with her curls carelessly falling upon her face and clouding and shading her white brow like the lily! O she looked like the Madonna of Angelo!

She clasped her fingers, and she heard not the babbling words of Lucio, who eloquently spoke now, yes, it was love that made him so eloquent and impassioned in his speech, for every word of it he ardently and sincerely felt.

She only knew after all that his many words

meant that he loved her—loved her with all his heart and to the bottom of his soul—loved her all his life, and would go with her to the end of the world—for she would make him happy and he would love her forever.

“I do not know how to say how I love you, but this love bids me to offer you all my heart, my life, and my soul!” Then he continued, “Rosa, may I expect your answer if possible tomorrow? . . . Will you?”

No answer escaped her lips, again he pleaded, “Tomorrow, will you decide?”

She looked at him, she paused, and then lifted up her head in taking up her pitcher from Lucio’s hands, for she could not go home without that dear earthen pitcher, and, what is more, without water!

Then, shyly she guarded silence, and lowered her eyes again. O how lovely was the virgin of the meadows! However, her lips uttered not a single word.

He looked at her, and oh, those sweet eyes and blushing face, what a thousand feelings they said! And she agily went away—even spilling her water—with the last words of Lucio engraved in her heart—“I love you, Rosa.”

The words tingled and produced a fine sound—like the sound of bells in her ears and her heart responded wildly, but she was coy and unassuming, for she was one of those angels of her sex who are simple, pure, artless women. The thought burned in her mind—it always reminded her—and that meeting aroused

new feelings in her, which she could not fathom or understand at all, so much so when she could not sleep or rest without being reminded of that eventful meeting.

What is love? She did not know, but her throbbing heart and the pleasing sensation spontaneously thrilling up her whole frame, emanating from the heart, made her understand a little and gleam a fallen ray of that most mysterious of all human feelings.

She was filled with the thoughts and impressions Lucio made on her, and she rather felt happy, why, she could not tell. It was a mystery—an enigma—such a strange thing both to her and to her lover! It was an indefinable sensation that made them happy when together and unhappy when apart.

Ah, she rather repented why she did not answer and why she was so silent and why she did not tell Lucio at once all that she felt and all that she desired and all that she dreamed day and night in order to unload and ease up her aching young heart! Why? She did not know. The whole thing was a question without an answer.

Good heavens! She became restless.

Ah, how many people's lives have been filled with misery and unhappiness because of silence and indifference!

After Rosa left, Lucio was still at the spot and in the same position she left him—gazing at her direction until she faded away from his sight—there standing and philosophizing as if in a trance.

His feelings and sentiments flowed towards the being who had just left, who was in appearance angelic and in body virginal.

Then he uplifted his arms to heaven imploring:

“Ah, God, what did I do—did my love forsake me?... Pardon, if I know not what I do... They say that love is blind—blind?—but I am not blinded by it—I know what I do... But I only know that I love her—ay, love her with all my life. I can not be happy without her. Never!... If I can only make her happy, as she can make me, then I will do everything in my power to merit her love and affection with the approval of her heart and soul... Rosa, dawn of the morning, queen of the beauties of the fields, from whose heart the flowers derive their perfumed scent and from whose sublime soul the birds tune their sweet vernal notes that seem to give enchantment to Apollo’s lyre,—Oh Rosa, would that I could make you happy, would that you know and understand what affection, what burning passion, I have for you and for you alone! It is in you where I find consolation—even in thought only and in imagination alone. You are my love, the dearest of the dear, and the sweetest of the sweet, ah my love, my life, my all—the loveliest of the lovely.”

Poor youth, there he was, in the bosom of Nature, soliloquizing—mad with passion, and lost in meditation.

O what a sweet reverie he had!

He painted with rosy colors the future of his life

—now laughing alone, then silent and serene. Oh! pale and wan poet of the plains, let your songs now charm the dear love of your heart and thus make the world happy and beautiful with the strength of your solemn love.

Realizing afterwards what he had done, and laughing alone, he pursued his way towards the field where Camilo was working in their hut together with his peasants.

Camilo, on beholding his friend so taciturn and flushed with unusual feelings of exhilaration, remarked:

“What ho, now, Lucio, anything new?”

“Nothing—”

“Why nothing? When I see and read in your physiognomy that there is something missing or there is something doing!” He laid up his work aside and put it on the ground and faced Lucio and they sat on the bamboo bench covered with a buri mat.

“Now don’t conceal it, I know it. And if I am not mistaken, it seems that you have come across some fortune—or struck a mine—and most probably you have met again that young friend of mine—Rosa—the Rose of the Village.”

“What the devil’s keen mind you have!” Lucio exclaimed. “True. . . . Ay, Camilo, that is true—and you, dearest of friends, I saw her—yes, I saw her in her glory—but quiet!—breathe you not a word to any-

body." He looked around and whispered: "I met her somewhere in the meadows near their home at the stream nearby on my way here this morning."

"Have you been able to talk with her?"

"Well, not so—I only remembered she looked the more beautiful and the more enchanting—just like what Scott said in his 'Lady of the Lake'—

'Ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace
Of finer form or lovelier face!'"

Patting Lucio on the shoulders, Camilo said:

"Good, my boy! That's the idea, Kid!"

"I am no longer a kid, now, Old Pal, but rather a Bassanio bidding fair to Portia's hand."

"Good, I said—ay, what made you so poetical—eloquent and philosophical this time? Is it our surroundings or your love feelings?"

"I know not what, but of this I am positively sure. It is because I am near the loved being—breathing in the same atmosphere and suffering of the same thought as she does. What is more, I like the farmer's life—it is just contented and very peacefully fine."

"You sure would as I told you."

They spent the rest of the day happily in the fields by working and gathering rice stalks and addressing the peasants just as soon as the day's work was over on subjects common to them—bits of lectures on farming and modern agriculture now, and then on educational lines,

such as themes on Love of Country, Character and Industry, laying emphasis in that if they can not better their conditions now, they must let their children do it—as they are to be the men and women of a brilliantly promising future. And this was done while sitting together around a fire or resting under the shade of a tree or in front of the big cottage.

Hand in hand they went home, Camilo talking of his field work, and Lucio talking of his love. Each agreed with the other and so they reached home satisfied that each was all right where he was, in line with his own thoughts.

That night just before Lucio slept, he was reminded again of the coming day's adventure which he pictured, while his romantic mind roved on bed, how it should come out. In his imagination, he saw there in the folds of the dewy morn the angelic form of Rosa—bathed with the fragrant atmosphere of the bright April morning and standing on soft verdant grass, and surrounded by the beauties of nature and listening to the merry tunes of the birds and the murmuring sounds of the streams. He beheld her reigning supreme in his wild Elysian dreams.

He saw her walk in beauty and breathe with love. His flight of imagination was filled with the wealth of nature's lavish gifts on her. He thought in brief of her as the most beautiful, the fairest woman on earth, for in sooth she was the belle of that town, loving in soul and noble in manners. In the intoxication of his

love, he forgot Juan de la Cruz's remarks—that she was a woman without a father.

But what matters that? For when the heart loves, it loves for ever. He excused it with the idea that no human being is perfect, and that even the Grecian standard of beauty was not as lovely as she should to others who loved another, for did not the lovely Titania herself fall in love with the terrible ass?

Oh, how queer and blind is love! Love is indeed unfathomable—deep and mysterious,—deep as the depth of the fathomless sea and mysterious as the sphynx and sweet as woman herself with all her charms.

Lucio was lost in his lovely fancies. So he fell asleep with that hearty smile curved upon his lips, as Camilo saw it, and, which he told him during the breakfast time, when they were about to part, each to his field work.

Lucio smiled at the joke and rebuked his friend for calling him mad in love with Rosa, for he was too modest to acknowledge his weakness.

After Lucio had taken his breakfast, and Camilo parted and took his way to the farm, he stole away and directed his steps towards the place he was found yesterday morning. He strode with that yearning that makes the youth appear in his best wits, and in contentment that passeth all understanding.

It was a lovely April morning. Nature was clad in green and smiling all around and casting her charm-

ing glance over the fields and the whole surroundings, especially in the streamlet nearby.

The sky was limpid blue and very clear, and the air was cool.

The dew was yet fresh on the green grass, shining like pearls as the sun shone over it and the whole flashed like beads of precious stones—here ruby and there emerald or sapphire. O what a confusion of hues bright and blinding! Ay, what dazzling beauty and charm living there in the prismatic colors in all dew-drops upon those million blades of grass!

As he approached, he saw none. He sat there with folded arms, waiting and wistful. All was silent like the grave, except the audible murmur of the stream. Stillness was weird.

It was already eight o'clock and Rosa had not yet appeared.

And the hours wore on.

Indeed time passes so tediously to those who wait and expect nothing for Lucio became rather impatient until his heart beat low. It is the person who waits and not the one waited who becomes impatient, as the native saying goes.

But there was heard over there—a very soft sound flapping, and then a distinct form approaching—she the rose of his dreams coming—coming towards him, and what is more, to say “yes” or “no,” as the case may be, which would mean to him life or death. So his

heart throbbed the faster and he felt the tips of his body turn cold and then flushed, but his heart beat higher still and with fresher hopes.

“Good morning,” he saluted.

“O Good morning,” she replied in the sweetest way. She was again carrying her pitcher.

How sweet and gentle was her voice! Ah such a voice! The beam of her eyes lighted up with kindness and beauty, and her lips bloomed with a smile, while the sun seemed to make a golden halo around her black silken hair.

“How are you today?” in a sulky tone.

“Very well.”

“I hope I will not be bothering you.” He paused for words. “May I know what your decision was?” He talked slowly, in a low pleading accent.

“I—I have not come to any decision—I—I cannot answer you, but I came here solely because I do not want to keep you waiting for me, that is all.”

She was smiling, but her bosom heaved with deep emotions.

“Why not, dear loved soul? O why keep me in suspense, and in immense sorrows and afflictions! See—listen—look at my worn-out self... I cannot bear the sight of it... Your coldness is making me sick—driving me mad. O a word or anything from you will suffice, ay, something of your kindness enough and to spare!... But, remember, I do not want to force an answer from your lips, no, not at all. I want

one that sprang from your heart—a word that shall be mine forever . . . You are silent, you make me suffer—what a torment . . . Rosa, yes—may I be permitted to address you such, Rosa? And you call me simply Lucio.”

“Certainly, that is the way we people out here in Merry Town address each other.”

Her simple heart and ways won people toward her. In Fertile Valley, too, they were accustomed to address all others informally and democratically.

“In my inmost soul I bless you, and behold you as my all in this world. And surely you would not make me suffer, won't you?”

She answered not, but was silent and observing.

“What shall I do in order to win you, my lady? Tell me. I shall risk all for you in order to be blessed by your love. Like a poet, I will sing my sweetest verses even if I break the strings of my lyre. And out of my notes I'll create the beauty of a living virgin like you and the love of an intrepid youth like me.”

She picked up a lily of the valley and then tore off the petals one by one and scattered them on the ground where they stood. While he took another *sam-paguitta* at his side and did the same unconsciously. Oh, little children! Children-like they were yet learning their alphabet of love.

“In my love for you, Rosa, I suffer, I am tortured. I am sad. Give me your smile. Give me your love!”

You are silent! Shall I forever suffer? Is that my fate? . . .” He gasped for breath. “You won’t let me suffer—won’t you?”

“I won’t if I could help it.”

“Surely, your coming here, Rosa, was a sign of your pity on me, and of your kindness, too. And I am much indebted to you for not forgetting my word. And I would give you anything or do anything for you to repay this heavenly favor.”

“Don’t mention it, Lucio.”

Now they became more familiar with each other as their feelings beat the same hopes in common.

“Rosa, tell me frankly,” said Lucio after a momentary pause. “Will you be mine?” He took her hands into his. They trembled and her mute lips made an assent. “May I believe your coming here as a sign of consent?”

He clasped her hands which became cold; and glowing the while so lovely, each tenderly pressed the other’s hands—closely to each other, as if to swear before heaven and earth their love for ever and ever.

Something incomprehensible thrilled their feelings to elation.

Wild with joy and enthusiasm, Lucio asked:

“What would be the symbol of our love?”

Looking around, Rosa beheld the *sampaguita*, picked a blooming one, and handed it to Lucio without saying a single word. She looked up at him, but soon dropped her eyes and blushed like a truly April rose.

“Let this speak of our everlasting love,” Lucio pledged.

They were dumb and silent. For when the heart is full, the tongue becomes speechless.

They stood breathing in the atmosphere laden with the fragrant scent of the flowers and filled with the songs of the birds that gladdened their hearts and solemnized their love.

Full of emotion, Rosa softly spoke:

“Yes, yours till death doth us part.”

“And this sweet *sampaguita*, Rosa, will I keep in my bosom while I live!” said Lucio in the deepest affection. “Even though it shall fade, still its memory shall go down with me in my cold grave.”

They were gladdened by the passion of youth, and so thought only of the ideal world of youth at that moment, as if it was the lost paradise that was once of our ancestors Adam and Eve. Truly, Mother Nature was at her best that month of showers, and everything seemed to harmonize with their newly experienced joys, joys which seemed to them enduring and without an end—joys as long as life itself should last.

On his way home, joyfully he sang with all his inherent emotions in full:

“If I were a flower,
I'd be content to fade in thy lips;
If I were a lover,
I'd be content to—”

But, alas, the thought of parting and its consequent heart-rending effects stopped him short and the song was left unfinished!

Camilo and Juan were at home. Camilo was reading newspapers, while Juan was smoking.

"Some of our field laborers complain. They want shorter hours—say six, and more pay," said Camilo.

"Oh, they are turned Bolsheviks!"

"But what is that anyway?"

"They are incited by this Governor and this Oscar. They preach it. O the world has turned a Bolshevik! What it is precisely, I do not know. . . . It is a deadly germ that infects; so pluck this evil weed before it takes root in your farm. Pluck it off, and at once!"

"Tell me, then, your general conception of this new evil—against labor and capital, as you opine."

"Well, if you hear some one says that men are not born or created equal, I say that's Bolshevism; if you hear some one says that people are not brothers and sisters, I say that's Bolshevism; if you hear some one says that Filipinos are not fit for independence, I say that's Bolshevism."

"And so you will brand as nonsensical notions Bolshevism?" asked Camilo, much amused, but convinced.

"Yes! If they say that Lucio is not a fit lover of

Rosa, as these two here in Merry Town allege, I call that Bolshevism, too."

"Very good."

"Ay, if they call me not a Filipino citizen, I brand that preposterous remark as Bolshevism!"

Camilo admired him for his outspoken ideas.

"But these people offend society—they are a pest!"

"They are preaching against good morals. In brief, as I understand it. He is a Bolshevik who poses for a saint when he is a fake; in fact, he who preaches things against the golden rule—who works contrary to human expectations, doing things unworthy of a Christian. Nay, these who incite your workers concede not what they preach to their own laborers! That's blackguardness—that's the Bolshevik's idea. It's insanity!"

"You had better intercede in this Lucio's affair, so that the evil would not bear any fruit."

"Bet, I would. . . . You know, there was a time in my Junior school life when I loved a dark-eyed buxom girl—Oh Maring! my fickle one!—but never have I seen such a sentimental romance as this of our friends of Fertile Valley and Merry Town. By Jove! if it's only a reading matter, it's just fine, gripping and thrilling to the core!"

Then they discussed the social problems of the times. But suddenly they heard Lucio's steps coming

toward them. Juan rose up to greet his young friend, and throwing away his cigarette, said:

“Here comes our gallant friend.”

“Hello there!” spoke Lucio. He grasped his friends’ hands fondly and then stood smiling at them.

“What is the news, Lucio?” asked Camilo.

“News? Why, nothing that I know of.”

“I suppose Lucio’s pen is now busy?” remarked Juan.

“Not only his pen, but his heart as well,” said Camilo teasingly, as he embraced his friend, “I am a prophet.” And then to his surprise he heard the unusual throbbing of the young man’s heart, and his doubts were further dispelled by reading the face which became so bright and the eyes so satisfied. “I told you so.”

“Congratulations, young friend! Be happy while you may.” He winked at Camilo, for Juan was such a man of unusual, keen sense of perception, and then added, as he bade them goodby, “As I told you, he is the most romantic lad I ever saw in the Province of the Plains!”

CHAPTER III
THE TRANSFORMATION OF YOUTH

Swiftly but full of joy the end of vacation days drew to an end and Lucio with much regret and heart-pain bade adieu for a time to his beloved Rosa and to his friend Camilo, whose love to him heart and soul, enlivened and gladdened his stay at Merry Town and made it so delightful—delightful beyond the power of imagination.

So the day of separation had at last come to pass. And Lucio bade farewell—with a heart aching with unending pain almost to the breaking point.

Rosa was too much taken up and absorbed in her new feelings that she then told her lover, after having considered the pangs of separation:

“Where you are, there shall your Rosa be!”

To which Lucio manly retorted:

“Just wait, Rosa, and time shall find us the happiest beings in this world. I will first try to work hard in order to deserve your affection sweet and lasting and then we shall marry.”

To which she replied humbly, crying and her hands holding his:

“I’ll wait as you say.”

“And I’ll come to you.”

“Goodby, dearest.”

“Goodby.”

But they felt an instinct not to part, for that inner voice of nature bade them not to part yet so soon, and so each lingered awhile. And it was she, the rose of life, who called him back, and said:

“Are you coming back?”

“Coming back? And why not? And I’ll only fail to come back to you when I can walk no more. I’ll only fail to come back to you when the eyes are dim and even then when only beyond my control—but it is impossible, my dear, not to come back to you; and if suppose, I do, where shall I go? Therefore, if I came not back to you, I would be laid low in my grave...”

“And when will you come back to me, dear?”

“I will come back to you when I will leave you no more.”

“Shall it always be for me?”

“For whom else will I come back? When you are my love, my life, my world; Rosa, to me you are all, and without you I cannot live alone.”

“Your words are like the flapping wings of the gentle dove. I will wait. But work on, and then we shall live happier—for our lot is to live by the sweat of our brow. ... And, of course, I want you to be the best of men, and by that I mean you must be true, and I will be true to you always.”

“Rosa, I live only for you.”

“I know that, and that is why my heart beats—only for you.”

There was a momentary pause, and both turned sadly away, and they saw by shading their eyes with their hands the beautiful rainbow of the morning. And they heard the rustling wind whisper the melodious music of their heart.

And Lucio spoke, "Why, dear, why can't you be like that rainbow of this rare morning, happy and gay?"

"But when I think of parting, my feminine heart melts—yes, like that very rainbow—as soon as the light shall dissipate all its splendor, then it is seen no more—for it is only atmospheric."

And she began to weep—her tears moistened her view, and the delicate hues of the rainbow changed into a gloomy aspect, for she did not behold it any longer as her eyes were filled with tears.

And she tried to smile, but tears dropped again.

"Ah, when I think of it—it makes me sad. It seems I do not have the heart to bear it all. But no, I must do it, even though I can't help it. Is that what you want?"

"Yes, if you please."

"I will."

"Rosa, I'll return and then I shall be at your side, there I shall be always till our hair grows gray and the hand of destiny separates us altogether. For, then, I shall never leave you—"

"But if you shall leave me—how will the world
?"

“As usual. . . Left alone you will be brave for my sake, won’t you?”

“Left alone—I’ll go with you. . . if—”

“If you cannot, tell me and come to me. . . But don’t weep. Weep for me when I die. It is for the dead that we shed tears, and not for the living; and so weep not while I live, for then there would be no more loving tears left for me.”

“No, think not of that—for my tears come from a well of affection, from the heart—and while my heart beats, there shall always be enough tears for you, for you to shed and to spare. . . I was taught that we shed tears for those whom we love. Lucio, isn’t that true?”

“O my love! My Rosa! How you interpret the sentiment of love, the emotion of life, and the language of affection! . . .”

There they stood holding each other’s hands in the bosom of the plains and alone with Mother Nature. To them the world was only full of love, when in fact, only their hearts were full while everybody in Fertile Valley and Merry Town of the Province of the Plains was busily working under the burning sun. But the village was enveloped in purple hues and there was nothing so to speak of—but life—brimming with love and sunshine. And in their hearts that young life had no dimples of cares and that sunshine had no shades of sombreness, as it was one perpetual summer of bliss.

“Weep not for my absence, but rather for those who are in affliction; weep not for our love, for our love grows and deepens and shall live forever; O! weep not, my Rosa, for my departure, for it shall take away the courage of life—but rejoice like the birds fluttering happily yonder, beneath the deep blue sky, for we shall meet again and when we meet, then we shall never part—and nothing in this world shall part us . . .”

“Yes—nothing—nothing—nothing! . . .”

And she clung faster to his arms, and they were lost in the folds of love—love the triumphant, love, the blessed love!

“Don’t cry.”

“No—let my tears fall—so that they will wash away this gloom.”

“Let me dry them.”

And he took her handkerchief and lovingly dried her tears. When her sight grew clearer and she saw her love lingering at her side, she said:

“No—let the tears dry themselves. For when you are away who shall dry them for me? And when I shall think of this it will only sadden me. Don’t you think so?”

“But, dear, my thought of you—my love to you shall dry them all, and will not that be sufficient?”

“It may, but not like your own hands. The hands of fancy only enshroud me with loneliness.”

“There is a saying, Rosa, that when a lover is sad

and he or she uses the same handkerchief wet by each other's tears mingled together—then the bearer of the handkerchief shall feel no sorrow—he or she shall not want for happiness, for joy and love shall always abide by with the bearer of the handkerchief while the memory lasts.”

“But when the tears faded and only the salt remained would it not be the sadder still?”

“I think not.”

Then she rejoiced.

And he continued:

“You know, the old woman who told me this secret further said that she herself did it and became happy. For it is like the Egyptian amulet. It protects us from misfortunes.”

“So you bring it with you.”

“No. You had better keep it yourself for your love of me—because I could endure sorrow better than you, dear. Let not this separation make you unhappy. Smile, yes, smile, for me, only for me.”

Ah, poor heart! She could not smile, but she could only cry.

And they parted with tears—a sad and sorrowful parting it was.

Lucio returned to his native town much perturbed and lost in the mists of the enchanted world of love.

Benito Soliman observed that his son's usual manners and habits of reading and taking pleasure in every-

thing that he formerly did were gone and now how very different and entirely changed!

“What is the matter?” muttered the father in seeing his child shut up and silent in his room—not reading but with the palms pressed upon his brow—thinking, sometimes sighing, then writing, and so on.

Till at last when the solicitous father could not bear it any longer, he inquired paternally:

“My child, is there anything ailing you?”

Looking up at his father straight into the eyes, meekly he answered:

“Yes, father, I am suffering the pangs of love—love the glorious and love the dolorous.”

“Remember, I am your only and best friend, my boy.”

“I know it, father.”

Then Lucio frankly told all to his father; how he met Rosa, and how he became attached to her, heart and soul, and how their separation caused them both sorrows beyond word-description.

So then the kind father comforted his unhappy child. He spoke, fondling Lucio’s hair, as if he was again the petted boy:

“My son, this is just the ordinary pain of the passionate days of youth. Come out from that chrysalis and awake into the light of reality, and above all, I mean to say—*Be a man*, and *suffer it all bravely like a man*. That is all I can say. I felt it once and twice

—when your mother and I were young, and when she died. There was the end of it all. And I confess I suffered it even unto this day, and am still suffering it and bearing its burden and feeling it this instant, yes—but always like a man.”

Moved by his father’s soothing words, Lucio stood up and tried to contain himself in the way his father suggested. Then he said:

“Oh yes, father, I will do it; but let me suffer it all in silence and bear it all alone. Please, let not my behavior afflict you because it shall break my heart if I know that you are sharing with my sorrows.” He made efforts to force a smile on his face. However, the father detected his poor show of an unsuccessful effort, but kept on encouraging him and injecting pep into his mind.

“There is the boy!” Benito ejaculated. “Better take a ride—go to the fields. Forget awhile your sad thoughts. Delve into the happy realms of books—books the best of friends and lovers, the friends of the lonely, the comforters of the despairing and solitary; they console the sad, and bring life into gloom.”

With those words of sound counsel, he left Lucio and strode away to attend to his work in the farm, planting corn and tomatoes and divers fruits of the season.

Lucio tried to forget, but to do it, he could not; that seemed to him the most impossible!

He seized his pen soon after he feigned joys in the presence of his father. Then he wrote down:

“Dearest Rosa:

“Here I am in sorrows beyond compare. As I told you before, I am a poor child—motherless and without consolation. Oh, how I wished I could behold you once more and press you dearly to my heart and be drowned in your breast! Oh, my dearest Rosa, flower of my love! Here before me is your Sampaguita, now faded and withered like a mere dead piece of leaf but which I dearly treasure and press to my lips, for its recollections sweet awake and bring back to me memories fond and sacred to my heart—yes it does every minute. You who gave this to me I know you and can now recall to mind vividly your virgin-like image: I can see your lovely and queenly face blooming with smiles; I can see your brown silky curls, yes, my Rosa’s hair, falling upon your neck and shoulders caressingly; yes, my Rosa, I can see you plainly with hands outstretched to enfold me, enchanting and lovely,—bringing me nearer into the world of love—a world full of happiness in store for us two, and it seems to me, for us two only—ay, a world full of real life, real love, real happiness!... Forgive me, if ever my cry and sigh for you in silence, in the name of our love, awake you up in your sweet slumbers during the tranquil night, when calling for my dear, my love, my all—dearest Rosa, my Rosa!...

“Yours most affectionately,

“Lucie Soliman.”

When Rosa received the above amorous epistle, she read it secretly and eagerly, and later on buried it deep in her white bosom, reading it now and then as if memorizing its contents.

In reply she sent him a postal card of her picture—lovely, innocent and smiling, pure like the morning dew with the pulsating beauty of youth.

Upon receiving it with the inscription, "*To my dearest Lucio—with love of his Rosa,*" he was crazed with delirious joys and then pressed it to his breast, and all that day he was happy, as happy as the birds twittering in front of his window.

While the thought of being separated from the mistress of his heart whom he adored like a divinity made him sick at heart, yet the thought of their constancy and pledge of love and devotion gave him a new lease of life.

Now Lucio became saner in mind and calmer in his ways, and after putting all things in abeyance and in accordance with his father's counsels, he seemed to recover from the torpor of youth's passion, and then his bearing became the more imposing and his countenance the more commanding and respected. His personality became marked and distinct.

Really he was transformed, and it was love that transformed him.

His sole idea now, as being content of his love, was to go out and face the world and struggle on for existence.

In his town, the Fertile Valley, he was once the leader of a gang of adventurous youngsters, during his revolutionary period, as he slangily put it himself.

Now this bunch of youngsters was already composed of young people, and one evening just about a fortnight after his arrival from his joyful and romantic vacation trip, his friends called on him and found him lying snugly abed and they took him with them to their meeting in the house of one of his most influential friends.

He was the man looked up to in his town for alertness of mind and calmness of disposition, for he was like a born leader.

“What is to be done? Why are we here gathered again? For what purpose, young rebels?”

He looked around him with satisfaction. Some belles and young men were present, and they cheered him at his jokes.

Juan de la Cruz stood up and said after calling for silence:

“Ladies and gentlemen:—Well, we are here, my good friends, to make conference in an informal way. Our aim in doing this is to form, if possible, a mutual association, devoted to social reciprocity and cooperation among members in order to foster and promote social progress and intercourse and to disseminate information and instruction along literary and educational lines. In short, we want to strongly form a union

among young people and to help each other, which has for its object physical culture, education and fraternal union. . . I have said."

He bowed down and the audience warmly applauded him and he was much overjoyed with lively cheers.

"Viva Juan!" were the words the audience said in unison in cheering Juan de la Cruz, the petted but much abused Juan—the liberal man of the day.

"Friends, I hereby move," said another, "that Mr. Soliman preside over the meeting. He is the only logical man." And by unanimous vote and consent, Mr. Soliman occupied the chair as president *pro tempore*.

They named the society "The Rising Generation," composed of the young men and women of the town and of some other neighboring ones.

And Lucio Soliman was duly elected President when the constitution was drafted, approved and ratified, and the general election, held.

The business routine of his presidential office kept him busy, writing up native poems, and dialogues for recitation and performance by the young ladies and speeches for declamation by the young men, and outlining debates for the debaters and orators.

Also he planned as a step to debating practice the worm-eaten subject of "Resolved, That the Wise is better than the Rich."

And it turned out after the decision of the prominent men of the town, among whom were the Municipal President, the Teniente Mayor and the leading lawyer and doctor, was handed down that the wise-man proposition naturally won.

As soon as his men were trained, Lucio proposed the inauguration of the Society and he acted as Master of Ceremonies, and the leader and speaker of the occasion.

It turned out that his speech became the principal talk of the people, and it was entitled "The Great Duties of Man," namely, duty to one's self, duty to one's country, and duty to our God.

He was so eloquent and enthusiastic. His sincerity moved and thrilled his hearers and carried them off their feet with prolonged applauses, for it aroused their will into action. Certainly it rang with emotions and it drove the message home—to their heart of hearts! At least, he was able to stand on his feet. You know, his audience was not highly educated, but it felt he spoke well after all.

It was a grand debut!

And the speech was:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:

"I hope we shall all do our duty to our Society as laid down by the Constitution. And do it religiously—by deeds. For the welfare of the society is also the welfare of every member, that is, every-

body. Let us unite, and united, nothing could break up our strength,—for unity is such a tremendous source of strength. On this sacredness of duty that shall make our society live, and the power of knowledge that is essential in knowing our different moral and spiritual duties, I shall speak of tonight.

“Knowledge is the one thing needful. It is just what our country’s youth need at present, why, because a country with wise people is a country that can never be subjugated by any foreign power, it is a country with learning, it is a country that can not be poor, it is a country that shall be free, happy and prosperous. So then let us get what education we can and let us use it for the benefit of ourselves and for the welfare of our country.

“We have three duties. The first one is to our Selves, the second one is to our Country, and the third one is to our God.

“Our duty to ourselves is to make the most of our time and our life. One who is poor can surely be wise, and what is more, he can by proper study become also rich. For when you have the knowledge necessary for practical purposes, then you are already wealthy in mind. That wealth of the mind cannot be robbed from us. No one can get it from us, and we possess it from the time we attain it and we carry it on to the last of our breath—it is ours forever. Therefore, get the best education you can. You can do it if you will only try. It is our duty to be good, to be honest, to be industrious and to make the most of ourselves while we live, for only

by that means could we truly serve our country. You, as sons of the patriots of 1896, ought to make the most of yourselves. That is your first duty, and I wish you should do it for your own good.

“Our second duty is to our Country. It is said that we have two mothers, the first one is our own mother who gave us birth and life, and the second one is our country who saw our birth and who shall ever protect us from the time we are born up to the time we die. A man who loves his country and dies for her, if need be, is called a patriot. As a patriot, then, love your country, serve your country, protect her flag, and do whatever you can to make her free and happy, now and for all times. Be a good citizen. A good citizen is one who is always after the welfare of his beloved country. For a man without a country is like an outcast. Our country is fondly called the Philippine Islands. She needs dutiful children. Do your duty well and when the time comes you can serve her well and die a great man, one who is patriotic, useful and great in the eyes of the world.

“Our third duty is to our God. God who is above us is always with us everywhere and every time, be it in the hour of distress or in the hour of happiness. He is our best companion. He is our Saviour. To know God is to know everything. For from Him comes all knowledge and all greatness in this life and hereafter. Follow the golden rule as a good Christian. In that way you cannot be a failure—for if you will do what our God commands

us to do, then the time shall come when we shall be real men, men who are faithful, noble, kind-hearted, and loving.

“Our Patriot of that dark year of 1896 said that the Youth are the beautiful hopes of our Motherland. We are so only when we have done our duties—to our Selves, to our Country and to our God.

“When we shall be able to do our duties, then, shall we be a happy and useful people; then, and only then, shall we live to see that we are no longer a poor or selfish people and a dependent country; but, God guiding our footsteps always in the righteous destiny, we shall be an independent people, happy and forever living peacefully and prosperously in the blessed State of the Promised Land!”

From that time on Lucio was looked upon as one of the most promising young men in that province. Juan de la Cruz, his friend, was so glad of his success. His unceasing admiration kept him busy in always saying to everybody:

“Lucio—I wish you darn people to hear another grandiloquent oration like that in the inauguration given to the ‘Rising Generation’ Society. I am proud of it an’ if you continue doing it and rendering service to your people, I’m mighty sure you will be a great man some of these dear days some time. So I hope the kiddies go after you and do better than playing all the time and sitting around uselessly. Lucio is my man—he is the right man and may every boy or girl be like him. Amen...”

That is how he boosted his hero.

As humanly usual, Lucio gained as many admiring friends as envious critics or enemies.

That is always the question—there being always two phases in every walk of life which are the white and the black—the good and the evil. These always abide in the world, strewn in everybody's path in order to test his moral courage to fail or to rise, to fail or to succeed, to die or to live!

But it is up to you to choose—the right path to success and to heaven, and the thorny path to misery and to hell.

Lucio was, however, in the whole, esteemed very highly by his friends and nearly all his townspeople, for he was a budding youth on whom the public saw in him (even his enemies acknowledged it) promises of greatness and service to his country, sometime in the not far distant future, provided he kept on the tension of his good work.

Once Juan de la Cruz caught Lucio in the act—writing something in poetry, prose or what, he did not know. When asked what it was he was thinking of, Lucio answered:

“I am trying to depict conditions in our Islands as they exist and clothe them in the garb of vernacular color.”

“But what is that thing?” he asked, pointing to a heap of papers.

“It is a dramatic story whereon my life’s impressions since childhood are set forth and depicted and painted in lively native tints like the curdling blood of our heroes who died in the night. It is a moral, real and psychological study where life’s principles and the philosophy of our country are richly blended together. Sincerity and Justice and Truth play their part on the one hand, and Injustice, Greed and Evil on the other. We see the world as it is, with the Western touch of civilization here and there so as to create a modern style of writing as model for generations yet unborn, or still to come.”

“What is that book about?”

“It contains some of the eternal truths of life.”

“Old, eternal truths?”

“Yes, the truths of the immortal soul dressed in a new form—in the style of the modern times.”

“Ah—do you think they won’t call you a plagiarist?”

“If it were so that what man had read and, was impressed, thought and wrote bit by bit was such, then Shakespeare would have been the greatest plagiarist the world ever produced if you’d turn over in every page of his plays—containing the gems of the great Book.”

“You know I was only after your welfare, for if they’d call you such, I would be the first to raise hell against them all, and single them out in the arena of combat—be it by mouth, by pen or by hand!”

“Well, do not preoccupy yourself, Juan. All’s right with the work.”

Juan, surmising that the waters were deep and the subject beyond his understanding and mental grasp, shrugged his shoulders and left Lucio with the words—

“Go on in your pursuits. It will produce better boys, better worlds, better generations, and better Philippines.”

Lucio was one of the young fellows who did not mix with the company of idle men. For in whatever he did, he had a purpose and stuck to that sole purpose. His convictions were firm and sound. He was one of those who thought they were not born to die—because they meant well to mankind. He had a firm judgment—formed by his practical and keen common sense.

His friends always sought his society and he uttered his thoughts in witty sayings, such as those of Poor Richard, Rizal and Mabini and other Philippine and world-famous thinkers. He said to them that lost time is never found again, and that what one makes of his time, that shall determine his future achievement in life. He believed in the new-thought philosophy.

His former schoolmates said that he was a practical man, healthy and strong, earnest and painstaking. He thought of athletics as a secondary means to develop the muscles and to train the mind to alertness and to form the habit of fair play and self-control.

To some his ideas appeared to be quaint and curious, but they were unique and universal, and not at all too idealistic and radical.

He was honest with himself, and so people were square and respectful and honest with him.

He believed in the practising and observing of to do as you would that others would do to you. Nothing more and nothing less, for as you sow so shall you reap.

Lucio was human, and therefore had his own faults, weaknesses and shortcomings.

“I want to scatter broadcast whatever ideas and thoughts I have so that others may reap what I have sown and done, and so that by my little ideas and insignificant knowledge my country’s ban of ignorance may be obliterated and lifted up, little by little, for I am with the saying that drop by drop the sea is filled.”

As to those despondent ones who sought his counsel, saying that they were not born scholars, bright and useful, he told them good-humoredly:

“Everything depends upon you. You are the sole masters of yourselves, that is, the architects of your own destinies. Ask and it shall be given, the Lord says. Then, why don’t you work always the best you can—and do it to your satisfaction? Oh, my dear friends, do not come here and stand and look askance at me—I mean to practice what I preach, if I can, and make the most of my time while I live.”

He paused as if groping for the thread of his thoughts. He continued: "It is practice, constant practice, untiring practice that makes men perfect in whatever they do. It is unflinching practice that is ever victorious. We lack practice in education—practice in material patriotism, and practice in commercial pursuits—so if only we can practice and gain experience as we ought to—to struggle like the French patriots, to work like the British laborers, and to trade like the American business men, then the time shall not be very far away when we shall behold the dream of our less fortunate fathers realized—blooming like a flower into full reality of statehood—the blessing light of liberty that shall never perish on the face of the earth while you and our children and their children's children are, and shall still be, living in these fair coral isles of the Far East!"

Such were some of his deep and inmost sentiments. His mind, though young, was fresh and fraught with promises of brilliant deeds and realization. He was a hard-working man. He worked or read sixteen hours a day; and when he read, he read; when he worked, he worked; when he played, he played; and when he rested, he rested soundly.

His discourses ran along divers subjects within his mental reach.

In this regard, an ardent admirer of his said:

"Ah, would that there should be more of the type and character of our good friend Lucio! Then, you,

my Country, thou shalt prosper in war or in peace and in all that you undertake and thus be happy while you live!"

Let us cast a hurried glance over his environments while at home with him and see and study his home and his habits in order to get first-hand information and know him closely. There on the wall was hanging first of all the picture of his hero Jose Rizal with Bonifacio and Mabini and a group of illustrious Filipinos on both sides.

Going a little farther more, these pictures meet one's sight—here the picture of Lincoln, there of Shakespeare, down there of Napoleon, and a little farther there of Verdi.

Simple art was in the home sparsely touched here and there. There was a small library of select books—mostly classical, and of the native works, such as novels, poems, and *corridos*, among which were "Florante and Laura," and "Noli Me Tangere" with the author's biography, and the History of the Philippines and the World in general.

The house was built of bamboo and sawali walls and nipa roofing, and with wooden posts and windows.

Around it were banana plants and some garden-vegetables, all richly flourishing, tendered by his own careful husbandry.

In agriculture he was adept—especially in home gardening.

He went down just as soon as the sun had set, and hidden behind the mountains enwrapped in purple clouds or sunken into the waters. He watered and cared for them till the evening. Before sleeping he would take down his book and sit on a bejuco chair beside a narra table and a Standard oil lamp, with pencil and paper in hand and read and take down notes of what striking passages he came across or else marked his own books.

Our old men tell us that a young man may become old in mind. Such was young Lucio, who was old in mind, for he surely knew that we live in deeds, not years.

One day he received a note from his Rosa imploring him in the name of their love to go and see their Garden Day and participate in the town's happiness and jubilee.

So he prepared and left for the day. It was the first of June. He saw Merry Town, the place where Rosa and Camilo lived, decked with arches richly decorated with waving Japanese paper lanterns and native adornments.

The town was bright and gay in attire. And the booths or pavilions were many, for many barrios were represented and their buildings were really nice, fine and striking in appearance. The arches and the pavilions presented remarkable contrast and their attractiveness drew people from every corner of the province to get a glimpse of their wondrous gaiety.

Towards twilight there was a civic parade. Many attended.

And in the evening the coronation took place, and Lucio went out to obtain a stolen hurried glance at Rosa. He saw her in her queenly splendor and she requested him to be always near her, and he promised to do so.

She was the queen of the day. Oh how beautiful and surpassingly fair was she to behold!

As usual, our friend Juan de la Cruz was there, a keen observer, and a good spectator. He took his seat beside Lucio, and Lucio appeared in his best.

Governor Ismael was there, also an American Teacher called Uncle Sam, the Superintendent of Schools; another man well known to Juan de la Cruz was Oscar, a pretender of Rosa. Camilo was there too, who acted as the ball's toastmaster.

Camilo delivered the coronation address. Afterwards the Governor spoke, whose remarks were not notable at all—always using gestures and speaking from an empty mind and with a guileful tongue of a politician; and then Uncle Sam made a few remarks, saying, among other things, "The Filipino woman is indeed beautiful—especially when dressed in her native costume of red, white and blue—glorious and gleaming like her Flag, and charming like her simple sister the Sampaguita, the fairest little Flower of the Isles." He expressed the hope that the Islands cer-

tainly needed more practical instruction and more native industry, both commercial and agricultural, and he retired with great ovation.

After the insistent request of Camilo, Lucio rose up, and was greeted with coldness, but seeing and being at the side of his beloved Queen, he delivered, people said, an eloquent and impressive oration, which though spoken in prose was in the style of inspired poetry.

As soon as the enthusiastic applause of the audience was over, Governor Ismael touched Oscar on the left shoulder and took him aside. He asked: "Who is that guy? He seems to be wide-read. But I do not like the way he acts—he seems to win and carry the honors of the night. By the way, who is that young handsome devil?"

"He is the new lover of Rosa."

"Lover of Rosa? Damn him!" was the surprised ejaculation of the taken-unaware Governor. He looked at Rosa and then at the lad maliciously and shook his head in utter disgust. Then Oscar laughed.

"Yes, indeed," was the mocking retort.

"His name?"

"Lucio Soliman."

"Ehe, but he shall not have Rosa!"

"They say they are engaged."

"Engaged! The deuce take him!" He was the more surprised.

“As they say it!” said Oscar, keeping the fuel of envy alive and burning the more.

“And, as I say, Rosa can not and never shall marry him, swore the hidalgo of Merry Town.

Oscar laughed with a sneer and thought that it pleased his lord, the Governor, to present Lucio as such so that by arousing the mighty politician’s anger, he might be able to win her for himself. For she was the only image that he ever gave shrine in his heart, the woman he ever truly worshipped in his life.

So from all appearances the Governor did not like Lucio’s ways, and from that time on, nursed a grudge against the harmless man.

Both went home early after the dance, silent and full of the night’s excitement.

Juan de la Cruz said: “Never did I, since I was born and saw morning light creep into the world, hear such a gallant speech.”

Being suspicious, he asked Lucio personally on that same night.

When asked, how he had been able to improvise such a masterly oration, Lucio replied:

“Why—I simply gathered it from the many thoughts I remembered and laid aside in my memory from my few books and some magazine clippings. That is all and there is no wonder or any secret in the affair—it is just preparation—hard preparation.” Then he smiled, as usual, in his friendly and catching manner.

Further Juan inquired, "But what the devil made you burn with such inexhaustible eloquence?"

"That is well known to you, and I do not keep it a secret any longer, as I said. You know my love, don't you? Rosa was there arrayed in all the glory that was Sheba's. And her look and contented love made me eloquent. What more, for Love imparts strength and lofty ideals to man. It inspires. . . . It makes the speechless or the dumb speak in prose and the unlettered sing in verse."

"Good! I might offer you a suggestion. Keep your eyes at that damned politician. He looks at you maliciously. I don't feel liking him for his speech and actions. He only, in his great and artificial bearing, seems to be a laughing-stock of a demon. Also, wait, keep away from Oscar. He is a crooked rival."

"I am afraid of no man, Juan. I am doing what is right, and I don't meddle with other's affairs. But I know what you mean. I'll remember it, for forewarned is forearmed, as the sages say."

After the coronation ball, the lovers met—and truly separation makes lovers love each other ever more, and serves only as a test of their affection. Their meeting and company short and brief, as it were, (for they were watched by the mother and the Governor), gave them joys beyond description of what the human pen or tongue could say.

Before Lucio left, good Rosa gave him her first kiss.

In this mingling of lips and feelings, they experienced that which it is given to a man but once on earth. That sealed their fate forever. Lucio felt the happiest of men, after tasting the nectared flavor of love's first kiss, as he drew her close to his heart and were locked in a most passionate embrace, which seemed as though in all eternity they would never separate.

O for the first kiss of a woman!

O Love! O Venus!

It is the theme that poets love to sing and to glorify in sublime and immortal poetry! It is the wine that intoxicates. Woman's first kiss is said to be one of the greatest events in life—it is the seal of the love like that of Juliet's to her Romeo—when two passionate lips dip into the sweet realm of the cup of love—while Cupid stand smiling and the angels in heaven sing of the faith of two loving souls. It is sacred and pure—it means the purest love of a woman that only a woman can give to a man. It means love, it means music, poetry, heaven, life and everything.

And Lucio was the youth who drank of the morning dew that fell on the clean and pure and sweet lips of Rosa, the angelic; Rosa, the flower-like; Rosa, the virgin,—the queen of Merry Town.

But Lucio noticed that while his lips were pressed on Rosa's cheeks at the ladder steps, a sinister cloud suddenly gathered at the horizon and a few minutes later the candle was blown out by a strong gust of wind and then a heavy shower fell down. And the thundering vaults of heaven presaged a pending storm of a disastrous character. Then a sharp lightning flashed, which made the timid heart cling fast to her lover's strong arms. Oh, what a dark, ominous vision!

CHAPTER IV

CUP OF SORROW

Morning came, and the rains swept all the glaring beauty of yesterday. And the town wore its old-fashioned aspects, and its pride became a mere thing of the past.

During that night of the ball in honor of the village queen of scarcely seventeen summers, Lucio noticed instinctively that even though he had been cheered and the joy was more than he could bear, yet in his inmost heart, he felt a longing not to leave, but to have more a chance to talk with Rosa, for something and somehow indescribable in his heart, urged and told him that there was something wrong somewhere and a danger lurking on foot.

He therefore felt uneasy and the next day he was loath to go home and depart from Merry Town without exchanging a few words more with Rosa.

But, as his promise to his father was to go home the next day, just after the ball, he took the first train leaving for his town. He was a boy who placed duty before pleasure, and who could not break up his word to his father.

It fell into his ear again by sheer rumor that Rosa, was, as previously said, a child without a father.

And all the village knew it, of course; Camilo knew it, but was silent, for he saw no cause why to divulge it to Lucio.

People also said that the present Governor Ismael had a certain family under his control and support. The province was innocent as to whom he endowed a dowry of one thousand pesos worth of rice per annum.

And it became a fixed habit of Rosa's acquaintances not to ask who her father was. Once she was unexpectedly asked, but instead of answering, she cried, either because she did not know, or knowing, she was ashamed of it, or else felt the disgrace of her being born fatherless. Juan said, "She cursed the day she was born. She thought she had no father, or that he died during 1896. It was but natural."

After a time it developed that the devout lover Oscar did not cease in his selfish pursuits of love and devotion to Rosa, worrying her almost to death—in spite of the awful fact that he knew from mere gossip that she was engaged to Lucio, and that they loved each other ever so much.

But he kept on wooing her and lavishing gifts and numerous favors upon the family that after the lapse of time the mother became compassionately moved and touched by the good acts of Oscar. And what was more, Oscar was a sort of a boy to the Governor who worked much in making his candidacy a success, and traveled far and wide to crouch upon certain electors as if to steal or buy their votes and give them to Ismael,

even though going to the extreme of bartering goods or paying ready money for such votes. Thus he began to tamper with the sanctity of the official ballot which ought to represent the sacred will of the people. As to their own farmers, they, poor men, were threatened or forced either to cast their votes in favor of the Governor or else leave their farm and all their work from whence they derived their living. It was such a cruel alternative, and the poor creatures, much against their wish and to their regret, obeyed in fear of displeasing him and losing their daily bread.

Such was the fine work of Oscar which overjoyed the Governor. And during a casual visit of the young political satellite to the Governor's birthday party where all his army of admirers and followers were gathered in full, mostly corrupt as he was, for birds of a feather flock together, it so happened that Oscar prevailed over Ismael, when the latter heard of the exploits of the former during their last political campaign.

The aristocratic Oscar was silent for a moment. Then he impressively said:

"I only ask one thing."

"Tell me if I can help you, and it's within my power, my boy."

After a much seeming ado, he hinted, "I love Rosa." That was the young man's reply.

The Governor stood up thoughtfully pacing the floor up and down, and later said:

"Well, what of her?"

“As I love her, I wish she should be my wife—and to love her all my life is my most coveted ambition.” He spoke shyly and with a trembling voice and a much discomfited feature, but sincerely.

Whereupon after a long pause and deep deliberation, the Governor approached him and, patting him on the left shoulder, answered:

“My boy, you shall have your wish.”

The Governor was apparently drunk.

Oscar was overjoyed, so much so that he went down suddenly, leaving everybody there without a word, and came tumbling down when a dog barked fiercely at him. He kept repeating to himself, “Oscar, be happy. You shall have your wish—Rosa shall be your wife.”

“Good,” he said to everybody he met, that people thought he was mad.

He valued those words because he knew what the Governor was talking about, for talkative as he was, as is only common among petty politicians and wily officials, he still kept his word, especially among his favorites.

And the next week, people knew not why, a rumor was spread around Merry Town that Rosa, the lovely woman, was about to be married.

To whom? That was the question everybody asked everybody, inquiring, to whom? They could not answer. They knew that she was engaged to Lucio and

that from all appearances they saw in them the most natural thing—that Lucio shall marry Rosa soon or late.

At last when the fatal day came, it was announced from an unknown source that she would be married to—Oscar.

The mystery thickened and people in Merry Town found a good ground whereon to gossip.

But Juan de la Cruz, who heard the whole thing, delved into the heart of the facts, and so away he went straight to Rosa's house, taking Camilo with him and inquired like a New York reporter about the truth of the statement made quasi-public. For he knew Rosa and her engagement to Lucio. There was no telling that Rosa was to him fair like the lily of the valley—so he had the welfare of both man and woman at heart and hoped for their happiness.

Upon being interviewed, Rosa denied the assertion of her being secretly betrothed to Oscar, and when further pressed upon by Camilo, she said with deep concern and pearly tears dropping from her eyes:

“Ah, dear me! . . . You know very well to whom I have given my love! . . . Why torture a poor girl like me—torture her further with this false news? People and the public the world over are always fond of one's downfall or disgrace or misfortune—I see as I grow old and am convinced of the bitter truth that they are very fond of knowing and breaking and bringing sadness and misery to the life of others—and instead of helping and consoling them, as some humane

and sensible men like you do, they instead try to spread the worst part of the story. I pity such people at the bottom of my heart. Why,—because I think and feel that I can never be anybody's wife except Lucio's! I am sick of this suspicion!... Were it not for Lucio, I would as well prefer lying silently in the grave of peace! Ah, it drives me mad!..."

Moved by her pitiful sight, they said on bidding her farewell:

"Be of good cheer, Rosa. That is just the way with the world. Suffer it bravely. Don't cry... We know Lucio. He is a good and broad-hearted man, loyal and faithful to everybody, especially to you."

"And if he shall ever come to know about it, how shall he bear it, and don't you think that he will open the subject to me? It shall break my heart, as well as his. O if he should ever come to know anything about it! Oh, delusion of love—you are like the mirage in the desert of life!..." She spoke with outstretched arms, which fell by her side—ay, a veritable picture of grief!

Both Juan and Camilo reassured her that they would not reveal it unless some vile tongues would, and that they should not be the ones who would be the bearer of destructive news.

"Rosa, my dear friend," Juan addressed her candidly, "I think this rumor does not become the man who spreads it. I cannot for one believe it, and I am only led to believe that there is an agency from where

this news comes from; and most probably from Oscar. . . . But between us, dear girl, tell us,—all about this affair. In brief, what relations has he with you? What has he to do in this case, anyhow, or why does he scatter all this monkey business?"

Rosa looked at him, but Juan's countenance assured her that he was only after her best welfare, and thus she answered timidly:

"You know he once talked to me through my mother pleading his hopeless case—he promised me many things. O it is useless to enumerate them!"

"Well, pray, tell us some," interposed Camilo.

"Yes, tell us," added Juan, "in confidence."

"What I remember is that if I should marry him he would build a great palatial house for mother and me, give me servants and the jewels of his family, and oh—so many other silly ones. His offers do not honor me—they insult me, to tell you the truth."

"Ah, let me see," said Juan thoughtfully, knitting his brow and looking down, "but he has not yet inherited anything from his father; and his father once talked of disinheriting him if he should continue gambling and being extravagant."

"You know, gentlemen, it is not my nature to hate men; but I feel a certain repulsion when I see this Oscar. He does not harm me, but still his presence brings antipathy. . . ."

"But why does he call you his bride or his cousin, either way?" pursued on Juan.

“I really do not understand. He is such a man who is not a fit companion for ladies. When he was in the city, I was told, he frequented the saloons and clubs; is that so, gentlemen?”

“O yes, you are perfectly right,” answered Juan. “And probably this coming Carnival season he will be there, and burn all his money in useless mundial things.”

“But what relations has he with you, by the way?” asked Camilo.

“Relations? He has none. He is not my relative. He is not my lover. He is none! . . . I have simply nothing to do with him. . . . Men who mask themselves as he does have no pity on women. They think that women are only their playthings to satisfy their personal desires. But they are sorely mistaken. We are as good as they are, strong in soul as they are in body, and pure in heart as they are in mind. Women are the mothers who create the grandeur of nations, for they rear the citizens of all climes. They mould the world at their laps,—for they form the character of children, and train them for service to humanity. They not only adorn the world but shed sunshine, perfume, and affection—the panacea of life. . . . It is true that there are some lost women, but there is always an exception—for here on earth good and evil exist side by side,—all women are not angels as all men are not saints.”

“I am of your opinions.”

“And so am I too,” said Juan. . . . “But Lucio—he is a martyr of sorrow! Poor lad!”

“Yes, he is a martyr, and I am the torturer, my friends.”

And tears, sweet crystal tears, like the morning dew of spring on the petals of roses, moistened her blooming cheeks.

“Nay, do not say so. You are not to blame. Lucio is not to blame. No one of you is to blame. It is this foolish Oscar who is to blame! He is a villain; and now, tell me, Rosa, do you want to give an end of all this?”

“What do you mean, Camilo? You want to spill blood just for me? No, please don’t! Harm no human creature or suffer any mother for my sake, will you?”

“But that is what Oscar deserves!”

“That is your weakness, Rosa,” said Juan. “You pity people while they do not have any upon you.”

“But Christ forgave His enemies and loved them, and did He not throw bread to those who threw Him stones, ay, did He not?”

“But now the world is not that. People nowadays talk of the equality of men and all that but human laws are different. It is the survival of the fittest,—and *laissez faire*. The judgment day has not yet arrived. Of course that is what everybody ought

to do, but in your case it is different! Oh, were my own sister's honor slandered as they tried to do on yours, O Heavens, I would stop it once for all!"

"I have no strength, I have no weapons, but I can suffer; and while I know how to love, surely, I will also know how to endure."

"But it is this humility of yours, Rosa," said Juan looking at her pitifully, "that emboldens others to abuse your confidence. And if Lucio only knows this—"

"Truly, you pity and forgive others while they neither pity nor forgive you."

"Never mind. . . . Oh if he only knew! So, please don't tell him. It will put him into endless troubles. Ay, promise me, friends, do not tell him. I do not want him to be troubled, I want him to keep faith in me still, for I have done nothing to merit all this humiliation. Oh under what an unlucky star I was born! Oh, really, I do not know why all this heart-breaking, groundless tale on my life day by day, which like clouds, bears me into the world of melancholiness!"

She dried her tears, and the two friends continued to hearten her and make her forget her cares and troubles and the burden of her soul:

They did all their best to humor and enlighten her sadness; but all their encouragement seemed to be of no avail, for she kept lamenting her fate, which she said was the saddest.

They left her and she was so disconsolate, sobbing and beating herself. Her mother was there crying, but

powerless. They were simply at the mercy of forces hidden and unknown, and warring against circumstances unforeseen and beyond control, they thought and concluded at last by themselves.

Rosa thought of the world and the people in it, ah—how cruel they were, and how sad and hard it was to live—bitterly hard to live, especially for a woman, so weak and flexible, unable to face the battle of life.

She, in her innocence, prayed to heaven to give her strength to patiently endure the buffets of circumstances and meekly suffer in humiliation man's ingratitude to man.

Crying alone, she stifled her sorrows in her heart.

Camilo could not help writing his friend Lucio, whose happiness he had in mind always. He informed him of the impending peril and trouble, of the rumor, especially the one going around in Merry Town that Rosa was about to be betrothed, which she herself bitterly denied. The letter reached Lucio in due course of time.

As soon as it was received, the flame burning within him was pitched into the height of desperation.

Just imagine what sadness that carelessly written note had caused this silent and thoughtful and devoted lover—Lucio. It somewhat aroused the animal nature within him, that is, to jealously revenge. But Camilo thought it would do good to inform him, for the love he bore him. But after thinking it all over and viewing it from different angles, Lucio was at last self-convinced

that in all probability the story of the people's statement that Rosa was a woman without a father was true. He had no doubts now; however, he thought it so, and so, believed it thus—after deducing it from the facts he had on hand.

What was more, his letters remained unanswered. He excused the same thing, for his love and Rosa's love to him he never doubted even for a moment.

But now,—this note of Camilo before him, clearly spoke of his love's faithlessness.

What to do?

That was the question he put to himself. He could not answer. He could not decide. He sighed simply and sobbed deeply and desperately, saying, "Woman, are you indeed like your Mother Eve who betrayed her husband's and God's trust—and thus cause and bring all these sins to the world?" He groped for reason. "But I know, Rosa, that you are as true as you are fair."

After considering it all over, he took up his hat, and rode on the first available train, and that very night found him at Camilo's side, determined to know all; but he became the more uneasy in mind and more disappointed than ever.

And asking Camilo persistently the while, "Is it true, Camilo, my dear friend, that Rosa is a girl without a father? Just tell me like a brother. Is it true?... But I think not. I doubt it very much. Excuse me... Better tell me not or I'll get mad."

There was no reply. Camilo evidently did not want to add more painful news to Lucio's overloaded breast.

Lucio pleaded for an answer again and again, but Camilo tried to evade and ignore the question, and his immense sorrows. Morning came, and by the incessant pleading and supplication of Lucio, he at last yielded and remarked:

"The story runs that she has none, but nature does not permit that, for every child born must have a father and a mother, according to the inviolate laws of human nature; hence, I am very sure she has."

"But you are dodging the issue—deducing things scientifically, while I am asking you plainly, who is her father—this soulless and unfeeling villain—the causer of all this unhappiness to her and to me?"

"Why not ask her yourself?"

"I do not possess the courage to do that. I can never make her unhappy. It shall not be my hand that shall do it. If through me she shall be sad, I cannot endure it, I shall not be the cause to effect her sorrows. . . . I have enough of my own."

"Then, be quiet, and let us observe and study things and dig into the root of the facts. Only be patient and wait for developments."

"I have waited too long already; and it seems to me the more I wait the sadder I become. . . . Now tell me—"

"All right, but don't blame me."

He was calmed for a while, but the fever of jealousy was burning and eating up his brain and consuming all his energy, that he became after a night of suffering very dull and exceedingly pale. Oh how true is the observation of psychologists that we reflect on ourselves the thoughts we have and cherish in mind!

He went home exhausted. He worked and made efforts to reconcile or to forget the past. He subjected his mind to a rigid discipline—and at times useless, for it roved in the same old memory—the sweet episode by the stream of Merry Town.

A year passed by and Lucio learned at last the bitter truth that Rosa was forced against her will to love a man she did not by heart and soul really love.

Lucio was now transformed completely. He was no longer a turbulent and unreasoning lover, a passionate youth, but rather a self-composed young man and manly in every way. The trace of his early years of suffering left on his face certain marks of reserve, of self-denial, and of infinite sorrows.

He was now lord over himself.

He contrived to send a note to Rosa, supplicating her to go to the spring where they first pledged their vows of love.

True to her word, Rosa went there, and in time.

Thus he managed to have an interview with her.

At last they met face to face—the lovers—Lucio and Rosa.

The greeting was cold.

"Rosa!"

"Lucio?"

"I only wish to let you know personally that you can do as you wish, and I will not stand in your way, for I'd rather see you happy in other's arms than be wretched and miserably unhappy in mine, although, as you are most perfectly aware of, you are all the world to me." He spoke slowly and with a reserved and manly voice ringing with regret, all his destiny and future hanging there in those words.

Rosa was silent, and her emotions choked her; but was able to say:

"Lucio, do you really know still what I told you before when we were here in this same spot scarcely a year and a half now?"

"Yes—and only the cold hand of death shall make me forget it."

"You do?"

"I do—and perfectly know it all by heart, waking or sleeping I know it—it is here," pointing to his heart.

"Well, then, why do you renounce me? Why make me sad and forlorn and cause me all these unnecessary worries and affliction—ay, why are you so changed? Tell me frankly. Do you believe in the current and merciless stories of cruel people who circulate just, perhaps, with the malicious intent to break the love strongly existing and binding forever between two souls? I do not suspect that you shall turn back

against your words now—no, by all means, and never will I believe it. But tell me, do you believe them?” Tears gently rolled down her cheeks.

There was no answer. Silence reigned.

“No, unless you yourself told them to me, I have no right to believe in idle stories. I have absolute confidence in you. I trust you, Rosa.”

Rosa fainted. She became unconscious, and was about to fall on the ground were she not quickly held by Lucio.

“No—indeed! . . .” he spoke aloud. “I do not believe a word of it! . . .” Then looking up to heaven, he went on, “Oh, my God, see what misery cruel tongues have done! . . .”

Rosa’s face became dark as ash. He feared for the worst yet to come. Ah, he must act, there was no time for hesitation!

He laid her down softly on the grass and fetched water from the stream. Then he sprinkled water over her ashy face, and very soon she breathed and recovered. And while she was lying helplessly like a child on his strong arms, he tried to soothe her with words of endearing cheer and affection.

He assured her that it was all over, and that he did not take to heart a jot of it, and that had the whole world turned against her, she should still hold the same sacred place in his heart, and she should be the same true and innocent and lovely soul to him, the queen of his heart—ay, yes, his—till death doth part them.

After a while he continued:

“Be calm in mind, Rosa. I am with you. But, as I said, I shall not stand in your way. Be assured of that. I shall not retain your word or hold your promise. I give it back to make you happy. As for me, never mind me. I am born to suffer, and I shall live to suffer like a man even though the burden shall be more than I can bear. Yet, if only I shall know at last with satisfaction that you are happy, then I shall live and die happily, too.”

He was calm and unmoved, while she was all tears, saying:

“It is the work of the Governor, who calls himself as my father. Ah, the Governor! He tries to make people believe that I belong to Oscar while Oscar knows not about it, and very well knows, too, that I cannot be his as long as I am yours. Believe me, whatever happens, I will be true to you, and Heaven be my witness—I tell it now, and again I swear it forever! . . .”

She stood up erect and in a most lovely yet pathetic posture.

Lucio was thoughtful still and very mild. However, in his inmost thoughts and feelings he knew that his love, his Rosa, was innocent, and acting on that impulse and belief, he folded her once more to his longing breast, and said:

“Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them asunder!”

"Yes, till that Great Dispenser of Life and Death shall part them!" was Rosa's sweet and hearty and assuring response.

The hour came when they should of necessity part.

They were reluctant to see their parting hour, so they lingered for a little while more, although their hearts yearned only for love and each other's presence, never to part or to wait in vain!

Rosa said, when she felt the pangs and agonies of separation:

"Let me go with you—so that all this talk shall cease—once for all—and we shall live by the fruit of our labor."

"Do not rush, my dear. I know you are by nature obliged to obey your parents. So, if your mother means to wed you to another well-to-do I shall not and never will stand in your way. I can sacrifice mine for yours. And only remember that if you ever need any help, I will stand ready to do all that I can to help you while I live. I say, wait; so that neither you nor I shall repent in the future. You can depend upon me in the hour of necessity. You shall have in Lucio, dearest, the best of friend and lover forever!..."

They parted. But each after a moment turned to the other.

Lucio called her back.

"O Rosa!"

"Yes, Lucio?"

“My dear, what is it that your heart feels which you hide from me? Tell me, tell me all. Anything I can do I’ll perform for you. Your eyes cannot deceive me. Rosa, please tell me.”

She looked at him, and being assured, she said:

“I know not what to do—I like to be at your side—to be with you and with my mother—my duty to her forces me to separate from you, and my duty to you forces me to separate from her,—ah, what shall I do? Give me light.”

He could not prevail over her sorrows. But he said:

“Obey your mother. Be an obedient child. It is your filial duty.”

“And you?”

“Never mind me. When you are happy, I am also happy.”

“But if you are unhappy, I will also be unhappy—what will I do then?”

“Obey your mother. Consult your conscience. That is your duty.”

“No—my duty is to *her* and to *you*. So I’ll be true to both of you.”

Her dilemma was great—to disobey her mother was unfilial, but to forsake her lover was faithlessly loathsome.

Rosa’s face grew rosy, and her mind, agitated,—pondering over her sacred duty to her mother and her

moral duty to her lover. Which shall prevail? She was lost in meditation.

“Goodby, Rosa.”

She could not answer. She only dropped her eyes in endless grief.

Lucio was as usual calm and firm. He went home with head bowed down, thinking and breathing so deep.

His reflection was about a love once and no more. How could he face life manfully?

That was the subject absorbing his whole mind.

Meanwhile in the house of one of Rosa's friends during a baptism party, Juan de la Cruz met Oscar, who even out of the way eagerly asked:

“Say, dear Juan,” for Oscar was a friend to everybody (as Juan remarked) when he wanted anything, “is it really true that our friend Lucio had broken his engagement to Rosa? Well, as neither the engagement nor her accepting him, I could not believe, how could I convince myself, that such an hypothetical breaking of an unknown engagement ever existed?”

With a mocking smile in his inimitable way, Juan replied:

“Really I cannot do you this favor of answering yes or no, but this is, in so far as their love affair is concerned, what I know—that each seems to be cold to the other.”

Now wine took its effect, as they freely drank; and out of Juan's remarks, Oscar got a glimpse of the lovers' intimate relations, as Juan babbled: "Lucio is as lucky as he is unfortunate. Poor lad! Yes, lucky, as he was the recipient of Rosa's love, and unfortunate, as he was a fool to lose her heart's love. . . . Ay he was a jealous man. . . ."

"Jealous of whom?" asked Oscar with a wild stare.

"Of a certain Oscar."

"Me? . . . Well. He should not. For I would not yet claim my girl. Sometimes. Not now—even though it's sure she'll be mine—as the powers that be already said and confirmed that."

The effects of liquor worked also on Oscar as his tongue became loose and as glibbed as the others'.

Oscar became the laughing-stock of the company. They all had a merry time in that merry party.

Juan was a desperate fellow then, and he said to Oscar's fear, "Whether drowned or killed, at once or not, it's all the same, for we are sure to perish speedily in one way or another."

Late in the afternoon they separated and became sober. Then Bacchus lulled them to sleep. As soon as quietly laid on bed, Juan forgot what he said, for he only thought of life in all its joys, while Oscar from that intelligence began to develop his devilish plot against the loveliest and most innocent and purest woman in all Fertile Valley.

And it came to pass after a month later that Lucio's and Rosa's engagement was really broken. Lucio was, nevertheless, a bit surprised, for he anticipated it before long. He pitied her to the core of his soul, and only wished her every happiness, even though her name and memory were linked with his very life.

The sorrows of Rosa were indescribable when she wrote her last, so she thought, sentimental letter to Lucio, ending it with:

"Kindly forget me not in your prayers, Lucio, and forgive me if ever I was wrong in my pure affection to you and let us the best of brothers and sisters be."

Lucio could not contain himself any longer as soon as he was informed about it. No sound counsels of his father could he put into his head and make him sane and rational. Strong-minded as he was, his will lay bent on love's sufferings.

To him the world was no longer joyous and happy, to him there were no more songs, no more enjoyment in his studies, and no more recompense in his work, and no more poetry in his writings. The world was colorless, all dark, and in gloom, utter gloom—barren and lifeless.

The cup of sorrow was full of poison, sadness, and misfortunes.

He could sip its contents no more, and to do so would mean a life of misery and nothingness. His breast was full, to load it more would seem fatal. He

had a "delicately brittle grip on existence, and one of the human secrets that baffle the mind had gone into play in his heart.

He became thinner, and every day his health became precarious.

The thought was poisoning him and obsessing his brain. It was a cup with bitter dregs.

Everyone has his or her own cup of sorrows. It is, however, up to each and everyone to either sip it or let the winds blow and drain its contents altogether, and time wash and cleanse off its poisonous elements.

"It is terrible. I can not blame you, for I love you, Rosa. You were once to me all the world—and now you are but a name. . . . Be happy, and may you not forget that one soul shall forever cherish your memory with dear regard and sweet recollections. Oh would that I could bathe my sorrows in the river of Lethe and so forget, and be rejuvenated,—forget all about this world and its cup of sorrows. Woman, is it true that you, Woman, are fickle? 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' . . . But, Rosa, I cannot entertain that idea. 'To me you are a virgin—immaculate, sweet and pure.'"

He was the picture of desperation—his hair was disheveled and his eyes full of tears, crying lamentably like a child. He was madly and deeply enamored with his first love!

After a hard thinking and weighing of the affair all over with the light of sound reason, he exclaimed:

“Well—I cannot believe all this. I’ll dismiss the sorrowful thought if she can only be happy—happy with another. I know she is fair and true and faithful, and no one can doubt it. I forgive you, Rosa, O my Rosa! To me you are innocent and to me you are clean even though the whole world denies me and blames me...”

A sinister smile emerged from his parched lips, and his face brightened.

Then he tried to forget. Days passed by and time found him either in the fields or at his study. Other friends tried to interest and introduce him to their lady friends, but he refused saying that he was no longer a young man—born to woo and to share with the world’s happiness, but one who was born to work, to suffer and to serve.

Lucio wore a white coat with a Baliwag hat, and had an uncombed curly hair, like young Werther, the very picture of despair and dismay.

Such was Lucio, the broken-hearted man, who retained absolute faith in his love—hoping against hope that she should one day be his own dear love.

“Come on, Camilo, what is all this talk of the folks in Fertile Valley that the Governor tried to accuse Lucio of some trivial matter,—that he was not a fit admirer of Rosa, and so forth?”

Camilo was greatly astonished and stopping at a houseshed nearby, answered:

“I know nothing about it, except that the Governor was not polite to him, regarding him on as a mere rustic country lad.”

“Ay, that is a disgrace—they say he, in his most satirical manner after the ball, upbraided him as a coward—never to bid fair for Rosa’s hands. Why, what has my lord Governor to do in this affair, I wonder? It’s enough with his politics—enough in throwing the government to the dogs. Emphatically, it’s none of his business!”

Juan was evidently angry, his eyes were burning with rage, as he was a good reformer as well as a good defender of Lucio’s cause.

“When people talk ill of one’s friends, it hurts surely one’s feelings, as this affair does. Really, this demigod of a rotten Governor ought not to meddle with Lucio’s private affairs.”

“Certainly,” said Camilo, “I own that I’ll give every atom of my blood for Lucio’s cause. I am his for life. For never shall I turn my back against him through thick and thin,—though imperfect a human being as he is, still I am on his side—all my life! . . .”

“That is the true friend, and we might as well declare ourselves the Three Musketeers; I am for one who shall go anywhere in the world with him—I’ll do anything in my power to deserve his everlasting friendship—whether present or not. And oftentimes, Camilo, I am only jealous that he loves this Rosa more than he loves us.”

“Well, old man, let him love. His love means his happiness as well as our contentment, for we are happy only when our friend is happy, isn’t?”

“Oh, yes, that is perfectly right.”

They went to see Lucio, but their noble-hearted friend humored his sorrows away as if nothing happened.

From that time on, Juan de la Cruz seldom found him in the streets, but mostly toiling in the fields, counseling and lecturing to the poor, illiterate people, especially the children, putting them into the right path and shedding joys in many a gloomy home.

It was not in entertainments and ball rooms and luxuriant cafés and feasts where you could find him, but wherever there was something to be really done—to benefit others, to console the sick, or to help the unfortunate.

Some said that his words were golden, and his mere sight, an inspiration. He was silent, a man of few words.

After all, his sorrows made him a man—able to labor for his own good as well as for the welfare of another. With his superb physique he soon recovered from the shock.

For he well remembered the words of his father—
“Be a man, my boy.”

And his ambition was but to be a man, and knowing full well that human nature is imperfect and

fallible, he, therefore, set to master himself and pursued the righteous course, as he thought best.

Later on it was heard that he wrote Camilo once, at least that was what Juan, Lucio's sympathizer, said. The letter, our friend told us—Juan de la Cruz's words were enough—read in part as follows:

“All is over. Rosa is free to do as she wishes. I only hope to see her happy. I stand always ready to help her—cruel though fate was to us—and separate though our destiny shall be. . . . Now I must get busy! To do so I shall go to Manila and work—and find my way or else make one. For that is the land of opportunity, where I could labor and shape my own destiny and be a worthy son of Fertile Valley.”

Man is bigger than his sorrows.

Lucio sipped and tasted much of the bitter-sweet contents of the cup of life. He reflected much,—then, becoming sober, he flung his sorrows far away.

And he resolved to do something!

CHAPTER V.

THE CITY OF OPPORTUNITY

“I will go to the City!”

That was the resolution made by Lucio after much thought and careful deliberation.

Firmly he adhered to it, and he went to the city, leaving his father with his tenants and his cousins to till the field and eke out an honest living.

As soon as he arrived in the city and after much bitter experiences, he recognized the truth of the statement of the local papers that Manila is the land of Opportunity, the one city of the Islands wherein chances are knocking every now and then in the tide of human affairs. Yes, for the man who does not shirk from hard, manly work and stop in shattering the barriers of failure.

After much struggle, he also arrived at the conclusion that Manila was the place for those who were alive, alert in brain and sturdy in muscles, those who meant to struggle hard, and struggle hard to succeed and win a place for themselves.

He found out that work, more work, constant work with a noble purpose, is what every one needed, with a common sense and a practical education—brain and muscles, that is all, to make of this life a life of success instead of a failure, a grumble and a drudgery, and a burden and a menace to society.

It is only work that makes men differ. And the quality of that work, it must not be forgotten. Also the rich as well as the strong must work in order to keep on pushing up to the front rank of society, for life is an onward march from morning till night unto the goal we all know so well, but so little understand.

He who shall not move and use his brain or muscles is bound to realize the meaning of the big handwriting on the wall.

For it is the man who diligently works and attends to his own business that prospers and not only prospers, but whose name shall become a household word dear to his people, and whose memory, a benediction.

He laid aside his thought of living at ease in the air castle of social unity. For he long conceived and realized that the government and the people are just bound to work on a certain social contract, based upon social reciprocity. All the world itself to be well governed and to intellectually prosper must have to work on a social contract, yes, even labor and capital so as to reconcile with, and not to conflict against, each other, must be based upon social contract.

Such is human society. It has an unwritten contract—and man must abide by his obligations to his community in particular, and to humanity in general. Everything is governed by certain laws, such as work; it is governed by brain and muscles. "Labor is the law," as thinkers say. For, the world at large is a big workroom where the social contract finds its fulfillment.

Lucio realized more and more that he who knows more and knows what he really knows is the logical man who commands the best salary, while the man who knows only what is at the surface of things is bound to be at the bottom rung of the ladder. Thus in order to climb up the ladder of achievement, one must do that superfluous work—work that is dignified and that enhances progress and civilization. For he has succeeded in life who has worked hard and worked much for the good and uplift and betterment of mankind.

He has failed in life who has not worked as he ought to, and in duty bound and obligated by, the terms of social contract. It is only mean work that belittles man, while good, honest work dignifies him and blesses him, and raises him from the common level of life.

That man is happiest who has worked much and served well his people, his country and his God.

In this connection, when Juan visited Lucio at his boarding house, the latter remarked:

“Don’t you think, Juan, that the world is ruled by work?... Everything springs from work. Great things and wonderful works of art are the products and offsprings of real work. And we people have but to work to free us from the bondage of poverty and slavery.”

“I think you got the right dope and further believe that you are driving at the right point.”

“There,” exclaimed Lucio, “those factories we see—the Ice Plant, the Rice Mills, the big buildings or sky-scrapers, the distilleries, the coconut mills, the lumber mills, ay, those steamships peacefully lying or anchored at the Manila Bay,—those automobiles running here and there, and tutting, the necessities of modern civilization, and all those myriads of electric lights and those social luxuries and comforts,—are but the products of what we call dignified Work or Labor.” He stopped and meditatively continued: “And companies must have to work for their social contract or orders so that they shall prosper and be efficiently running, or else they shall go behind the wall.”

“Certainly, and this palm-greasing work must be stopped at once, as practised in some governmental departments,” quoth Juan.

Lucio raised his hands in a pensive way and uttered his thoughts accordingly:

“Nay, all those treasures and precious papers locked up in the bankers’ safes are also the product of work. And so work, and working hard and satisfactorily is the power that rules the world of commerce. And it is only work that shall make Manila the real emporium of the Far East. Really, Work, O I am sure, is what you need, what I need and what everybody else needs now—even our country as a whole to make her ‘happy and prosperous.’

“To substantiate what I say,” continued Lucio, “that Work conquers all: Whitney’s work revolutionized cotton cloth; Fulton’s work revolutionized trans-

portation; Morse's and Bell's work revolutionized communication; Edison's work revolutionized lighting. See what wonders work had done... Be independent. Learn to work. Don't be a drone in the hives of industry, or a parasite in the tree of life. Express yourself, for self-expression brings forth life and growth. So that when you have lived, worked well and left the world happier, your name would go down in history as an example to be emulated. We can live longer if we will work harder and accomplish more work in a day than some others accomplish in the same length of time. For that will be the harbinger of greater things to follow. That is the thing that counts. If you'll do all this, you'll see life starting out before you in beautiful panoramas and heralding the grandeur of a promising future."

"And so, Lucio, as I bear more years than you, hear my short essay: Don't say your work can't be done. Say it can be done... Do not intend, do not wait, or expect, but act! Today is a better day to form a new plan, to register a new resolution, and to carry out all to completion. . . Climb higher every minute, for our allotment of the span of life is at best very short. Cultivate your mind—mental efficiency is our life's success—mental work lives longer than physical work. Never procrastinate, procrastination is not only the thief of time but the enemy of work. Work your best as others see us and then you will not go astray—but will reach your rightful destination."

Juan de la Cruz, it must be remembered, was a

modern product of the local public schools who, by force of patience, had acquired a practical education,—far from the vulgar conception of the times.

Were it not for the encouraging talks and letters of his friends, Lucio might have come back home the same as before, for oftentimes he was worried by the vicissitudes of his new city life.

But he kept on pushing farther, for he thought that industry is the only mother of good luck.

After a hopeless wandering in the City, Lucio had been able to make his way through one of the small schools of the city. He taught there for sometime while waiting and preparing for something to boost him up to the goal of his ambition.

He found it hard during his first stay in the metropolis to make both ends meet.

After a couple of months, he was called by one of the biggest firms in Manila. There he worked patiently and faithfully and rendered the most efficient service he had been capable of, and hence he was soon raised from the position of a petty clerk to the chair of a respected chief—the boss of his own department, as the common business parlance goes on.

He attained that position because he meant to work hard and to excel. Thus by dint of real hard work he got what he wanted and deserved it.

Business was booming loudly, and never did the Islands in all its history experience such a big volume of business, such an unprecedented prosperity and such a most favorable balance of trade.

At night, after laying aside a certain amount for tuition fees, he took commercial course and literature at the same time. He did that for two obvious reasons—because it was his most cherished ambition to make money for his living and to support himself and his family all the way through. He took literature, for his mind was bent on writing some of his big ideas and life experiences that needed development and which were bursting forth and finding their outlet into print, so as to work for the service he thought best to give to his people.

That was his purpose why he studied, for he knew that education is the power that drives the words home, and that it is the element that polishes the soul and makes out of a mere amateur an artist, and out of a mediocre, a genius. So, he did all his best to improve himself, and at the same time not to lose a single opportunity to hear a big national man, or a tourist speak on everyday questions that affect every noble-minded citizen, or whenever there was a great event brewing in the city.

For it was his intention to acquire an all around education—physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual. That was his aim in order to acquire a symmetrical living—alert in every faculty.

He resided in a secluded place after living in the heart of the city, for he realized much to his regret that he could not study well and give the attention his work and studies required if he would not live and rest

peacefully. In order to concentrate his mind and work efficiently, he needed silence and above all a good surrounding.

It came to pass that one afternoon while passing at the Plaza Goiti shed, a horse happened to fall down from a collapse and there was a mother with a child in the carromata. Upon the sudden falling down of the horse, the child was to be crushed and crushed to instant death. Seeing that, Lucio sprang and took hold of the child and thus protected him from being smashed by the merciless wheels, while the cochero took hold of the horse's reins, and from that instant's decision, the precious life of a child was saved.

The throng gathered in and around thickly and wondered and inquired about the affair as is wont by the curiosity-seekers. The policeman came later on and stepped in and dispersed the crowd, blocking the passage.

Unmindful as to what he had done, Lucio gave the child wholly unhurt to the thankful mother, and then raised the horse with the help of some others.

Then he departed and gaily sauntered on the way to his work and bandaged his bruised left arm, satisfied that he had been able to do something that day. That, he remembered, he entered in his diary.

While the gazers crowded the more, asking and looking for the savior of the child, Lucio was already at his office, relating the story in a most matter-of-fact way to his companions.

Oh, yes, it is indeed a sad thing to see some people gaze at other's misfortunes, and instead of helping them, they stand by aloof and with folded arms as if satisfied and happy even at the expense of seeing a child, a boy or a girl, a woman or a man in distress and affliction. What good shall we get from that? It is always blessed to help that to be helped.

But I am sure that time shall come when people shall learn more. The world is still young, and there is yet much to learn and much to perform, too.

The life of Lucio in the city was full of social and business activities. He was one of the members of the leading societies composed of self-supporting students and employes who were forging ahead into the commercial field and world of belles-lettres—into the spotlight of Philippine history.

This is what Juan said of him:

“His friends spoke well of him and they looked upon him with favor. His name was uttered respectfully, for he was not only a man of words, but really a man of action and deeds, and versed in theory as well as in practice along some commercial and intellectual lines.”

There is a tendency nowadays in that Manila is becoming the Mecca of self-made people. For decidedly it is the land of opportunity. What New York is to America, Manila is to the Philippines.

The same applies to London of England, Paris of France and Alexandria of Egypt. For Manila is the

business and educational center of the Islands. It is, in brief, the heart of Eastern civilization. There are its famous walls built of stone moat more than a century ago, and its gardens and parks are so beautifully decorated by nature, and furthermore, the historical monuments and various companies and transportation facilities, besides its navigable rivers and macadamized streets, which make commerce and industry easier and more convenient, thus attracting foreign capital. It has also one of the oldest institutions, the University of Santo Tomas, and its public primary school is considered as second to none of the largest primary schools all over the world—the Meisic Primary School.

The old order changes and gives place to the new. Situated at the most suitable site of the Orient, surrounded by the most favorable climatic conditions, and endowed with the most abundant natural resources, stands the City of Manila, the Capital of the Philippine Islands. It is becoming the center of interests for the tourists, the mercantile firms, and the international powers. And there is no doubt but that in time Manila shall surpass the gardens of Java, excel the trade of Hongkong, and lead the export and import business of the Far Eastern countries, and become the port and mart of the East and the West,—for does not history repeat itself?

Lucio was a worker. So, Manila life appealed much to him, for he gleamed from every moment opportunity's beckoning hand, extended to each and everyone who would but move and work and push on to the

front rank of achievement. The door of opportunity is flung wide open, and enter anyone who may—the poor and the rich alike, without discrimination. It is open and free to everybody, be he a son of sweat or a son of wealth. The hour of opportunity is always ringing and not lacking to those who will do their very best in any given endeavor, for to push on forward and onward to one's goal, one must be conscious of doing his level best and be originally a workingman, one who is not afraid of work, and to sacrifice for the good of others. One must not only work for himself, but must work as well for others, for we become happy as we behold others to whom we are attached happy.

These thoughts flitted into Lucio's mind every now and then, animating him, so he kept on pegging early and late. Yes, from early dawn up to the middle of the night, he read, worked, or studied incessantly, or rather methodically. Gentle reader, don't you know that great men spring from poor men?

He followed the best he could the plans he set up physically, educationally and socially in his calm hours in order to realize his most sanguine dreams. In short, he studied the times and the people, and suited his words to his actions.

That he was a born patriot no one could ignore, Juan contended, for he always attended every Rizal Day and other national movements, and during our loyalty Manifestation Day to America, he was either seen leading his fraternal society, or else mingling

among the spectators, cheering up the speakers, or participating in civic parades of native holidays, such as Patriots' Day and Labor Day.

He believed in the good policy of the United States toward the Philippine Islands, for he had absolute confidence in American ideals, as enunciated by that great American statesman, Woodrow Wilson, the bearer of the Nobel Prize as Peacemaker. In his inmost heart, he was thankful of America for coming down to the Islands, bringing up and inculcating in the seeds of democracy, equality and fraternity; for were it not for her, probably he might have been a common *tao* hidden somewhere instead of enjoying the benevolence of democratic liberty. He now saw with open eyes in the grand aspects of Manila what great wonders America had wrought into the Islands since her Stars and Stripes waved on our isles, more than twenty years ago, whereas compared with the three hundred years' regime of Spain, what startling changes, what great disparity of progress and civilization had been implanted on these shores since Dewey set foot on this eastern soil, the land of the rajahs and the home of the Malaysans, loving, loyal and patriotic!

He was often seen in the Library if not at home—reading, reading, reading—writing or looking up for some cross-references, for he once hinted to Juan de la Cruz, his devoted friend, that he was planning to publish a book—and who knows what goodness he could do! But on hearing that, Juan's lips curled a happy

smile, confidently believing that this man was up to some mysterious work, and so it came to pass that he already saw a rough draft of his manuscript wherein he poured the thoughts of his soul,—and what a fine felicity of expression and polished beauty of thought his untiring pen produced!

Juan then believed that silence is a virtue and that if a man in his whole life time should only write one word, perhaps that single word should move the whole world.

Once Camilo met him in one of the suburbs of Manila with a book in his arms. “What are you doing now, dear old boy?”

“Nothing—absorbed in business and studies.”

After refreshing themselves in a native ice cream parlor, Camilo unbosomed the sore theme of his friend’s heart—about Rosa.

“Rosa! Ay, do as I can to forget her, I cannot. Her memory is still sacred to me. I hope she is now settled.” Those were his sad words that fell from his sealed-like lips which seldom opened.

“Settled? How could she without your knowledge?”

“That is the thing I could not understand.”

But he felt in his innermost heart that the girl would have been a victim of circumstances were she to follow the counsels of her mother and one other man supposed to be her father.

"Say, Lucio," said Camilo, "don't you remember what I told you during vacation days that a sleeping dog catches no bone?"

"And acting on that, what have I caught? Sorrows. . . nothing but sorrows!"

"You told me to watch the outcome. I did. And now even though you think yourself to be the saddest, I consider you the most fortunate. Why, simply because you were the blessed lad on whom genial Rosa bestowed her first pure love. So, after all, Juan and I know what we say."

"But not what the consequence is," replied Lucio as he put his hand on his friend's arms and laughed heartily.

They were in a pensive mood.

"Do you still love her?" asked Camilo, in a sad tone, "do you still love the daughter of Merry Town?"

"You know me, Camilo. To say that I love her when she loves me no longer would be talking at the height of folly. But to say that I still cherish her love and dearly regard her as my ideal woman would not be hoping in vain. If others doubt that I love her, let them doubt, but Heaven knows that I do not doubt my love or her love; yes, Heaven knows how I love her and live loving her; and it seems I was only born to love her and no other."

"I feel, of course, that is just what is taking place in your heart. For I should pity both of you if you would not remain true to each other. I have once loved

myself, but I tell you I have never experienced such emotions deep as the sea, lofty as heaven, and sweet as the native songs of our childhood."

"And so don't you believe that the course of true love never did run smooth?"

"That is what the poets say, and there is much truth in it, of course. But your Rosa has such a pure heart. I could not completely describe her as all women are indescribable. But imagine the embodiment of all that you can conceive most charming—and add to that artlessness, grace, innocence and sincerity—then you would get at least a water-paint picture of your love."

"'Tis better that this feeling should come now and not after. For troubles or jealousies, or whatever you call them, that test the faithfulness of people's friendship, shall only bring us nearer and nearer until we shall never part. A beautiful woman is beautiful—but a pure and virtuous woman is more beautiful still. Ah—one who could suffer and, suffering, love the deeper; for love is like wine—time tempers it, the older it is, the better; and so is love—time deepens and makes it sweeter than ever."

"And so, my dear Lucio, let me live and see the day when you shall be lovers always. . . and let me be the godfather of your firstborn."

"You make me sad. Do not talk of that remote time. But let us hope for the best."

Their hearts beat the same sentiment. Each understood the other, and so they did not go beyond the uncertain limits of time.

Before them lay the green pastures and farther away was the faint outline of the horizon shrouded by the fogs of the sea where the land and sky kissed each other. Way down in the fields were the grass-cutters and the grazing cattle. It was a simple everyday splendor. Ah, the scene was surely worth a moment's pause!

"I have also loved," gravely said Camilo with downcast eyes, "you know of whom I speak about—"

"Maring, I am sure."

"Ay. We were the best lovers at first, but afterwards when the spell of love was shaken off—the engagement was broken; and I was left to my utter distress. And I have thought of the world as the Valley of Tears, as you now do,—and I went to seclusion. . . . And were it not for you, I would have been lost amidst foolish longings—hopeless love. Lucio, when I think of that, my heart hardens, instead of softening, and crying as you now do. And I thank Maring to the last of my days because she taught me something—something of the heartlessness of women and something of the sacredness of the vows of women. And so I believe that those who promise so much are the very ones who little value what they promise. I know, for I speak from experience,—because a silent and faithful girl never says much except when impelled by her senti-

ments. . . . Ah, well, I want to be quiet these times, and if ever I shall love again, I'll love one like—”

“Rosa?”

“That is what I pray.”

“And do you still think of that sad incident? Better not. . . . I am forced to smile—when I found you so depressed and broken-hearted that time. Don't you remember you swore to leave school and not continue and finish the senior year? How foolish of you then. . . . What a nice *affaire d' amour!*”

“How foolish of me!” said he much perplexed. “For love makes us foolish—it makes us everything—a prattling child, a bold youth, a desperate man, or a perfect gentleman.”

“What is past is past. Let us now consider the present. That is the only way we can live happily—by burning the bridges of the unfortunate past behind us, and looking ahead with glowing hopes.”

“And that is only what I do and what is left for us all to do.”

“But thousands live like us, and are none the less happy. . . .”

Camilo was then the one who turned to be the sober of the two. But Lucio tried to dissolve the encircling gloom around his friend's mind, with kind words and cheerful smiles, even forgetting his own. He was devoted to him, and that is why Camilo would risk everything for the sake of their friendship.

They kept silent for a while and then both looked at the enlivening scenes before them, and endeavored to forget the vicissitudes of youth.

However, Camilo told him afterwards that shortly after their last meeting at Merry Town and the consequent breaking up of their engagement, another sad scene at the house of Rosa followed. Camilo related it in this wise:

“Rosa asked her mother who her father was. The mother was reluctant on Rosa’s request to do so. But the daughter was insistent and unhappy, and the mother, seeing her child refuse to eat and grow thinner, at last told her that her real father was Ismael. Then from that time on, Rosa became silent and thoughtful. She was said to have rebuked her mother crying: ‘If you had told me long before, people won’t have called me such a disgraceful name as “A Child Without a Father,” and as it is now, you cannot wash off that impression created in their minds. I am not in the least sorry for your doing so, dear mother, or repent of your fate, but it might have done me good had you told me earlier.’

“To which the mother replied, ‘Well I had repented already, my dear child, and God alone knows my grief, and I am growing old with sorrows and my hair turns white with repentance.’

“That was the history of the child without a father.”

Lucio was silent as usual, and tried to evade the subject.

Camilo, guessing and feeling the same sentiment, wrote to Rosa, but Rosa never answered, either because the letter did not reach her, or because she was too proud to acknowledge her mistakes. Subsequently, it was later known among the Merry Town Circle that it was she or some unknown hand who wrote and broke the sweet engagement of old.

That night they entered the Cine Ideal and drove their cares away.

Lucio thought he was free and far away from the scenes and tribulations of life, but on the contrary, in seeing his friend again, past scenes, and painful scenes of other days, suddenly awakened in his soul, and he was sorrowful.

Then this lonely man thought that he was the melancholiest of men. But somehow or other there was also another woman suffering for him, as he was suffering for her. And the simple story was told by her last letter:

"Dearest Lucio,

Don't you know how I live? Do you care to know? I believe after much thinking that you do and ought to know of all people what I do and how I live. Here I am... I am now in great affliction. Sorrow is my company, and solitude is my enemy. I am sorrow because you seem cold to me—seem to forsake me and to forget me. I am solitude, for I only think of you—ay, my darkest

moments are in picturing our lost happiness, and my happiest hour is in picturing the day you told me to wait for you and then we shall marry, and live as man and wife happily and peacefully. In your stinging indifference to me, I sometimes want to love Oscar, but my heart and soul unanimously acclaim that he cannot fill the vacant place in my heart, which is for you, and only for you! Yes, for you were the one who taught me to love and to love but one—and that is you, my best man. Who could ever in life take or occupy that place in my heart always longing for you? Who could but one man—you! No one, and so I am yours forever. And you shall be mine, too. Aren't you?...

“How many times have I gone to the stream! And I sat there on a bed of flowers, and mused around, and thought of you. I put the handkerchief, where your tears and mine mingled together, in my bosom as proof against all sorrows. And I looked upon every familiar nook in the place, for sweet memories are connected thereon and how I love them and treasure them, for you love and treasure them, too. But wrapped by the stillness of the once glorious spot where you and I had everlasting remembrances, how loneliness brought me irresistibly to the world of melancholiness, as I was there alone and without you—the soul of all my dreams, and the love of all my days!

“You are my first love—the sweet and unforgetful love that shall bear me company in this world and hereafter. As you say I am all the world to you, so are you all love to me, too, dearest first love of mine! Oh how sweet is first love! I believe in what the poets say that first love is the sweetest, the loveliest thing in life. However, I do not wish to keep you from loving other women—may you be happy—but I wish you to think well of me always. You said I must forget you. . . . O see how my tears drop and mar this letter! . . . Do you really mean that? Or have you found another, a better woman than I am? Probably not, and I hope it not, and God forbid, I believe it not! . . . I tried to bury the past as you said and be the best of friends. But simply I cannot do it, for the more I think of it, the more I long and dream of you day and night. Alas, the reminiscences of our first love wash away my tears, ay, they also enthrone me in heavenly joy! I know and treasure all your letters and your words—I am just waiting for your return. So now come home, my Lucio, do not tarry any more—but come back to your Rosa, and, ay, comfort her, make her bleeding heart whole and sane again, make her happy. O come! Take her, yes, take her—and bring her even to woman-knows-not-where and she shall be contented and happy, provided it is with you for whom she goes—anywhere, yes, take her anywhere, even to the end of the

world! Yes! and say to her, 'Rosa, my darling, —have I kept you waiting long? Now I am coming to your side—forever! . . .'

"It is only our love that makes me live. And I believe that women only live for love. I do, and am still waiting for you. Remember me always. Cherish a fond memory for me. Lucio, forget me not. And believe me, I am still waiting for the promised day.

"Yours till death doth us part,

"Rosa."

Unhappy love-sufferers! They were both laboring under an hallucination!

Each ardently thought of the other and each suffered and waited in vain.

Who in the course of his life had not worshipped an idol? Invoke that spirit from the shades and the past is alive again and it becomes a portion of the man today, for our thoughts, or affections, never leave us and they follow us whithersoever we go even in the face of the Grim Reaper.

Time passed, and Lucio grew in intellectual as well as moral stature.

He became reserved, self-composed, and stalwart, and acquired a respectable mien.

His clothing was simple and clean. He was not following the fad of the youth of the times—who were

always up-to-date in the matter of styledom, the vanity of which evoked the famous phrase "*O tempora, O mores!*"

Juan and Camilo were always at his heels, and this was their chronicled observation:

"His activities were many and varied. And although he did not excel in them all, as he was scarcely an amateur, yet his friends already saw some improvements steadily taking place. For the local papers already commented on and favorably alluded much to his writings,—brief and simple, as it were, yet breezy and morally helpful."

He seldom visited Fertile Valley, but his father was always in his mind, and he returned home to see him whenever he could afford, such as when he had no class and no office work, or during holidays, for his office duties did not permit him to go oftener than he desired.

He was a painstaking and conscientious worker, performing his work to his own satisfaction because he did not wait for things to turn up but always put forth his utmost, as he wanted nothing done short of perfection.

Oftentimes his friends took him riding or seeing school games or calling on their townmates or other good friends. When he amused, he meant to do the most of it. Some observing silly girls said that he was the wittiest man they ever saw, and other sensible ones related of him that he was of all young men the most silent and sincerest they ever met.

Being a broad-minded and wide-reader, he conversed freely on current subjects, and with his gift of native eloquence, he was able to handle his topics, and thus attracted attention wherever he appeared; but he adhered to no party principles except those of his own, after hearing the different sides of the question and reading and thinking much upon the matter. He had his own convictions properly formed by right reading stuff. With these in view, he struggled bravely, and worked along the plans laid down by him ever since he came to the city. He fought for his principles, and oftentimes, in a majority of cases, he did not go far astray. For if a man adhered to his object in view, he should be assured of his triumphs. But if he did believe me, he should certainly meet his Waterloo.

this and thought of that and so on *ad infinitum*, then,

“If I fail,” he said, “I do not care, for I have done my very best. Man cannot do more. But the effort put forth makes me stronger, and feel mightier than ever. Man is by nature imperfect, and even so I shall strive to be good, and try to avoid mistakes, for our success or happiness lies in not repeating or doing the same mistakes over again, but in profiting by our own mistakes, by other’s experiences, or by their example. Oh! Experience is a good, mighty, strict teacher, and from her we can learn human nature. If I were asked what is it that makes men differ, the little and the great, I would say—“It is Experience. For such is man’s wisdom—it teaches one to be a man—and when a man’s

a man, he should succeed, if not in the eyes of the world, it should be so in the kingdom of God.' ”

He had ideas, queer, mystic and oriental.

Sometimes many of his acquaintances, especially Oscar, the Governor, and his townmates, laughed at his ideas, but later on they only found out that he was right after all.

One afternoon there blazed the great fire, in Avenida Rizal. The wind blew strongly and the fire spread quickly and enlarged so suddenly that it devoured hundreds of houses. It was a grand spectacle and all people flocked at the conflagration. He was one, but on seeing the distressed people—the women and children screaming, the old people especially crying for aid—he rushed and tried to help those whom he could and being unable to do more, he with others called the policemen and the American soldiers and sailors. Thus they have been able in a way to abate the furies of the tremendous fire that engulfed all the properties and belongings of the poor and unfortunate residents there.

At night, what a great havoc was done there—the posts were like candles burning and kindling brightly, as the merciless wind lashed and blew over the dying embers, and the houses were laid down in ashes and nothing was left except ruin and destruction and desolation,—and the misery of the poor people!

He thought much of the poor and the sick and his sympathy flowed and melted with their feelings. When

the subscription for the relief fund came and the Red Cross was then working there, he helped during the interim of his office hours, and how much aid he had done, people up there to whom his face became familiarly known could tell you all. That was why he was called big-hearted. Some people remarked, "Were he perhaps a millionaire, he would have done more than act and all that—why, he would have given until it hurt!"

The end of the year was drawing near. There was a great rush and movement in Fertile Valley to celebrate December 30th. Some of his friends, especially the new President of the "Rising Generation," and the Chairman of the Program or Rizal Day Committee, wrote him and urged him to go home or send a representative of their literary society in Manila. By unanimous consent, however, he was chosen as the representative of their fraternal organization.

In connection with the Rizal Day, the Program Committee opened a literary contest for the best Rizal essay, for which a gold medal would be given for the first prize, and gold fountain pens for the second and the third. Lucio entered in the contest, and he sent his essay after a careful preparation and thoughtful revision.

December 30th arrived. He went home and saw once more the land of his birth.

He was one of the orators sitting at the tribune.

The toastmaster of the occasion, after opening the program of the day, announced the winners of the con-

test. Foremost among them all, was Lucio's name, leading the 200 odd contestants, and so the first honor was conferred upon him. As he received his gold medal given by the lady of the day, he was acclaimed with hearty applauses.

A great triumph that was for him.

Below is the report of a local newspaper:

With that heart overflowing with love and that sentiment overflowing with patriotism, he stood up, bowed and smiled, and then read his prized essay to the crowd, who was but too eager to listen to a new face after his long absence from town; and how changed, they remarked, was his face and physique—now thinner but well-built and proportioned and more handsome in complexion! He began eloquently and ended forcefully. Such a hero's name is Mr. Lucio Soliman, son of Fertile Valley. His brilliant essay was an eulogy on Rizal's civic virtues, which is reproduced in full as follows:

**“WHAT WOULD RIZAL, WERE HE ALIVE TODAY,
BE FOUND ADVOCATING OR DOING?”**

The remarks of Jose Rizal, the Filipino Patriot, written many years ago aptly demonstrate the substance of his ideals for his country:

“I make the training of the people as a
premise so that they by Education and Indus-

try may attain a Personality of their own and become worthy of those Liberties. * * * In my writings I have recommended Study and Civic Virtues to the people. . . .”

Reading the above again after all these years of progress and evolution, and now observing this merry-go-round life here in the Philippines, such as the Lucullus-like feasts and banquets, “the glorious, fantastic, razzle-dazzle medley” now rampant especially in the city of the fashionables and aristocrats, on the one hand; and the vital questions of Food Crisis, Schools, Agriculture, High Cost of Living, Strikes, Gambling, and Social Vices, before us, on the other hand, all making up the grim Spectre of Death and Stagnation;—what a pitiful sight would these Pearls of the Orient Seas have appeared to Rizal were he alive today, who gave up his life and all that was dear to him that this land might be a worthy sister of Columbia, the gem of the Ocean, and the home of the brave and the free!

Rizal had taken as his major premise the education of the people and this means more enlightenment, and hence the building of more schools, and the training of the masses along the lines of productive industries, thus turning them into useful citizens,—practical scholars, intelligent laborers and patriotic soldiers.

He also emphasized civic virtues and this means that, as applied to the present times, we must have cleaner politics, that is, there must be no political distinction—no Nacionalista and no Democrata,—but all simple brothers, equally alike, when it comes to the

betterment of the people and the question of our national cause, which we must all champion to the last. With regard to his "ideal political aim" like Israel Zangwill, Rizal believed in "not to make the world safe for majorities, but to make the world safe for minorities." He also advocated the unity of his people and the race, and so was the brotherhood of Mankind. Like Wilson, he advocated "making the world safe for democracy." In his "Philippines, a Century Hence" he saw in his vision his beloved Mother Country with a personality of her own, having prosperous, industrious, bold and liberty-loving inhabitants, with her flag flying high, under the starry skies—and all these idle lands turned into one vast productive garden full of coconut groves, hemp fields, sugar canes, lumber trees, rice plantations—with the grandeur, fragrance and music of her mountains, valleys, woodlands, brooks, springs and flowers—that form the poesy of the Ideal and the Beautiful. In the flight of his imagination, Rizal painted the people of the land of his forefathers in the color of such scene. The farmer while tilling the soil sees beyond the folds of the hills the dawn of his country's redemption and beholds her in her seat in the great concert of nations. We look upon our great men today who are running the ship of state as the harbingers of our supreme cause. O would to the Goddess of Justice and Liberty that she might hasten the day when what Rizal preached and wrote and did would become true, and God grant and speed that day when the Filipinos and other peoples of the Universe would be united

brethren,—educated, industrious and devoted citizens of the world,—and then there should be no more bloody wars and Armageddons, but all in eternal peace and plenty, and the world, one vast Fæderation of Nations, and these Isles, the masters of their own destinies! . . .

The whole life of Rizal exemplified Patriotism and true Manhood in their loftiest senses. His life was composed of his divers struggles for education and mastership, social reforms and modern ideas, all of which he hoped to be the coveted ambitions of his fellow country-men, who, once having acquired them, shall become worthy of their liberties.

During his own life our Martyr wanted Independence and ardently advocated for it, but he again took education and labor and civic virtues as the prime requisites, and in support of what he said he forbade Andres Bonifacio to start the Revolution of 1896, for he thought the time was not ripe.

He was after social reforms, but not radical ones, for he desired his people to study, as he did, other foreign countries' knowledge and civilization, and to apply all that was good and beneficial to us, yet retaining still our best traditions, customs and individualities.

There is no doubt but that we all love our country the Philippine Islands and the Filipino people, and that we all pledge ourselves to obey her laws and would do everything possible to bring up the people together into the summit of freedom and happiness, and to protect

her Sun and Stars, and to serve and even die for her as a true and loyal Spartan son.

Rizal was also after the economic and social conditions of these Islands, for he encouraged Agriculture and other Industries. He suited the word to the action when he himself worked as a farmer while exiled in Dapitan, and this same experience furnished the noble theme of his beautiful poem "My Retreat."

We Filipinos ought to read and learn by heart the life and teachings of Rizal in order to be worthy of being called his compatriots. We must also study his conception of the Filipino young men and young women as embodied in his "Filipino Youth."

So were Rizal alive today, he would have been found advocating Education, Industry and Civic Virtues. Were he alive today he would have been found doing everything in his power to bring about the desired results. We the living must crown his dream with tangible success and real deeds.

On Education he wanted the people to acquire a liberal and working knowledge of the arts, sciences and professions, and to provide for more schools with good model teachers, patterned after the most progressive and up-to-date institutions in the world.

On Industry he wanted these rich Islands to be well cultivated and let agriculture flourish as in the lands of the tractors, and industrial training inculcated upon the minds of the youth, and to encourage the economic developments of the natural resources of these Islands.

On Civic Virtues he wanted all to be useful and brave citizens ready to unitedly defend their country and champion her rights and to die for her freedom, if need be, as well as to play fair in politics and to respect the purity of the ballot; and to adopt some social reforms suited to the times, and to imbue into the minds of our Youth the spirit of modern life and the principles of real democracy.

We the living must pledge our best cooperation and support to maintain and to realize the "aurora" of Rizal, who, as one of those immortals who died in the night, left the following message for us to forever remember and to embody into acts:

"Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The Torch; be yours to hold it high—
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow,
In Flanders fields."

The next day the people were savoring of and profuse with their praises or flatteries. His political enemies were completely silenced and subdued by and overwhelmed with envy, for, in the words of a student, "they seemed to find no mistake to criticize and no flaw to break or enter in."

Good deeds always shine mightily and truth always rises uppermost completely. They come to light so

brightly from time immemorial. Noble deeds and bold truths illumine the world and cause the crowns of tyranny and injustice to totter and tumble down and elevate in their places countries free from subjugation and oppression and raise them up to prosperity and eternal freedom.

However, the envy was pacified by the thought that even though he was not truly a great writer, he might not feel ashamed as compared with the poor showing made by his competitors. Of course, as a writer in a new language, which he lisped as a child in his mother's lap, much could not be expected of him, as in his own native dialect; but so many people fall into the pit, for writers, it is said, are born, not made.

Camilo, who read the paper's comment, wrote his friend:

"Where in the world did you borrow that erudition and eloquence? I showed the paper to Rosa, and she is proud of your success. We congratulate you."

And the answer came in a postscript:

"Dear friend, I am sorry I cannot tell you because I do not know."

The New Year came.

It is the belief of the town people that during New Year the sky is clear and blue as if a new page of life has come. It is their belief that they ought to feel light-hearted and happy so that they shall be happy and lucky all the year round.

And that morning found Lucio sitting together with his middle-aged father, and both were happily taking their breakfast. That was after four years of absence in making his way through the metropolis, where if you shall not work you shall not eat. The morning air they breathed seemed to be perfumed with homely love.

Seated together facing each other were father and son.

Lucio was lively and calm in countenance and in good contrast with his father Benito. While the father was bent and silver-haired, and seemed to feel the weight of age, the son was fresh with the vigor of youth. The father appeared content and happy, especially when beside his dear son whose only welfare was all his solicitous care and concern and for whom he lived and toiled,—lo, he was happy now for his son had found his place in the world.

They ate what dainties, fruits and presents Lucio brought for his family. They sat long and contentedly. The father was asking of his son's many experiences and achievements in Manila and his different activities and telling him also of his pleasure in hearing people speak well of him, lavishing him with idle praises, while not paying any attention to envious acquaintances who wanted to criticize and to surpass him, knowing convincingly that they could not, for his integrity of character was built upon the solid rock of the golden-rule of faith.

“My son,” at last spoke the aged father, “I am growing old. It seems now that you have found what career you should follow in life. Only remember: Do that to which your best aptitudes and abilities are matched with. Never ask me, for you know better than I. And I know positively that there are a thousand misfits in this world, bright men who become useless,—yes, for not following the job, wherein Nature meant them to excel. If only man shall be able to find himself and occupied with the vocation where truly he belongs, working in the work he likes best and doing the best he can, then the Millenium they call shall be no more an illusion; it shall be at hand, and thy Kingdom Come! Therefore, do that which you think is best, and, as I said, I am old—and my years are numbered. . . .”

Tears came in Benito’s eyes as he grasped his son’s hands in his and said: “Lucio, you are the prop and stay of my old age. Continue to be honest and good and studious, and to love the memory of your mother, so that her blessing will rest on you. It is now New Year, but sorry I can give you nothing for a gift, but a prayer that you may keep your heart pure and true—Ah you will be good, for a clear conscience is a heaven in itself. . . . I am growing old. Don’t marry Rosa yet—wait for me, it’ll not be long—”

“Father!” exclaimed Lucio, and his face saddened. “What are you thinking of? Rosa is dear to me as my life, but I would give up a hundred Rosas rather than desert you, my father. I should never find any other father in this world but you, but there are plenty

of Rosas, although I would have none but this Rosa Garcia, were there even ten thousand others prettier and richer."

"You are right, my boy. To honor your father or parents is in the commandments. To give up passion and happiness for the sake of your parent is the truest gratitude of a son. It will make you wealthy in heart—and you'll gain blessing from our Great Father."

"Remember, father, I shall always be at your side. Let us live quietly together," he murmured, "if the world has no need of us, and we are all alone, let me love you then alone, and stay with you to the end, for to make you happy is all my one object in life and that is why I am born on earth—to serve you and make you content and happy."

For a minute or so no one spoke, but their thoughts dwelt on the problems of life. They were feeling the same sentiments in common, sentiments which seldom take place in our souls.

The father continued:

"When you enter the world, you will find the many crossroads of life—do your best for humanity, there where you can give the highest possible service to the greatest number. My child, beware of versatility. Many a bright person failed because of doing so many things at a time. Avoid being a Jack-of-all-trades, go where Life meant you to make a chance and be foremost. Find your particular bent, and cling fast to that thing; that is, choose well your occupation, and do not

go to a calling because your friend or somebody else wants you to follow it. No, sir, choose one yourself, for you are the one to do it.

“Don’t choose a business you inherited—because others made fortunes in it. It is your own, as no one else can choose a wife for you.

“The thing for you to do is that which God intended you to do, not what some one else thinks you should do. For, there is good luck to the earnest and cheerful mind, the pleasing personality, and the genial nature.

“When you are on the right job, fling your life into it. Honesty works as the best policy. Deliver your message to your people. And cultivate tack, courtesy, courage, self-confidence, and good-will to man.

“For, that man is happy who values honor and name, above all, who can brave misfortune with cheerfulness and courage, who appreciates all the beauties of this life, who has a mind contented and filled with beautiful thoughts, whose real riches are his wisdom, his high thinking and his love for humanity, who is conscious of his relations with God, and who is happy and learned how to suffer best. . .

“We are not born with a silver spoon in our mouth. We are all born equal, poor, naked, and it is for us to show the world what stuff we are made of. Misfortunes serve but the brave—they put him to the top. They develop character and make him a man among men.”

The old man paused for more convincing and inspiring thoughts. He stood up regarding on his son with a paternal air, and then proceeded:

“Well, my child, Criticism only tries you. Never fear criticism. Haven’t you heard that it is the unsuccessful people, and not the successful, who are liberal with advice and criticism? And don’t you read in the papers that the most noted men, those who do big things, are most constantly criticized? But, by whom? By those who know little or are ignorant of the person’s real work. If they can, why not demonstrate their superior wisdom? They can do it well for themselves instead of wasting it to others who do not want it and most likely do not need it. Critics are like talkers. Doing, you know, is something, and talkers are seldom doers. It is also good to have criticism for the man who never makes enemies or never arouses criticism never amounts to much. For critics are like—say have you noted small dogs barking at larger ones usually hidden behind a fence or somewhere where they can run to safe retreat if danger threatens them? . . . Failure and success are the mere children of our brains. Never fear, fear is largely imaginary, and it scares us like phantoms . . . Consider that we are like a ship launched on the sea of life. It is up to us to prepare for that journey. When we embark we must have those requisites of Life and Success. Do not be drifted by a feeble wind, keep at the right direction; if the gale blows you hard, take in sail; keep firm at the rudder and fight the storm; make yourself

master of the situation; and a new day shall usher you in a calmer, and brighter future. For he wins the fight who can most endure."

Thus impressively spoke the old man, and Lucio silently treasured every bit of his father's words, which seemed to be engraved in his mind as soon as spoken.

"I could depend upon you now. But one more thing I wish to take up with you, which I fear you have not given any thought of nor the attention it deserves, is about choosing a wife. . . . Take one who is simple, and lovely in manners, at most educated, I care not whether she is poor or not, provided she is womanly, has manners, is good-natured, kind-hearted, and knows God and the world. When you love her, above all, and she loves you, then, marry her, and so live happily with my blessings (were I dead or still living—it makes no difference—it's all the same) bestowed upon you. . . . That was what made me happy all these years, my son, because your mother was such—simple, kind, good and loving."

After Epiphany, Lucio returned to the City and resumed his work.

He worked with more ardor and application, and studied with more assiduity and fervor than ever. What we heard of him afterwards was that he gained an increase in salary and graduated with honors at a certain private school where he studied.

He also, in his innermost feelings, tried to wait and hope for the happiest day in his life.

The same feelings blossomed and withered in Rosa's heart.

But O children of love, you fondly cherish elusive hopes just as what you do in chasing wild butterflies! You get them with crumpled wings, and their pure beauty is lost.

O such an illusion in the course of human life!

CHAPTER VI

AT THE CARNIVAL

The morning was mild and fair, and the city was, so to speak, in a roar.

The atmosphere was as if ominously filled with something big to take place, for the many Bureaus and divers firms were closed up and decorated with banners and advertisements and all sorts of merry-looking odds and attractions.

There on the streets were children walking, gaily accosting each other and talking in a tone so unnatural.

Whistles were heard here and there. What is more, trumpets were sounded every now and then and in every side.

Ah! salvos of welcome were heard...

What was going on?

Pretty soon we shall know. Have patience, friendly reader, and follow me with Juan de la Cruz.

There the Ice Plant—or Cold Storage—whistle has given the signal! .. O the whistle—one—two—three! long, long blasts... Something was surely coming as if when a big steamer is at the pier, or when a big man like our saviors are landing or coming, or some commissions from the States are on board an "Empress" or a man-of-war. Really it meant something. There's the prolonged sound again... Don't you hear it? Listen! There it is—the Ice-Plant

signal tells us all. Here, look before you, at the back—then right and left.

And that something, was the big, the long-sought-for Carnival, the celebration of Momus, the mighty pet of the princess dollar and the aristocratic set.

And, oh, the jingling of the bells, what harmony, what merriment, what a sweet melody of life their sound portends!

The prolonged jeering sound of the whistle seemed to call and arouse everybody to arms, and the streets were packed with a flowing and madding and expectant crowd, especially along the many important ones, such as in the boulevards, at Santa Cruz, Quiapo, Binondo and Paco.

The marching of horsemen was heard, and bands of musicians gave the liveliest and merriest of tunes that something grand indeed was happening.

There is the Carnival Parade! And who is there?

Hats off, Gentlemen!

Her Majesty, the Queen of the Carnival, with her handsome consort, was passing by.

Long live the Queen!

Behind and in front of her, were the different representations of the Manila Community—the Americans, the Filipinos, the Chinese, the Japanese, the British, the French, the Italians, etc., who took part, and each respectively displayed the symbol of their country's flag and aspirations.

It looked like a jingoism, or a mobilization, but far from it, it was not that, for it simply was a merry-making proposition, and all were only alive to the spirit of the times, and wanted to cast away all cares and burdens and to mingle freely with the crowd—the crowd now talking in a very artificially subdued voice and in an entirely artificial, foreign accent.

There were in the streets people of all creeds and of all climes and also of all callings, dressed in bright colors and all in garish appearances, and they seemed to forget everything except what was going on, or the spirit of the hour, which greatly animated them. There they were to drink and be sober, and to drink and be merry, for perhaps tomorrow they should die. So they meant to make the most out of it—to be the happiest lot—ay, the happiest fools.

Little children flocked the most to see the fools make fun; and the Fool indeed made it fine, for everyone who saw him, even the most morose and sour, could not help but laugh and participate in the varied diversions of the day.

The passing throng was aglow with mirth.

But suddenly people cheered as one of the richly decorated floats freely threw broadcast some of its products, i.e. cigarettes, candies, biscuits, etc., to the public, and the people quarreled just for a piece of candy, and even went further to the extreme of causing injury on some youngsters.

But last of all, there appeared the nine-day queen

—the Queen of the Carnival. Really she was fair, in appearance all love and in beauty Venus-like. What glamour of life!

She was dressed in rich colors and in splendor beyond what the words in the compass of human description could tell. Her profile was Spanish in form, but her manners and movements, all typically Filipina. The people saluted her. Here's a cheer to her Honor! How very courteous and much applauded was she!

As she passed by a flood of sweet and costly perfume embalmed the atmosphere, and the crowd closed thickly behind her, the Carnival Queen. Thus the parade ended after a triumphal march and the "Star Spangled Banner" was played—and as usual it ended when everybody least expected; for the people who wanted more humorously said that however long a procession or a rope is, it shall have its end.

But ere it terminated, the airplanes flew above and around the Carnival grounds, and flew high and low so gaily, and the languorous afternoon closed marvelously and to the satisfaction of every spectator. How tired were the youngsters and busy in their own childish ways! Indeed, the Carnival was a success, financially and educationally.

Towards the evening, there at the Luneta and Wallace Field, we could catch a faint gleam of the wonderful play of the electric lights. The splendors of the pavilions and other wonders and attractions, just like in every fairs, were pleasing to the senses, but

hurtful to the eyes. There was a mingled blending of beautifully colored lights. Perhaps, Edison never have thought of this havoc of his incandescent light, but it made us just gay and the merriest of fools. Ay, the play of the light brought us, to get a glimpse of the wonderful *aurora, borealis* of the country of the Midnight Sun, for, lo, it was a veritable fairyland!

As you approach, people crowd you up and seem to crush you and, standing there, they will sure carry you and push you along to the entrance gate without having purchased a ticket—and so you have to retrace your steps back again and get an “admit one” for entrance purposes, unless you are such a lucky or a fortunate stockholder with a hundred and one privileges.

Inside, O wonderful! Never in the glory of Aladdin had he behold such a really enchanting dream-land, or Alice in all her adventures seen such a wonder-land!

At the right side stood the pavilions, the artistic shows from the scattered provinces of the Archipelago. Foremost among them all, as people said, was the pavilion of the province from where Lucio hailed. That was the verdict of the papers that day. However, they were all good and instructive and so delicately and artistically framed, built and arranged. Every sort of native exhibition was there, from the tiniest specie of animal and vegetable and mineral kingdoms up to the biggest imaginable; in fact, everything which appealed

to the wonder of man was there. Nothing was missing. And on the way loomed the provincial pavilions, nicely decorated and painted in arabesque and Parisien fashions.

There the Ilongos had their jusi clothes; the Moros, their pearls; the Ilocanos, their handmade blankets and other industrial exhibits; and the Pampangos, their agricultural shows and works of art.

At the left side, you could see the Bureaus lined up and exhibiting the most instructive materials ever gathered, worth thousands of pesos. Those represented our national wealth, gathered from the Batanes to the Sulu Islands, but they were all there displayed for the benefit of the Philippines and its inhabitants thereof.

And at the center, were the private concerns' exhibits of their manufactures, such as machines, wares, automobiles, trucks, tractors, electrical supplies, and a number of articles of daily use.

But right at the back were the private wonder-makers, the magicians, the acrobats, the bailarinas and what-nots.

Ah, well, over there, too, were some of the what-nots they call the Ukalele girls, the dancing girls, the jazz dancers, and oh!—such lovely girls—“too bright and good for human nature's daily food!”

You go on more and you would see the Auditorium. “Come inside,” was the big voice we all hear calling. For the music invites us and the lure of the lights beckons to us. Yes, “Four Pesos” the gate-keeper calls—

“Just four pesos, imagine, and all is over—goodby.”

So let us give our four pesos—sacrifice them to see what is really happening there—rather throw it away—for pleasure’s sake, and in curiosity’s name, and, lo, once a year is nothing. What matters! That’s not too bad, any way.

We are in and we meet our old acquaintances. It is now ten o’clock at night. Ah, there, were the flowers of effervescent pleasure!

O le beau monde!

The Constabulary Band was gaily playing dance music,—exquisite and exciting, inviting the feet to tread a measure on “the light fantastic toe”—there in the wide ball room in open air.

The spirit of the evening seemed to be “On with the dance, let joy be unconfined.”

There seated among some ladies’ gay was Lucio.

At the center was Juan de la Cruz. Our Uncle Sam was there too, making the most of the starry night with a lassie dear and lovely. What a good time he had!

Dancing was at its height, and Lucio danced. Uncle Sam danced. Oh, delightful night of Terpsichore! What gaiety, what merriment, what passion for dancing you excite in every heart and what ephemeral pep you inject in our blood!

In those flitting rounds we could meet Camilo. But later on down at the further side isle, ah! there was Rosa dancing, too. With whom? She was with Gov-

ernor Ismael, and what more—dancing gaily and merrily with Oscar!

Ay, mine, terrible! Ah, we cannot help but escape a sigh of relief or disgust. There was something mysterious about it, and yet the dancing proceeded on. There was something anyway to be cleared up, a knot to be unraveled.

As it neared its end, some familiar eyes met.

Rosa's eyes met Lucio's—they were as if enchanted and fascinated. It was a fixed momentary glance—surprising, and magnetically bewildering, fraught with incomprehensible sighs and longings. In stopping for a while to salute and about to force a smile, Lucio could no longer see the lady to whom he paid courtesy. Say, what had happened in those brief seconds?

It seemed as though her whole form sought to spring to him and being unable to do it, she paused, blushed and did not know more. And he stood in like manner amazed before her. How different was she now! She was twice as beautiful. Before there was in her something unfinished. Now she was like a production which the genius of an artist had given the final stroke of his brush. Her bosom, neck and arms were moulded in lovely proportions. What a beauty, a woman in full possession and development of her charms!

Rosa fainted, or, alas, feigned to be sick!

The conscience, when hurt to the quick, is the most painful wound ever known.

They took her home very early. Why? Her companions knew not why, and thought she was over-excited and tired only,—only, yes, and that she wanted rest after the day's glee and big and exciting event; and more they said she was not used to such life—she was new to the city and a stranger of city life—that noisy and wearisome stir and hubbub of Manila.

At the eleventh hour, Lucio was not to be found on the grounds.

Face to face we stare and ask why? Well, we do not precisely know.

It is a mystery of human nature.

Once in the course of human life the old memories revive and they could not keep wounding the heart. That very feeling awakened itself in the core of the lovers' hearts. Immense sorrows penetrated in their souls, and old times were brought back to life, which like a grain of salt could make an old wound ache alive, or a careless pinning should make it fresh with pain again. But where is the panacea for all sorrows? Tears, therefore, we could not help falling to wash down the blood of the dying past.

Come, let us keep track of Juan. He looked upon all like an attic philosopher.

The night wearily dragged on. The moths and butterflies were there, flittering and fighting against the flaming light which burned their wings.

Lucio arrived at home. He sat for a moment watching life slip between his helpless fingers.

As he undressed, this thought was unconsciously put into his mind, "Until death doth us part!"

Throwing his clothes away and after crossing himself before going to bed, he uttered as if talking to himself, "Unfortunate night!"

He continued: "Why did I see her when least I expected? I could not bear the sight of her whom I once adored. I could not say she had been faithless to me. But I am convinced that there were circumstances beyond her control that forced her to a life she perhaps had never thought of for an instant which would put her into such a situation... Circumstances alter cases. Is it true that I have a premonition that it is the work of somebody? I know and have no doubt at all that she abhors and loathes and curses to the bottom of her heart such life, for it is the quiet, secluded, simple country life she pines for and loves so dearly, and not luxury and society. She yearns for peace—for love and for simplicity—nothing more. O times! O world! O Life! Are there moments when the living walk on our graves?... Ay, I am sick at heart—I am weary of life!..."

Afterwards, he was reminded by the power of his will that he could not allow himself to fall into such weakness.

So, firmly he breathed:

“Let the dead past bury its dead... Can't you be a man?...”

As if awakened from his torpor, he uttered in sad reverie:

“Ah, fickle human nature!...” An idea vague and terrible lighted his wearied brain. “I knew it. God bless and forgive her. I hope she'll be happy... Nonsense, be quiet and calm... I'll not look behind but walk straight forward into the spotlight of the future and make good. If I failed in love, I'd succeed in something else... I will work. I will act and be—well, let time say!...”

That was his determination. By sheer force of will, he resumed his calmness of temperament and serenity of mind.

He went to sleep with his usual buoyant nature.

But the evil spectre still haunted him and hovered on his sleep; and, human as he was, he was subject still to human passions, so he now and then succumbed and peeped into the yawning depth of the chasm that separated him and her from that “till-death-do-th-us-part” oath.

Youth is hot in blood and passionate in nature.

Ah, poor children of passion!

Each, while at home, cried in his or her own way, and they tried to forget, but the happy and inoblivious scenes of their yesterdays were yet fresh and vivid in their memories.

Forget?—they could not and never would. They could not bury the beautiful past, that golden past—which, as it were, was so sacred to them, as it formed part of the golden pages of their lives, for they were living back to their primitive, lovely days.

They were mortals, and they were prone to passionate longings, and liable to indulge in sentimentalism, and likely to fall into the abyss of retrospection. They tried to retrieve mistakes, but they were proud to do so and moreover none dared to approach the other, much less Rosa, and beg pardon—fearing the tremendous effect of public opinion which had already heaped and spread sorrows enough to kill them both and which already made them wretched and forlorn and miserable.

Yet in spite of that, the night ball they left went on, and the people were gay all.

But for the two pining souls, all the merry-making and much expected fun and merriment to be derived from the Carnival which they saw with their own eyes suddenly departed and evaporated like ether into the thin air and to insignificance and oblivion.

Instead of its being a city of fairyland and enjoyment, it in its stead became and turned into a city of sorrows and a den of misery and remorse and wretchedness which sapped the very life of their happiest day.

“God . . . Forgive me!” at last cried Lucio when he dreamed a sad, a terribly sad dream of one dear unforgettable being, that being who was no other than

his once beloved Rosa. He dreamed she married and was miserably fed and consequently soon died.

The mere idea of it stung him to the very soul. What a dark nightmare! Would that it were not true!

“Rosa—*la donna mobile*? . . .

“I cannot think of it—I cannot believe it,” he talked to himself.

He flung the thought aside as fast as it came and flashed into his mind. He gave no more even a momentary thought of it, yes, not even an iotic thought of it, if he ever could help it.

Rosa was tossing on her bed. Wild nightmares also haunted her.

She was crying, poor woman. She was wrapped in the bosom of phantasmagorias.

It seemed as though she saw Lucio with another gay woman—not her’s any more—but another’s. At last, she screamed! That awakened the inmates of her dwelling, and so her landlady came in, but soon retired, seeing that everybody was fast asleep and there was no cat breathing. “Ay, Lucio, could we be ever united?” She sighed. “Fate is very cruel to both of us. . . .” Furthermore, like Ophelia doubt made her mad, “He loves me? He loves me not?”

The next day as usual Lucio went to work, and in his work he oftentimes and unusually made mistakes, unpardonable mistakes. He was, in short, inefficient. What ailed him, he knew very well, but concealed it in the secret chamber of his heart.

He worked, for work exalteth the workers.

Once his curious officemates asked him why he seemed so pale and careworn. And they even joked him for indulging too much in all probability in the Carnival affair. But he assured them that he did not do so in excess, for he was an advocate of moderation in everything.

At the closing night of the Carnival, Lucio went again, as he promised his mates the other night.

On seeing and hearing the gallant Pierrots whispering words of love and endearment to their coquetish Columbines, and the Harlequins luxuriously rambling in the thickness of the crowd and freely mixing with the merriest set and displaying their wits and talents lavishly upon the geishas and sensuously teasing the bailarinas, who were rushing like butterflies into the flames of the fire of pleasure, he thought of the past event and the first night, to forget which he could not, for he freshly recalled in vividness the hour he met Rosa in that Carnival spot. And he pushed the idea back again, but more clearly did the picture present and outline itself, and wildly it rose and haunted his wearied and morbid mind.

Strewn with an inch thick of confetti was the Carnival ground, and the trumpets whistled and the merry-makers foolishly caroused and blindly delved in pleasure again. There the children frolicly went around, laughing and riding on the merry-go-rounds; and all,

people and music and pleasures, comingled, and all cares and sorrows covered.

It looked as though the sun never set—for it was apparently daylight.

Everything seemed to be attired in its best, all pavilions and all people, men, women, children and bald-headed ones, reveled in the pleasure of the hour. Ah, there passed him the fleeting Columbines, the gallant Pierrots, the aristocratic Harlequins, and the gracious Clowns—the wisest fools in Christendom! He wanted to be gay and mix with the fun, and seek adventure, ay, he felt himself like Haroun-al-Raschid.

He could not resist the temptation of the pleasant and alluring hour—so he mingled and plunged into the heyday of life. . . . Occasionally he threw confetti to some chance acquaintances, while the artful Columbines *cap-a-pie* coquetted and joyfully flirted him by throwing confetti to his face, and whistling their trumpets at his back. He was in the thickness of the happiest throng, the maddest crowd. He lost sight of his companions. He advanced on nonchalantly for further sight-seeing.

As Fate had it, the very being he wanted most to avoid came in full view—ay came to him—there while he was at leisure seeing wonders—standing alone, while his companions secured their tickets.

“Lucio! You here? How you broke my heart!” was the soft voice speaking behind him, and perhaps he knew the voice and the little cold hand taking hold

of his arm. But he did not remember whose tone that was. So he was curious and unprepared.

Turning back he saw—whom did he see?—he saw Rosa.

“Ay, Rosa. I am here to throw away the cares and sorrows of life. . . . I hope, however,” he went on sorrowfully and falteringly, choked with hidden emotions, long felt, “I—I hope you are enjoying it.”

The keen Rosa felt the effect of his words and shrank from the stinging reserve of his actions and his passive indifference.

He looked at her pathetically, and she looked at him coweringly.

“Well, not so much as you do. You have your companions, don’t you? I wish you enjoy it most.”

“And so do I wish you, too. . . . Are you happy with—”

The question oppressed her, and she sadly turned her face away.

“Are you happy with—those girls?”

He was taken unaware.

From their faces, we could read that women could better suffer than men.

Poor love-sufferers!

The name of “girls” also affected him and he felt the sadder. And she felt the same for the “unspoken name.”

"I hope you are. . . Anything I can do for you? May I take you to the Auditorium?"

She could not say nay. She was betwixt love and courtesy. Perhaps that was what she wanted.

He offered his arm, and as she was to put her delicately beautiful hand, suddenly appeared Oscar with Don Ismael and Camilo, too.

"Thank you—I have my companions. We'll meet there only," was her low-voiced reply, and she withdrew. Her dark sad eyes told him more, and he seemed to have understood the untold message.

"Yes—we will."

How lovers' hearts understand the unwritten language of sentiment!

Courtesies were exchanged between the two parties, as soon as the companions of Lucio joined him, and all entered the Auditorium, the best and most comfortable place in the Carnival, especially for couples.

The two friends were once more happy again in being together.

"Say, why are you with this company?"

"We're townmates, you know. It's against my nature to be found in the company of Oscar, but Rosa is here and I must look after her for her mother's sake. I should say, for your sake."

"Stop!" said Lucio.

They entered the ball room. All was bathed in glorious color and rare splendor. One might think that he was in the famous palace of Versailles in the time of Louis XIV.

The turn at last came. Rosa and Lucio danced together.

What a beautiful pair! That was inevitable because it was Camilo who desired it and who brought them hand to hand, and face to face. So, with the permission of both parties' companions, the two danced.

Afterwards, they went to the refreshment room for Rosa said she wanted to drink or wanted him to take her there for a *tete-a-tete*. Rosa began to talk in a sad, tender voice:

"Lucio!" Her eyes dropped while his calm countenance changed.

"Rosa?" he asked in a subdued, sentimental tone.

"O! Can you forgive me?" she said in a trembling voice, fraught with stifled emotions.

"Hush. . . For what and why? You always know I do. Useless!" He looked long at her and continued, "You know I always forgive you. I shall not interfere in your plans. Never. Go where you will. For I have confidence in you—till the last hour of my life. My soul is yours wherever you go and my prayers follow you," he said calmly as he sipped his soft drink, but his voice lost its musical cadence and assumed a most reserved one—blurred and very sad.

And the glass trembled in Rosa's fingers.

"But your coldness, which conceals your emotions, is what makes me cry. You do not let your heart or your natural self speak, but your reason. Why don't you be more lenient to me as of old? I have suffered all these days—yes, for you, and for you alone. To live any longer, I cannot, I simply cannot live and lead this life. I am not born to it. But, my mother wants me,—ay!—wants me to marry—marry Oscar and—"

She could not continue, her voice was husky and she was choked with too much sentiment.

"You must do it as a good and dutiful daughter ought to and should," rejoined Lucio. "Rosa, O Rosa, I know and realize what you feel, and I also appreciate your deep regards for me and your family, but there is a far greater duty that holds you back, and you are in duty bound more to your family than to me. A dutiful daughter is the happiness of her mother. Remember. There is an abyss between love and duty. Go wherever duty calls you, for a dutiful daughter, if she shall not live happily here on earth, may perhaps do so in yonder heaven above us all," pointing to the dark sky. . . . "Besides you owe it to your mother and your father to obey them for they gave you life and all. . . ."

"But they gave me not love—that is mine to dispose."

"But not to dispose of as to bring unhappiness to them."

“My happiness and my love are above all else!”

“Your mother is like God on earth, what you propose she disposes, and she only means, I am sure, to make you happy, and if you shall obey her, there is no reason why you shall not be as she intends you to be—to live in joys aplenty—there in the garden of paradise—full of sweet life and happy days.”

Lucio sighed. His heart was full. His words faltered and he was very sentimental, yet sincere and reserved. His own words seemed to stop the beating pulse of his life, and to suffocate him in an instant. But he strenuously held on so that others might be happy. He did not care for his own happiness—his did not matter a bit,—his was nothing—he cared more and considered far superior the happiness of another whom he loved better than his own—that was all the world to him.

“A weary lot is mine, Lucio, look into my heart and you will know what is just in there. Open the book of my life: You are there, and if not, the pages will be black and utterly black. Only death shall part us in thought. . .” She chuckled, as feelings deep and sad filled her whole countenance with dark forebodings, which she could not hide. And she blushed, and further sobbed, “As you wish and sanction that I shall obey—let me think of it once more—but duty or no duty I shall be yours only or nobody’s!”

“You don’t feel well, do you?” No answer.

Then she regretfully said after a pitiful glance at him and a calm reflection:

“Hope you’ll be happy with another—”

“Never, Rosa, never!”

She said that for she thought that the great waves of destiny cast each other’s hopes along foreign shores.

He was silent, and contemplated long, as if mourning over their best days. Then Rosa, as she was about to stand up and fan herself, asked: “Lucio, did you receive my letter?”

“O yes—I did. . . .”

His face reddened.

“That is the letter wherein I poured forth the life of my life—and—if I die will you please bury it with me? . . .”

“Why do you talk thus, Rosa?”

“Because I do not see any future—”

“You are a good Christian, so pray, and the Lord shall be with us two. Pray and hope,—lest we forget. Will you remember that?”

“I will. . . . But will you kindly think of me?”

“More than that! That is a thing I have a thousand times told you.”

“And I know it, but it’s only my heart that speaks.”

“Does it not feel happy?”

“Only when in your company.”

The meeting of their eyes was sufficient, as from each other’s facial expressions, they read what could neither be spoken nor described.

Those were their last words. They stopped and parted, as their companions joined them and interrupted their conversation.

That was the last glance Rosa and Lucio had of each other during that memorable Carnival.

The dancing continued on, but they retired home very soon. Again they saw the glittering lights of the city which brilliantly darted wondrous rays against the dim canopy of heaven, while their hearts throbbled with impulses of passionate love and filial duty.

Lucio meditated, "It seems that Rosa shall never be mine, but I'll be true to her unto the last."

"Is my hope for happiness a bygone delusion?" asked Rosa to herself when they separated.

There was an impassable glen between them. Such was what Fate decreed to the children of love and sorrow.

Happy are they who know how to love and loving could love dearly and everlastingly and ever so faithfully.

But sad are they who love so faithfully and then only find out at last that their very faithfulness is just what makes them sad and unhappy.

That night Rosa sat down near an open window and gazed in vacant space over the faint horizon. Through that silence she saw a hazy and long reach of future days strung together like pearls in a rosary—pale, lusterless and wet with pious tears.

For had they not loved each other and remained as innocent as they were when first they met, then their world would perhaps have been that Eden where they were born, green with the pasture lands, flooded with the music of the chirping birds of the woodlands and the sweet blowing winds, and gaily filled with the fragrance of the wild flowers of the plains and the innocent love of the children of both Fertile Valley and Merry Town.

Twelve o'clock sounded—yet that was an early hour for the revelers, and the Carnival continued on and never did Solomon in all his glory find such natal magnificence and beauty—as such is only born in the tropics under the starry skies, in the lands of the Palm and Pine.

The Columbines and the Pierrots ceaselessly danced on and on; Harlequins and Fools, Rich and Poor alike, were all there, and merry, until four o'clock sounded the parting hour—and bid goodby to Carnival—goodby until another year!

And we leave Juan still philosophically regarding on the ephemeral effects of the Philippine Carnival upon his people in particular and upon the world in general.

As he left, he scratched his head, and a remark escaped from his lips:

“This is a place to be happy like little children and not to be sad like broken-hearted lovers.”

CHAPTER VII

BLASTED DREAMS OF HAPPINESS

As the Carnival ended, so did the joys and merriments of the people cease, and everybody went into the daily grind of office routine and set the wheels of labor running.

So did Lucio, too. And all—Rosa, Camilo, Ismael, and their train went home, except Juan de la Cruz, who remained in town, to have a peep and bird's-eye view of how things slid on, as he fondly put it.

Happiness had now appeared somewhat as an absolute ideal, a living impossibility only to Lucio, for all the sanguine dream of happiness he expected from this world was lost—lost beyond his darkest reckonings.

Sorrow was all his—and after turning his situation all over, reviewing his past life, he hopelessly wrote at the bottom, as if summing it all up, the words: "Born of sorrow I am, and a man of sorrow I shall be. . ."

For it was the current saying in Fertile Valley that as soon as Lucio was born, his mother met her eternal doom.

However, because of his strength of will and integrity of character, he did not take note of his sadness. That written line was only the capricious result of subtle deductions, he told Juan. And he drew a heavy line over it, and wrote, "I will hope."

Now even with a wandering mind, still he kept pegging on to his daily work and sticking to his plan of self-improvement in order to be able to escape the cruel ordeal of the criticism of the people.

The gossip of the people, while it worried him so much before, now did not affect him any longer; his conscience shielded it with work; for all people make mistakes, and all are born imperfect—nothing new under the sun, except that one must do yet a lot of things—to shape conditions and bring peace out of chaos, and build master arts out of the commonest objects, from the materials of nature, and so benefit the world and mankind.

He was not altogether a pessimist nor an egoist. He was rather an optimist and an idealist in soul. And he was loving at heart. He suited the thought to the deed by his own life. When he was down and out, he put more pep into his mind, and thus recovered his equilibrium.

But somehow and somewhere, somebody told him,—yes, he did not remember who—somebody told him and not only that somebody but people said actually—that someone was at the eve of marrying. But when he came to know it, the act was already consummated. Shall you let Lucio know it? Not, of course, if we could help it. It would certainly break his heart. Why not tell it, if it is at all to be told sometime? . . . Let us, therefore, spare him the keen and awful pain of it.

Rosa was married to Oscar. People did not know why—forced, traitored, or what?

Had he used means fair or foul?

The answer was blank.

And this misery must ever remain a secret and an enigma. Let Time throw light upon it some other day. But we cannot do it now. We are not the mortals to divulge it. It is sacrilegious to attempt to do so. We cannot suffer the consequences.

But the news travelled far and wide—fast—faster than the wings of the light of the sunrays, just like Mercury. For you cannot keep or hide idle news of truth secretly long. You surely cannot shut the mouth—though you can dam water. Such shall stagnate, and there is always a friend, a good Juan de la Cruz, who shall tell it to the people, for the love and betterment of humanity.

Juan de la Cruz was not so bad as that, but he was the bearer of the news. After investigating the whole matter in his own way, he briefly wrote to Lucio as follows:

“My dear Lucio,

“All the town is now in utter askance and wild uproar, suspecting why did Rosa marry Oscar? Was she not engaged to you—or was the engagement broken? Why, what has been the matter? We cannot tell—even I—I cannot understand. We are at a loss—all—everybody, and

nobody knows who's who... I can not fathom at the root of things. It is all darkness like Erebus. All night, dead night—no daylight gleaming at all. No ray of sunshine. Goodness... I am in deep waters. All is Greek. Let me know it truly, please. Yes, I must know it. By God! You are the only one who can throw light on this delicate subject.

“But before I close I hear, and I only hear, mark you, that she married partly to obey her parents, and really to save her honor. Or did you only forsake her? I hope not. Oh, but the people are busy in discovering how the marriage was brought about one horrible night! The ball is now rolling... They know, if I am not mistaken, for gossip is not always so, that you are truly engaged, and unless something extraordinarily grave and serious had happened, it was broken. May it not be so! But, oh, the people, for the voice of the people is said to be the voice of God,—O the people—they blamed her, simply they blamed her, the poor girl! Yes, everybody's eye is turned against her in scorn—even I—“we do blame her,” condemned woman! The people simply cannot stop blaming and pitying her. They wished you were her husband! But, after all, I think, she had done wisely, as she could not do otherwise.

“Am yours in sympathy,

“Juan de la Cruz.”

“What shall I do?” he madly mused. “Kill or sacrifice?”

He brought his fist down with a bang, and stood up erect—contemplating the best and simplest course to pursue.

He wanted to revenge. He wanted to kill. O blackest of all hours!

But at last he decided to forgive, which was more divine. His heart was big, and his better self prevailed, and he forgave; but he too wanted to know before forgiving.

All that day and all that night, Lucio was unable to sleep. He simply could not rest. That went on for sometime.

Had he allowed himself to brood over that darkest spot of his life, a raging tempest might have continually taken place in his mind.

So he became a wandering Jew of a lad—but not at all broken-hearted. For he had such a complete mastery over his passions.

But at times he succumbed to a collapse. So he fell sick and was ill for many days and months.

The public said he had been a spoilt child, a spoilt child of nature.

But Juan de la Cruz heard by chance that Lucio sent a telegram to her or rather to both husband and wife, wishing them the best of conjugal life and every happiness. “Wishing them,” said Juan, “a joyous honeymoon—happiness and long life ‘ever after,’ just as the Arabian fairy tales were so fondly ended.”

Juan thought that to be a burlesque. But Lucio meant it literally.

When the message was received, Rosa turned pale and white, and cried, and nothing could renew her blighted hopes.

Sorrows caused by disappointments and afflictions work a great deal on man's physique, and are long felt, and remain uncured. When Lucio dwelt on the darker side of life for having gleamed no ray of hope, he became such a pale, haggard, thin man. What a transformation, from a robust, rosy health to a wornout, old and wrinkled man! What an unbearable weight of sorrows Rosa's marriage had caused him!

What a wreck sorrow had made of him, poor soul!

No more that handsome face; no more that winning smile; no more that agile step and contented movement; no more that poetical touch of his nature;—no more, no more, were his joys—no more his happiness; no more his ideals, ay, all is no more! . . . Now all was gloom, melancholiness, and sadness,—ay, sorrows played their part in the sad linings of his countenance, ay, sorrows and nothing but sorrows, only sorrows and nothing more!

He simply found no happiness in this world, as he colored according to his moods the objects he surveyed in his sombre vision.

While his enemies rejoiced in his misfortunes, his true friends looked upon him with great pity and compassion.

Lucio endured all injury done against him with a certain proud patience that disdained to complain.

Wornout with grief, he went often to the Pasay Beach, and sometimes Juan saw him there, pensive and a broken-looking man, alone, gazing and watching the dying sunset which left golden shadows with purple mists behind, and reading, anything that came his way—newspapers, novels, anything,—wearily watching the ships sailing and passing by—going to a world more brilliant and joyous than the world wherein he lived and where he seemed to breathe foul air, and felt uneasy, as every nook connected itself with a lost link of memories dear and forever gone into dead oblivion—a place he knew not where.

Once he was seen in swaddling clothes. People did not laugh but felt and divined the cause of it.

He was now dreamy, for the poems he read were such, and he indulged again in the habit of devouring romances, such as the works of the great French and English Romanticists, and he imbibed their darker sides.

Little by little his sorrows vanished, and little by little he recovered from the shock.

In his work and studies, his friends slightly noticed the return of his normal senses, and he frankly told them he had come out from the chrysalis of sadness and despair. They saw much change and he became busy as usual. Why he felt so, he said, was because of his love to Rosa that made him sick for years.

Time healed his wounds at last, but the scars of sorrow left their footprints upon his heart in mournful disillusionment.

He wanted to forget, and he summoned all his will and energy, and, such not yet having entirely departed from him, gained recuperation and poise, and was strong and healthy again, and perceptibly rejuvenated. That's the notion of Juan. His robustness was enough to carry him on his mental and physical activities.

Pale, thin and forlorn as he was, still his mind or intellect was bright and remained fresh, and perhaps keener than ever for his unnumbered days and nights of sorrows brought him experience and wisdom, the dearest things man could possess. He learned from the "School of Life" things never to be found in textbooks, how to suffer humbly, suffer like a man, as Jesus did, and as his father told him. Thus he graduated with honors from the world's University of Hard Times, the greatest institution ever built.

A man may be ruined, but his soul remains unimpaired.

For Lucio had now resumed his former work. He worked with the local newspapers besides his regular office duties, and became a man of letters; and, what is more, he continued writing his book of English and vernacular poems and stories and essays.

Juan, who gained insight into the work, remarked that all that Lucio read and all that he knew and experienced was all there in that single book—"The Novel

of Life"—for it was written with his blood; it contained the philosophy of life, as he saw and felt and lived it.

His letters breathed with lofty ideals, and pulsed with ardent patriotism.

In the words of Camilo, "he enthusiastically helped recruit men for the national army, or the Philippine Guard. He became a devout friend of the weak women, and a constant and stout champion of the disconsolate, and a wise counselor of the love-lorn."

For he was no longer a boy. Sorrows made him a wiser man, instead of a fool as some others become, after passing through the maelstrom of life.

When others become forsaken in love, they turn mad—because probably they had not the heart to suffer and be men, real men, men who could face and fight a battle and win without a grin against the thousand and one odds of human frailties.

They sometimes even think that they hear the call of the grave—these love-lorn people are perhaps less than their sentiments, for really man is greater than his sorrows, his afflictions and his surroundings. The trend of modern philosophical science says that we can be happy or sad, by the color of thought we ourselves produce. Thus man is either happy or unhappy as he wills. He is not a child of destiny really, but a man of his own making.

There are, however, times and hours when the heart bleeds and we know not why. The same thing happened to that great Alexander, and Bismarck, Mark

Antony, and to Napoleon, the Lion of Europe, for these are but fits of human nature, for truly all bow down before the powerful sceptre and irresistible commanding power of love and beauty. Man is always a man—subject to passions and to the laws of human nature. We cannot escape that. However, we must, like a man, do our best to be the ruler of our souls. That is why we are called men and not brutes.

One night there were seen two men walking side by side at the streamlet near the roadside. They were talking with subdued tones. They pursued their way quietly and then when they were hidden among the trees, one of them, the tall and fat one, said in a monotone:

“Do you still persist in your wishes?”

“Sir, I do, and what I have done for you deeds could tell—and I know you mean what you say, and I also mean what I ask, and so I will do my best endeavor to merit the reward, and please remember it.”

“Well, my lad, that is quite a different thing when it comes to fulfillment, and I sometimes doubt if you will do as you think and say—for doing is another from wishing. You can wish to be a king, but when you are on the throne you forget what the duties of a king are. That happens to the world, especially to man. He promises much to get what he wants, but when he obtains it, he laxes in his former efforts and warmth of enthusiasm. So it is but natural to lag and not do what one wishes to, else the world would not be plunged into the drifts of the sea of life by time and weather.

Wishes seem to be the passports to the kingdom of what you seek, but to forever take care of that kingdom you must be vigilant and constant in your wishes to realize your desires. That is, execute your resolve and act in accord with your plans."

"Do you still doubt me? Have you not seen it expressed in actions? Is there any shadow of doubt lurking in your mind? O let me demonstrate it again at the next polls, and I am sure you will get your present seat, and enjoy its blessings. The gratitude I profess to you I seemed to have shown already, and if that is not yet sufficient to get my part of the spoils, I would do it over again just to show fully and concretely that I abide by my words."

"Those are very nice words, indeed. But I have lived much in this world, and sometimes feel doubtful. I've lost my faith in certain people and in women, and it's the more natural to lose it again in men: I know them. They urge you and push you up to the top so long as you have money but at the very moment when you thought you were safe at the top and have reached climbing the summit of your ambition, then in that dire hour when you need them most, they desert you and when you fall, you fall alone, and you alone suffer the bitter consequences. . . . I think the best of friends are they who come to the man uninvited in the hours of his poverty and troubles, while they come rarely in the hours of his prosperity unless solicited. And as my hair grows white with all the sad and the happy ex-

periences I have in the long battle of life, I am so far convinced that young people are not likely to be depended upon."

"But am I not an exception?"

The tall and fat man paused for a while. However he seemed to have recognized his young companion as trustworthy.

"Well, young man, I have confidence in you."

"If that is so—trust me then—and let things in my hands and I will take care of them, provided I have your assurance that she will be mine, and that is all that I ask of you."

Then they arrived near a door, but they stopped again and continued their conversation.

The young man had a determined look. There was discerned a savage twinkle in his eyes, and he was much absorbed in his request. He spoke thus:

"Now has come the time when I must beg of you to have a moment of talk with her while you hold your conference with the mother. Can you grant it?—Say yes."

The man was much taken up, and the paternal doubt which once in a while surged into his head cautioned him to beware, and that aroused him from his sleepy, doubting mind.

It seemed as if his heart was struck by something incomprehensible and reminded by a link of human affection that hovers over the things it loves and where human happiness clings for life.

The young man was about to open the door, but the tall figure stopped him and grappled him on the shoulder; and, looking him up fiercely, he said:

“Here. Stop that! Beware of what you do. Here I take your word. Swear before Heaven and me this night that you will not harm nor touch even the hair of that girl. Remember, that for any breach of this condition, I will hold your very life responsible!”

Ah, there was visible such a fierce, compelling glare from the eyes of the tall commanding figure of the two men, followed by the flash of a glistening metal, nay, the dim light of the stars in the sky showed it to be a revolver! And it was raised and aimed at the head of the small one, and the man firmly commanded:

“Swear that you will do no harm to my child.”

There was silence, but no winking of the eye, and the man with the revolver continued: “Bad as I am yet I value the honor of my flesh and blood. So swear that you shall not betray me or dishonor my daughter!”

“I swear,” was the weak voice responding.

Then they opened the door, and knocked. They saw some one holding a lamp as they approached, and were soon after met by a pallid woman. The woman knew them—the light revealed their identities—the Governor and Oscar.

The woman, as soon as recognizing the midnight visitors, told them to come up, and inquired as to what they wanted in such a belated time.

The Governor approached the frightened woman, and said, "Felipa, do not fear, there is nothing in this trip, and can you accompany me to our tenant's house?"

"Where and why in such a night?"

"Well, help me, there is something very important that I must tell you."

"But it seems that I cannot do it, Ismael, Rosa is sleeping, and would she be let alone to the wolves of the night,—the darling child?"

"But, I have to tell you something pressing, which admits of no delay for at least twenty minutes or so. Yes, it is of the most vital importance. It concerns you and me, and what is dearer still, it concerns your little Rosa."

"Rosa? What has the innocent being to do with this? You seem agitated this night..."

The Governor summoned his young companion and whispered:

"Wait for me here, do you understand?"

"I'll be here," was the answer.

Returning to the woman, he resumed:

"Ah, why are you nervous, my dear?" folding Felipa close to his breast. They went into the garden shed, and way down in the street, and walked far into the night.

How the world leads us to believe that the old are as romantic as the young!

And the two continued their walk and talked in a familiar tone, while Oscar was left standing at the doorway and then sat on a bench in front of the main building.

Oscar looked serious, and thought much. He walked up and down, and then seemed much troubled, as if the hand of temptation was hovering on his grave. He paced up and down, and then muttered words of love and then words of oath.

Any one who might have seen him that minute would have taken him for a mad man, for sometimes he laughed, and sometimes he turned forlorn, and then shook and lifted his hands, swore and then sat down again, and was lost in utter despair.

And while he was in such a mad reverie, let us follow the couple.

As they reached the garden shed, they stopped, and the woman was the first to break the spell of the night's silence. For there was no sound and no movement of life, except the sighing wind and the occasional howling and hooting of the owl that was highly perched on the kapok tree.

The woman nervously uttered: "So do you want to bestow the hand of Rosa to that Oscar? And do you think he will love her more than I love her, even though she does not receive the same love from her father? Oh, I tell you, as I told you long ago already, this child is the dearest thing I have on earth and were it not for her I would have been dead these many years,

and I do not want to live any farther in this world of darkness. I gave to the world a name which is pure, purer than from where it sprung. Oh, how I turn disgusted with my life as I look back to the time when I gave all myself to you, heart and soul, twenty years ago!..." Then the lonely woman cried, and tears fell down upon her still beautiful face and her carmine lips curled such a detesting defiance.

Then Ismael, tried to calm her, but useless, until he frowned and scolded her. "Say, Felipa, what has been the matter with you? Are you not content with this life? What more do you want? I give you food, I give you money, and all that you need daily, and any other woman so situated as you are might have been contented and would not change shoes with other women! They should envy you and feel green and yellow. This is passing strange, is it not?"

"Well, do my words make you sad? But if they do, I only speak in behalf of my child Rosa, and do not take them to heart, will you? You know I am only after the welfare of the child. As for me, feeble and wretched woman that I am, you can do anything—you can throw me to the dogs—but O not my child!"

"I know it as I am also after the welfare of your two. Give her to Oscar. I know with this Oscar she will live well, as he is rich, and besides you know he has served me well."

"I know it would break her heart—for she loves another."

“Another? Who the devil is that?”

“Lucio Soliman.”

“Lucio? Ah, let me think. O I see—that man who was here last April! Isn’t it? Well—that is a smart guy, but he could not rear Rosa in the way she was born. Let her be Oscar’s wife. I’ll respond to it.”

“You will respond? Good, but remember, it will only break her heart and I do not wish to make her sad, even though her father’s wish is to cut short her rosy dreams. Yes, to you what should her happiness be? Because you were not the one who spent countless days and sleepless nights tending over her for nine months and all through her infancy, and I have brought her with the tender care of my tears all these years, and I love her and her happiness is also mine. Now you do not care for her happiness and her honor as you no longer care for mine. O God! Ismael, let us alone—let us die even in poverty and in hunger, but never touch her purity—never hurt her feelings. . . . So to her you seem repulsive. And as a result, the child does not look upon you with favor. It is because of your treatment to her. . . . Some times she asks me of her father. If I keep silent, then she cries. But when she heard your name she was sad, and said, that you were cruel and not fit to being her father. So, you see, even an innocent child feels your injustice to her mother. Oh, if ever there is any wretched, and unfortunate woman in all the world, who has been the victim of her love,

ay, it is I, Ismael, I am the most unfortunate and miserable and disgraced woman in all the universe! Poor Slave of Passion!" I say it because I do not have any hope of recovering that lost honor, that lost love! . . . Hopeless world! Why, because as you are married to another woman, I am bound to keep silent—bound to forever be a slave. O I am like a bird with wings cut—I want to fly—but hopeless! And you are that cruel hand who cut out all the wings of my youth. . . ."

"But did I not tell you that as soon as my present wife in the eyes of the law dies I shall marry you and make our child legitimate?"

"Even so—but that is past—a promise unfulfilled. And why don't you recognize her now?"

"It is not yet time—it is too premature."

"Now you know it—but you do not do it and you do not know what misery you are bringing to me and my child. O poor mother and child! But I tell you, I do not want to remain under this yoke of bondage. I renounce it all. You have made me miserable already and beware of making this child another disgraced woman before the eyes of the public! Remember, every debt has to be paid. . . . And, listen, I have left my parents in Fertile Valley, I have left my friends and all those dear in life in order to follow you only, and believing your words and your promises to be true and genuine, I followed you to the end of the earth. And you deserted me! And now you have not done your part, while I sacrificed everything for your selfish de-

sires at the cost of my own. Yes, now, you turn back at your words, yes, now that you have got what you wanted and satisfied your meanness. . . . Really, I am led to believe that while women are the weakest creatures, men are the most wicked ones."

"Do you repent for having entrusted your fate to me, Felipa dear?"

"Repent? Why, I more than repent—and cursed be the hour I fell into your hands!"

Her maternal love pleaded for her child. She ardently continued:

"So now it is my child you want to give to another liar like you? Know that even though it is not an open disgrace—it is so because she is pure and innocent like any earthly virgin. Don't you realize that when you give her to Oscar you are giving her to a beast—giving her to a ruthless animal? Had she any power, she would have hurled you into the pit of hell, all of you without any exception. Oh, simply I pity her—if you do not pity your own flesh and blood. Probably you do not pity her because you have not suffered for her as her poor mother did all these years. . . ." Then she sobbed and stretched her hands to Heaven: "Oh my Rosa, my unfortunate child, let me carry you back to your old grandmother, and let us leave Merry Town, and spend the rest of our lives there with our relatives, whom I have left. And they think I am dead, but here I am—disgraced, alone and hopeless!"

"Oh! there, Felipa, do not talk womanishly. Have reason. Think what it shall all mean to you and your

child to have this boy Oscar. Know that he is all right and I hold his promise to love and to take good care of both of you."

"So by marrying Rosa to him—you mean to wash off your hands, don't you?"

"But you will then be well provided for."

"So you got tired of us?... Thank you."

"No! He is under my power. Tell me, when they are married, what you do not want and I will arrange it all to your entire satisfaction. Oh there, Felipa; look at me, have you lost your faith in me? Oh, my ever dearest woman, my fair Felipa! Be reasonable, and think of the future of your child."

"If you love me, spare my child, even though you do not want to spare us this pain. It shall kill me, it shall kill her. We are of the weaker vessel. Remember and—"

"Well—just do it so, and will you promise, good woman?"

There was silence and only the gushing tears of the woman, dried by the lips of Ismael, was heard; and later on when the woman was won by that air of hypocrisy of the cunning Governor the poor mother yielded and said she would persuade her child—in obedience to a stronger and more irresistible power.

Oh Fate, there certainly are ironies in you that baffle the most sagacious mind!

While they were silent, and recalling their past life and how they escaped and followed the human turn of

the heart, and then lost in the world of a once beautiful and blooming paradise, in the days that were, there suddenly awoke in the mind of the mother the impending peril of her sleeping child, and when she folded up her clothes, and recovered from the lethargy of the days gone by, she seemed to have heard a voice calling her, and she tore herself away from the arms of her seducer.

When near the front of the house, she distinctly heard her child saying: "Mother! Mother!" and that was followed by broken sobs and stifled cries.

The Governor followed and he did not see Oscar any more in the spot where he left him, and there was no trace of his being there.

"Oscar!" they called.

And there was no answer. Only the echo of the night responded.

Not being content with the aspect of the turn of things, the Governor went up stairs and followed the mother at her heels.

The night was hushed, and the glimmering stars in heaven were shaded by the pale veil of the evening clouds. It was just in the dead of the night. What darkness!

Since then many a pathetic story was circulated, and Juan de la Cruz was very hard after it, that poor Rosa was only forced to marry Oscar, who, in his madness had tried to use means fair or foul.

And people remarked that a woman gained by force, and not by love, is an uncontrollable creature.

They said that "woman is only a woman, but a cigar is a smoke." Far from truth, only the savage and barbarous think that way. Thus the people were rather uneasy as to the whole truth and essence and real working of the matter and they wondered, and maliciously shook their gray and hoary heads in utter disgust, as they could find no satisfactory answer or solution to their queries and doubts.

It seemed that Juan had found the solution of his investigations when he struck across Camilo a week after the unfortunate event had happened. Without any useless inquiry, he went straight into the heart of the subject that brought him there. He began:

"Hello there, Camilo," and breathlessly added, "But what about this mad affair?"

"What affair? Rosa's?" interestedly asked Camilo, after shaking hands with his old trusted pal.

"Of course! Don't you know that it is the one subject that the whole world is talking about? Say, is it true that this aristocrat of a fool—social leper—Ismael and this foolish do-for-nothing Oscar worked out Rosa's downfall and disgrace before the eyes of the public? Of course, I bear malice to none. . . . Oh tell me, how was it brought about—what is all there's in it?"

"Why, be patient and I'll tell you all that I know," calmly replied Camilo.

"Tell it quick—this instant—don't breathe—so that I could write or tell more to brother Lucio."

“The sad fact is that this Ismael, who is supposed to be the father of Rosa, in love to his favorite Oscar, promised to give the girl’s hand to him. Then—”

“Ugh! what then?”

“Well, you know, the truth remains to be verified—”

“O then—what more?” impatiently asked Juan, who seemed not being able to wait for a second.

“Then one night—oh a most dismal night that was—full of mystery and black deeds! The moon was clouded and all was in blind darkness. Oscar at the stillness of that night climbed at the window just where Rosa was sleeping with the idea of perpetrating this crime. He crawled until he came near her,—and what happened the whole inhabitants of Merry Town and Fertile Valley could tell you. The weak and unfortunate girl, once the pride of this town, was dishonored through unmanly, foul and base means. Were my sister, O I tell you, only disgraced in that way, life won’t be so dear and worth living for me! I’ll kill the man or he’ll kill me then and there. . . . But this Lucio is a cool man. Another poor soul, he knew it not, and it is better to keep it all away from him. It will suffocate his breast. He would have acted had he known it. The next day, when I learned it, I went direct to visit her, but by jingo, she was gone! Oscar carried her to his house and then to the Governor’s. What horror! The girl was crying desperately, but she could not help it. When the fatal deed was done, she was

said to have been sleeping, and when she awoke, alas, she was powerless, and she wanted to scream and call for help. But ay, poor girl, she was only a feeble prey for a mean animal, who does things he can not do in day time. O victim of cruel and heartless men! She, to save herself from the cruel and blameful condemnation of the public, followed Oscar through thick and thin, though she knew it would kill her. Oh she took the most natural course!... And now after only a week of such miserable life, she is waning, waning like a crumpled flower when put into bloodstained hands. Ay, I do not know how she now fares, but she is seldom seen at the streets, and she has grown old and wrinkled—and she receives no one. She lives in a welter of melancholiness. She, like the poor Elaine, pines and pines for her lost first love, and for things that might have been. Now even in her emaciated form still she is angelic. Woe be to this man who did not respect woman's purity of honor and spotless womanhood! For a man who will not let others do unmanly things to his sister ought not and must not do it himself to other women, or those who are not his sisters..."

"Surely, this base man shall not prosper. He shall not reap the happiness he thought would be his. And the glory he sought to be his will only be the thorn of his soul, a black spot of his life. He shall go to hell—for men of such type hell was designed."

“From the very bottom of my heart, I pity you, Rosa. . . . Yes, I tell it frankly to you, I confess that never did I hear such a most unhappy tale of a woman’s dishonor. Lo—never, and in the old men’s opinion she had done well. She is like a crushed bud, fallen and never to bloom.”

“But the people blame her, people pity her—they are divided. But if they only knew that she fought with all her strength the criminal’s baseness until she fainted and became powerless, then I think our people won’t be so mercilessly pitiless to her, and should love her as usual instead of heaping on her blame upon blame!”

Juan after a long silence shrugged his shoulders and remarked sadly as he was touched by the story, “As for me, I cannot pass judgment on what she did and what had been done to her. But let it be put on record that I pity her and my heart shall always be with her. You’re right, she is like a delicate lily sprung from a dunghill—then trampled by the heavy foot of an unfeeling beast. I brand such cowards as criminals.”

“In what this Oscar had done, if reports are true,—for that is the consensus of opinion,—he’s more of an irrational savage than an educated man.”

“I tell you, Camilo David,” said Juan excitedly, “this Lucio is a man who could laugh not only in the face of troubles and defeat, but also in the very face of the Devil. . . . Any man who could do so—beware of his tremendous mental power. . . .”

And he left Camilo, without saying anything more.

Then he further remarked as if talking to himself alone—"That is the way with the world. . . . As I grow old, I seem to be more of a fool than a wise man. Some people make it so darn hard for others, make it so tough and tight that one can scarcely breathe and wait for developments, and the fool of cool reason to return and have fresher inspirations that elate us to ideals beyond the reach of understanding." And concluded, "*O 'the people! O the present civilization!*"

At Camilo's instigation, Juan tried to console Lucio, who, they thought, must have been living in a most unhappy world.

Lucio had now but one longing, however, and that was to work, even though not for himself, but for others, and he would do it as he told his friends, and so no doubt he would, or else not to think of it any more.

His ideal passion was for service, service to his people or service to God; and he made it a point to work for other's happiness, regardless of his own. "I could not work for my own. I do not have any one to work for—it is all over, except my aged father,"—he told Juan de la Cruz, his confidante.

"What is life?" he meditated one Sunday afternoon just after reading and taking his nap, "but a continuous struggle from the cradle to the grave? And what shall we leave behind us? People must do something—leave a work well done, a message inspiring and grand, a product either of their hands or of their brains.

That is, they must leave behind them either a perfect piece of art or literature, something that shall lift man from obscurity to civilization and enlightenment, which shall be the most valuable heritage to their children and their country. Something to light up the lamp of the distressed and unhappy souls, something great and useful to bequeath to the world and our brethren, and thus make true and possible that long-dreamed-of world Perfection. For the final test shall be the best inspiring effect of man's life on the world's civilization."

Turning on the subject of political and social science, he observed: "This League of Nations, if well carried out, is but a right step toward the right direction to the attainment of that ideal which is now at its infancy—when a man's become a man—and not in No Man's Land, and such words of Christ 'Oh my Brother' shall be truly and perfectly realized. Oh, Man, work, think and write!... There lies your happiness and salvation. For your weary lot is to labor, to earn your daily bread by the sweat of your brow, and when you labor, labor like a man, for what you sow that you shall also reap. Sow like a man, and reap like a man. As you sow kindness, so shall you reap love."

Thus when he was at leisure he kept on philosophizing, to enable him, he confided to Juan and Camilo by correspondence, to forget the ennui of the past—which savored of sombreness and endless sorrows.

Toiling twelve or fifteen hours a day was his hobby and his regular plan of labor, to which he had been

long accustomed. He changed oftentimes what he worked: Today he reads literature and tomorrow philosophy, economics, science, etc. Or while today also he works on a certain essay—or else writes along the line of his present work, or develops another outline, subject or theme, working simultaneously after a hearty rest of the mind,—for it was his aim to have a change and rest so as to make the mind always fresh and the brain responsive and the will strong and energetic in order to concentrate on any particular work, to sustain long endurance, and to make a fine job of anything. At least, that was his own idea. He did not work on impulse, but on a carefully premeditated plan.

He was after the idea of the Italians and the English that line by line the composition shall be finished and finished as a fine specimen or piece of art. Eternal patience and constancy of purpose and honest labor were among his favorite sayings. So he worked his best when he worked, and wrote his best when he wrote, and poured forth his very soul into what he was producing, putting himself all there, suiting the action to the word, and the word to the action. That was his method. When he meant to do a thing, he meant to do it well or not to undertake it at all. In short, he systematized his time.

It was one morning, limpid, bright and fair, when Camilo stepped into his chamber door and shook hands with his old chum.

“Lucio, what are you after these days?”

“I am in the old rut, man, and I am pretty hard squared on the same old job, the same old story, which seems to find no ending,” he laughed with the air of contentment lispng from his eyes. “I am a square peg in a round hole.”

“Well, I like the way you put it. Now come, let me hear more about it—it is just in line with what I am contemplating doing sometime when I shall be old and with gray and silver hair like the Old Man of Israel. Let me hear more of this Dodo bird. Know, I am interested always in what you do,” spoke Camilo enthusiastically, trying to brighten his friend with the flashes of his Irish wit.

“The thing is this, Camilo, I want to live tranquilly some days and in order to do that, I must isolate and do my work in my father’s old little farm, and leave this city life.” He uttered his words slowly but firmly, with an air of calmness, thereby impressing his thoughts upon the other’s mind.

“I like the idea. But why not spend it instead in our big farm? And let us work together there as was ever our wish since at school,—and sometime retire and write some of our daily experiences, and revise our early productions and atone for the past? Or, say write down our silly memoirs? which probably no one would care to read except you and I or possibly our wives and children?... What idea!... No joke... Oh, well, not likely with the view of publishing them as

a sort of book,—no, sir, emphatically no, just for the mere happy sake of record. And time shall perhaps come, who knows, when probably a plot-seeker shall discover in those life entries a good germ for an immortal essay, poem or story—and thus benefit an erring brother, who may have been led astray by the bizarre walk of the times and put him into the right path! That such purpose will work all right, who can tell! . . . I say, if we do that—who can tell what good shall come out of it!”

“No one, of course.”

Camilo had fine ideas. He bit his lips until they became red. But sometimes he lacked the initiative. He was not, however, original. While Lucio was just the opposite, his wide and varied knowledge of human life equipped him for the enterprise.

After some thinking, the two friends got down to serious work and so their plan was brought to a head. And their first step was to publish Lucio's work.

Lucio proposed that they should work and develop their little plot of land in his own town first and then go on to the bigger and more extensive farm of Lucio, alternately. He wanted to build their experiment station in his plot of idle ground.

Camilo absorbed the sense of it and then acquiesced. Thus they came to the understanding that they should turn farmers in order to develop the latent

natural resources of their farms, and so be producers instead of consumers, while at the same time tackling their proposed book-writing.

However, Lucio got leave, from his office, to take a vacation for an unlimited length of time. So he went home. He saw again the small piece of land he inherited from his dead mother, and found his good father who was growing older every minute much in need of some one to take care and look after him.

No sooner had he been there than when, alas, the Gray Reaper had called away that father dear!

Lucio exclaimed at the parting hour:

“Oh Sorrows beyond compare! . . .”

He lamented silently, and he felt that every day his sorrows turned his hair into gray. He was lonely and disconsolate.

Long he mourned and cried in silence and bewailed in plaintive sobbings the loss of his father. And at last he agreed with the poet-thinker who said that when sorrows come, they come not singly, but in battalions. Sorrows drift us along into the dark sea of desperation.

Again his friends were there, among whom were Juan de la Cruz and Camilo. They made his mourning a somewhat not tedious one.

Again he bore the loss like a man, heroic, brave and true.

Three days later he received a letter of condolence from Rosa, signed plainly, “Rosa,” and nothing more to speak of—ay the same old sweet name!

In Lucio's delirium of sadness, Camilo was always at his side, while Juan roved here and there amusing them with news—for he was a live wire. And Camilo never left until Lucio was in his best nature again, and master of himself.

On the ninth evening as the good friends sat together, Lucio soberly thought of his father. He therefore uttered his thoughts to Camilo, with eyes moistened by loving tears of affection, "My father is not learned. He is not a philosopher. But this is his message before he left: Opportunity is made, not found. We are not born with a silver spoon in our mouth. Of trials and troubles, Mother Earth is full; for the world is a testing laboratory ascertaining the metal man is made of. Opportunity is like a maiden, coy and beautiful,—much like the story of the Philosopher's Stone and the Old Man. It runs somewhat like this. There was once a man who wanted his iron chain hanging on his neck to turn into gold by touching it with the magic stone at the seashore, as told by the philosopher. So he went on, from morning till night, touching it with all stones he could get hold of, and he went on and on for years, trying to discover the real magic stone. But one day a curious boy found him, and asked him what he was doing. Thereupon the man replied that he was looking for the magic stone. But the boy exclaimed that he had a fine gold chain, and the man being surprised looked at the chain on his neck and found it had already turned into gold. Alas, he cried and then

went on his old work and retraced his steps again trying to see the magic stone. Old, bent, weary and hopeless the old man walked along the shore of life in the world of time, seeking for the neglected opportunity—but he found it no more. . . . So, now, I say: Seize your opportunities! Never wait for them to turn. . . . Be at the top of your calling. Keep your eye on your future. But beware,—do not burn the candle at both ends. Mark, there is no such a thing as getting something for nothing; do not be deceived by the ‘get-rich-quick’ idea. If we get, we must give. If you succeed, you must work and sacrifice. The man who uses his brain and talents is called lucky while the man who ignores these assets is unlucky, and that’s all there is to luck,—and no secret in it but manly labor.

“The supreme hour is never at hand, for the last word has never been written. All things are possible. Keep busy, cultivate industry, forget your fairy tales about chance, and go after success.”

He paused, looked down and dried the mist gathering in his eyes, and while the lines of his face deepened into furrows, he resumed:

“Do one thing at a time. Moderation in all things is best. Back of every great accomplishment you will find an active, alert, busy brain. Concentrate. . . . For, one thing at a time is Nature’s law—inviolable law. Just one drop at a time, and the river is formed that flows to the ocean; just one stroke at a time, and the earth’s hidden treasures are explored; just one blow at

a time, and the forest is cleared and turned into a blooming field or a flourishing city; just one step at a time, and the world is circumnavigated; just one word at a time, and the masterpiece is written; Oh, just one minute at a time, and life-time is unfolded, with all its beauties and its splendors. For one thing at a time, remember, is nature's immutable law."

Again he stopped, as he thought he had done nothing as yet in accordance with the wish of his father, and he went on:

"Alas, the best has not yet been attained, and the ultimate improvement has not yet been perfected. Go on, for we just fail at the very moment we stop or give up the ship of life! . . .

"Troubles? O don't let troubles trouble you. The world doesn't recognize man until he has proven his mettle. Trouble, hardship or misfortune is but like the unseen hand of destiny directing us to the zenith of accomplishment. The great are they who have known great troubles. Tears and accomplishment go hand in hand. Therefore, be up and doing, for now is the time of all times! . . . Such are in brief his words to me. He bequeathed me imperishable property. . . ."

His memory travelled back, and lingering in the past he saw and felt much that Camilo did not perceive.

He thought of how happy he and his father were there in that house; and in the summer with its clambering vine and its flowering beans, how pretty and bright it was in the midst of the sun-lighted fields. Their life:

in it had been full of labor and privation and no consolation, and yet they had been so far content, so gay of heart, and so devoted to each other. The little place was so dear to them. There—every humble, homely thing was to them precious and beloved.

And the two friends sat far into the night.

As to poor Rosa's colorless life, here was a fragmentary page of it, as Juan had been able to scrape it from Merry Town:

Sick of her own ennui and of her own curiously sad imaginings, she dropped her head on her hands, and wept. The evanescence of her life of heavenly bliss rent her feelings while she beheld the stream flowing—and that made her feel deeply sore, and cry ceaselessly.

That was a year after the last meeting of Lucio and Rosa that took place at the Carnival, when the latter was seen sitting one sultry afternoon alone at her window. Her husband was out into the fields or at the house of the Governor working or talking politics, she knew not what and where.

As she silently sat there by the window, she saw the stream and the meadow where Lucio and she were once very happy. The scene recalled to her mind those lovely days of friendship gone by. Evidently she was thinking of the past and most probably of that vow of "*Till Death Doth Us Part.*" That, that spot started her fantasy to spin the past episodes of her life.

Tears stood in her eyes. Her maidenhood and youthful days were over. The thought of it filled her

with sadness and forced her tears to trickle down swiftly upon her wornout cheeks now devoid of that rosy tonic of youth, until her small handkerchief was almost wet. Her grief was more than she could bear. She pushed back with her frail lean hands her falling curly hair that covered her eyes, as the wind blew it. Then she evaded the sight of the spot that made her weep so much and made her heart feel so sore,—bringing back to the album of memory sweet days of happy years gone by, like flitting day-dreams.

She very seldom went down, except on Sundays to hear mass. But she covered her pale, sombre face and went alone, or once in a while only accompanied by her mother but never by her husband. She veiled her emaciated face because she knew and occasionally heard that the people blamed and condemned her. They also pitied her but only did not respect her or approve of what she had done. The thought of it shortened her days. That was already written on her waxen, colorless face.

To both Mother and Child, alas, the days passed wearily on. Poor unfortunate women,—both were unhappy!

That same still and dismal afternoon her mother saw her and knew that she was more disconsolate, depressed and wornout with grief than before.

The mother folded her daughter into her warm, maternal breast as if she were the darling child long, long ago. And hearing Rosa cry the louder, she also

cried. Mother and child wept—wept together and shared in each other's sorrows.

“Why, my child, are you not happy?”

“Happy, mother?... I am happy because I obeyed you. Beyond that I am a stranger to other real happiness the world has for mortals—the happiness here on earth.” They cried the longer.

Her mother, after realizing what harmful effects her wish for her marrying Oscar had inflicted upon her, despairingly exclaimed:

“If you are not happy, Rosa, my dearest child, what can I do?... We cannot help it, any more. What is done is done. Bear it all like a woman. Ay!...” She covered her face and cried and sobbed aloud, “I meant you to be happy,—and—and—if you are not,—I am at fault, and—forgive me.”

“No more, dear mother. You are not at all to blame. It is only my fate—inevitable fate, so let me alone, and I can carry on my cross till the last moment of my life. Believe me, mother, you are not to blame.”

“Your situation drives me mad...”

They looked sympathizingly at each other.

Then she, the mother, slowly said after a long silence, “I often hear of Lucio. He is a great good man. His mother was kind and industrious.”

“So you knew his mother—were you friends?”

“No,” Felipa answered and turned the subject again to Lucio, “I think he is married already—but they say he is unhappy, poor boy!”

“No, mother, he is not married! And perhaps he will never marry. To tell you and confess all, he is the man who bade me, at the sacrifice of his and my own happiness—to make others happy—to obey you, for you only meant to make me happy, as you said, and he was not mistaken—and so I—”

“Noble man!” said her mother.

She could not continue—tears—more tears streamed in her eyes.

The conversation was cut short, for Oscar arrived. They were silent, and like women, they buried the whole thing in their bosoms, as if nothing took place. They dried their tears and separated.

Oscar saw Rosa at a glance in such a most dejected plight; and when the mother left her and went to her kitchen work, he came nearer and his face turned sour. Trying to console, he kissed her. But she trembled and the impression left on her spotless face seemed to burn her cheeks and cause the flower of life to wither.

The husband tried to soothe her but in vain for he was not the man to make her happy.

“What is the matter, Rosa?” commanded Oscar in a harsh, unsympathetic manner that made her shake with nervous fear.

She seemed dumb to the question. Then his wrath forced him to inquire further:

“Rosa, I say, look at me! What is the matter? Did anyone trouble you?”

“None.”

"If none, why are you sad, my capricious woman? That is always the case with you since we were married. I cannot understand you. Can I do anything for you, and then be reasonable? Now tell me, or else—"

"Thank you. It would be better to leave me," was her soft reply.

"But it is my business to know what you do and what makes you sad. I am, remember, your husband."

That was going too far and she had already been a prey of treacherous love. Then she thought she would not be the victim of his cruelty any longer. So she could not help uttering:

"No! It is none of your business, for had you not—" she could not say it. She could not utter the word, it failed her and made her neck tighten with sentiment.

"Say it!"

"Then I would not have been in this miserable state—and—"

"Yes. You can say it now. Ha! 'But that is over,'" said he with a mocking smile that made her the more angry.

"And I married you because—ah all the public knows it! Know that a woman's honor is like the frail pure crystal, which, when once broken, nothing else in the world could ever join it together just as perfectly as before the time it was split and broken. And what would a weak being, as I am, do so as to preserve her

womanhood immaculate and save the honor of a once honorable and reputable family?... Controlled by the powerful and unseen hand of destiny, I could not refrain from being caught by the net laid down to trap me and put me and subject me to a life which was to be death and not happiness! So, I pray you, it won't be long to be patient with me..."

And she burst into tears, hot, bitter tears.

"Rosa, I forbid you to open that subject!" Oscar shouted out loud to the consternation and great surprise of his watching mother-in-law who rushed inside to intervene in the scene.

The wound was touched.

She said: "What is the matter there?"

She guessed it all after seeing her daughter in her agony of helplessness.

She raised her voice in a defiant pitch and pointed straight to the door:

"Go—leave us in peace, scoundrel! Enough of this animal work of yours and your devil of a Governor!"

"I'll tell this to him."

"Yes, tell it, so much the better, and you'll meet me in the court of justice. I fear nobody!"

There she beheld her spoilt daughter, once her only pride, the beauty of the village—and now all those were a thing of the past. After all, she too suffered the same pangs in silence.

“Mother! . . . Please let us alone,” she implored. “For he will not long care for me. I shall soon go to a place where there is eternal peace, and rest.” She cried, poor woman, the victim of circumstances—wrought by evil and hidden hands.

Oscar, with heavy steps and haughty demeanor, took his hat and descended down angrily and went to a place nobody knew.

That night Rosa attempted to drink poison, but the ever watchful and loving mother had seen her, and prevented her committing suicide. She slept near Rosa's side and made her swear not to do it for her sake. Thanks, her intention was frustrated, and she promised to live just for her mother's sake. For it was for her mother why she married the man who could not make her happy,—the man she did not love,—and she would then live for her also. Humble daughter! Her dutifulness seemed only to sink her into the mire of misfortunes deeper and deeper.

“Hopeless life!” Rosa sobbed alone, “All my hopes are buried and gone! Lucio! . . . Fate is separating us every instant—you go forward while I go backward. O! God lead me on—on to your eternity so that I may forget the hopeless hope to be happy.”

Poor soul! Poor, hopeless woman with blasted hopes—the martyr of love! She tried to look at the light but her virgin heart forbade her, and she only cried and suffered alone and wished that she were dead. She prayed long and ardently, and at last a light lit her

soul and led her little bark to sail on and on to the peaceful haven beyond the hills yonder.

Beginning that trouble there was put an impassable gien between Rosa and Oscar. She repented and was most wretched and lonely. Oscar, her hated husband, went away, spent his time in dissipation and was often seen by Juan in the lowliest company, in questionable places, and with women of bad fame and ill-repute. He became a reckless drunkard.

Life to Rosa and her mother was a blank, a dry leaf, a torn page,—without the savor of love or the color of happiness, and without any promise of freshness and consolation as of yore.

And during that very dismal twilight the mother told her Rosa that their family was a family of unfortunate women, and that one of her grandmothers was already at the eve of marriage when death claimed her as its own. “The same to me, dear child, I am unfortunate. You are unfortunate. Our family is unfortunate. O, Virgen Maria, pardon me! . . .”

Evening found Rosa still sitting alone by the window. Ah, that evening—it was such a pale evening! The Moon was hidden behind a dense smoke of clouds. Not even a dim star was visible in the wide canopy of heaven. She meditated on life. It is said that the swan sings her sweetest melody just before she dies. Alas, it was in such a state of melancholia, when to forget her sorrows and chase away her tears, she sang her

SONG OF LIFE

What is life,
Is it like a long Elysian dream,
Like the ever-flowing stream?
Tell me, Mother, what is life.

What is life,
Is it like one eternal love, ~
Like the bliss in heaven above?
Tell me, Mother, what is life.

What is life, Mother Dear,
Is it a continuous shedding of tear,
Is it like a cloud sailing by
In the wide starry sky?

Tell me, Mother, what is life:
Is it one perpetual strife
Against darkness and sunshine
Or discord and runic rime?

I know you'll tell me, Mother,
For if there is any love that's mine,
That's sweetest, kindest, most sublime,
It's the pure love of you, Mother!

You told me while we live
We ought to be happy and gay—
Like the sweet moonlit ray
And so be happy while we may.

So when I die, Mother Dear,
Shed not for me a single tear,
Weep not, sob not a sigh for me,
Nor mourn, but only pray for me.

For God who is our Love
Shall look after me above.
He shall take care and see
That my Soul is safe and happy.

Tears flowed and kept on rolling, on the mother's and child's cheeks until both fell asleep. It is said that tears in women wash away their grief.

When the day's work was finished and when left alone they sat down and comforted each other or else counted the monotonous days.

Turning on the other side, we find the world as follows.

First let us see what life Lucio was leading now.

When he recovered from the great shock caused by the loss of his father and his love, he earnestly resumed his farm life. Camilo, on the other hand, began to work seriously in developing their plantations.

However, once, while they were lying down under a shady tree and taking their siesta, Camilo remarked:

"So you received another kind note of condolence from Rosa? What a fortunate old boy you are—to have a married woman still think well of a once favored friend! I think that is more than what one may think of. It is indeed very gratifying, nay, it's a great com-

pliment to forever hold the undying affection and admiration of both a woman's heart and soul." He was smiling, and he was very fond of joking him and making a slight allusion on things past, for to him it was a forgone conclusion that in that way Lucio, so he thought, might lay his mournful days aside and forget entirely.

"But," answered the other, "to you it is, but as for me, that is only a memory past and dead and gone, gone to the grave of oblivion."

"Isn't it sweet?"

Having pierced deep into the idea of Camilo's humorous joke, he supplicated him to let it alone in the name of friendship, "Oh Camilo, I implore—do not open that subject. A favor, please—do not open the mournful story of the past. It is too sacred, and not fair to her. It's so sacred to be humored at, my brother. I cannot bear it. Tell it to others, but not to me, I can not tolerate it. My conscience rebels—I cannot endure it. I know it already. I am only sorry, you know, because many tell me that she is not living happily."

"But don't you brood over that! Let bygones be bygones!"

He laughed in an effort to drive away the sombre idea once for all.

"Well, it is better for you, Camilo, to take your wife sometime. But not I, I am just taken up with my private affairs and have enough to keep me busy all

the rest of my life. And he buoyantly added, "Think of it, to bid goodby to old bachelor's days!"

Ever since that hour, that theme had been the food of the thoughts of Camilo. He did not wish to do it or embark into the proposition if his friend would not do it too in fear that his pal would be most lonesome.

The May of life only blooms once. Lucio's friends, especially Juan and Camilo, who always had his welfare deep at heart, asked him why he did not marry, for he was not yet past the prime of life. He, the poor orphan, answered, "I am old," in such a good-natured way, and added, "I can sacrifice so that others may be happy."

And when they left him alone, softly he sang that old favorite song of his childhood—that sweet "Annie Laurie." Though set upon by adversities, still he could sing a song.

Juan often saw Lucio and Camilo whenever he passed Fertile Valley.

All day long they worked, and only rested the seventh day. When they finished soon, they departed early in the afternoon and spent the night either in reading newspapers, books, or else in playing native chess.

They were contented and happy, and in the best of terms. In regard to that, the witty Juan joked them once:

"Well, old boys, I like how your work sounds. Now may I have a hand or a peep at it?" And they permitted him to so peep.

Camilo answered, "The thing, Juan, is that he who shall not work shall not eat."

"I own it, but—"

"There, believe me."

"Ay! the same old bull-frog story, eh? That does not hold true in my case, dear sirs. Look! Here I am! I eat lavishly and luxuriously in many a sumptuous feast and banquet and spend not a single centavo, and so eat happily to my heart's contentment and satisfaction at another's expense. Gracious mine! I do not work, yet others work for me. I am like the lilies in the Bible who toil not but are fed by their Heavenly Father." He smiled and continued, "Well, a good many people make that as a practice—in that way I'm not in favor—for it's going too far—simply it's not fair, or gentlemanly in other words. Why—it's not my fault I was not born a cacique, nor your fault you were not born a king, so why worry this world? Just follow suit—and smile and make good."

He laughed and they were gaily humorous those days. What jovial natures they had!

"I am a man who wish to work when others sleep, and I work most when I am alone," said Lucio. "It is only in man's calmer moments when he could dig up big, great, paying ideas that set man and woman on their feet and lead armies to triumph and victory and bring nations to peace, love, and prosperity."

"Oh I see! I get your idea now, for probably you are referring to the adage, that if you want a thing

well done, do it yourself. Isn't it? Well, of course, there is nothing better than that. It is par excellence! Yes, exceedingly true and magnificent!"

"Exactly," said Camilo.

"And not to let your left hand know what your right hand did," mirthfully spoke Juan.

While they were merrily gathered and seated together and earnestly engaged in lively talk and in enthusiastic contemplations on practical life, a messenger arrived, bringing a special note. He was panting with fatigue and gasping for breath.

He broke the news briskly,

"Pardon. . . Rosa is sick—very grave—"

"Who?" all cried in surprise!

"She is about to die and—"

"What?"

"And wanted to see you urgently—which of you gentlemen is he—"

"Name?"

"Lucio Soliman."

"I am," replied Lucio and he stepped forth; and the messenger turned towards him.

All looked surprised and bewildered. Their hair stood high.

There was an intense pallor visible in all their faces.

At last, Lucio's countenance changed from that of lively hue to waxen paleness, livid with fear and darkened by presentiments.

What a blow! He was dumbfounded and terribly confused. Internal sufferings battled in his mind—what an obfuscation in his heart! Sufferings hard and unsufferable produced their deadly effects.

He heaved a deep sigh, turned around and ran, but was caught by Camilo, and then Juan followed behind. He looked like a desperate man with such a wildly disheveled hair.

Gasping for thought and energy, he breathlessly said, "Camilo,—just tell me, this news troubles me and puts me out of reason. It makes me weak. It seems that there is something in this. I do not feel myself like a man. That it is true, I do not have a momentary doubt, but the question is, why should a married woman, not even a relative of mine but rather a chance acquaintance only, who had proved herself unfaithful, ask of you when she had her husband besides her to do everything for her, for better or for worse? It is mysterious, problematical—I cannot understand. But—O Rosa! . . . how I seem to hear your faint voice calling—calling me, adorable soul! . . ."

He flung his hands in the air and was lost in grievous meditations. He paused and thought long, his head bent to the ground.

After questioning the tired messenger who then went away in order to leave them alone, Camilo said:

"If that is her last wish, why not go and give her life! Lucio, if you were the only one source of elixir who could prolong her days and give her just a moment

of love and happiness why not go and see her? Probably she has a message for you. Who knows!" He shrugged his shoulders and knitted his perspiring brow.

"Why talk of love? That subject between us is no more, it's past and gone and extinct, and buried long, long ago—and I blotted it all away from my heart. We are brother and sister in the best sense of the word. Why, if that is her wish, I shall certainly not deny her. For if I have any happiness to give and bestow, or if the world of happiness is only mine—in the hollow of my palm, ay, I'll gladly give it to her, all to her—and let me alone live in pain and sorrows, and suffer all—all for her. . . . Ay, devoid of love and parents, I simply am the most wretched and unfortunate of men! . . ."

The old wound apparently became fresh, so Camilo thought. Two big tears coursed down Lucio's face. He wept and wept bitterly in the inmost recess of his heart as the sweet panorama of the rosy past vividly came before his wet eyes, especially when his left hand unconsciously got hold of a locket where a faded sampaguita was sacredly kept and preserved with its simple native fragrance which seemed, as it were, ever so fresh in his soul.

"Well, go! For God's sake go! Stand up, . . . There, be a man, don't cry!"

Then turning aside, Camilo winked to Juan:

"Ay! When a woman loves, remember, she loves forever!"

"You had better go," urged Juan.

Then Lucio understood. And he decided to go.

“Friends. Do you mind going with me?”

“Certainly not!” both replied. “We’ll accompany you.”

On their way to Rosa’s home, in Merry Town, they were all silent.

It was sunset when they arrived in town. The place looked sad and dreary.

The world seemed silent. The sky lost its bright smiling aspects. Suddenly there gathered from east to west the dark nimbus clouds like vessels of the night rapidly sailing by. Then it became darker. The air was saturated and heavily laden with humidity and there was a hush—no cool air but a stifling and suffocating atmosphere. You could breathe as much as you want but you seem to get no fresh air to satisfy the thirst and longing of the lungs. Little by little thin layers of rain fell down upon the drooping plants like crystal tears dropping from the sad eyes of the virgin of heaven.

And the splendors of that sunset were all gone, faded, and lost.

But the weary travellers went on and had they like Icarus wings of wax they would have flown, even if the sun would have melted those false wings and made them meet their doom without salvation at the rolling waves of the restless ocean.

And they heard the people say, “What a gloomy afternoon!”

Lucio saw again the old stream murmuring nearby but he did not break the reigning silence, although at heart he was deeply touched by the resurrection of past memories connected with that sacred spot.

He dreamed of the old glad days when they had chased each other through the flowering grasses of the summer meadows or sat hidden in the tall trees by the stream's side, watching the birds twitter yonder and sing their ecstasies of love and life. He dreamed of the time when she fainted and he took water from the bosom of that same old stream.

He beheld the Central School where she was proclaimed as the queen of the day and where he paid his humble tributes like a troubador of old.

He thought, and this made him the saddest of all, of the blessed hour when Rosa entrusted her heart to him—"till death doth us part"—and then gave him the flower which he always kept with him, plucked by her delicate hands and kissed by her rosy lips. O the familiar turnings of the road brought him to a life that was no more! . . .

There is a saying that when a dying person waits upon someone, his hours lengthen and his expectation prolongs his life.

And in a bed there was a dying woman who cast a glance around the room now and then, seeing only her crying mother bending over her, but not Lucio—the expected one for whom the last hour of her life lingered and depended.

Just in time when Rosa was about to fold her arms and give her soul to her God, she beheld Lucio. Then she said, with outstretched hands, as they were left alone:

“Lucio, O Lucio! Forgive me, Lucio. . . . There is another world yet. . . . Just pray for me,—I beg of you! . . .”

She cast a dim glance around. Her bony fingers clung to his as before when they were the passionate little lovers near the stream, and looked at him long and wistfully and lovingly; and he saw, out of that emaciated and careworn face—Rosa in her younger days, the same beautiful and lovely Rosa, his own Rosa. She looked as if appealing to all that was manly and godly in him. He did not move. But he felt all.

She again stretched forth her faded hands to him and he took them into his—cold and lifeless-like.

A last great wave of regretful memory swept past them both: it filled their eyes and hearts with doleful tears and heart-breaking recollections!

Lucio softly spoke in a soothing yet most melancholic tone, “Be brave. . . . Have you been happy?”

All was in silence, but the soul seemed to have heard him.

“I am now, and I shall be—there. . . .” staring up to the black-mantled heaven.

She tried to cry but her eyes were dry. She had no more tears to shed. And she, as the dispenser of life and death was claiming her, dropped her head into

his breast. That was her happiest moment in life. She smiled contentedly in her joyous mood, as if glad to give her soul to God, who like an angel was contemplating her peaceful flight to heaven. Yes, for her, what happiness to have been able to see him personally and talk with him and deliver her message!

Wrinkles were left and traceable on her face which spoke plainly that she suffered much and how much nobody knew except Lucio. It was evident that the poor soul had not been happy, and that her misfortune only hastened her call.

Her mother heard all and seemed to perceive the burden falling upon her, but was silent. She withdrew from the solemn scene and covered her eyes with her hands, crying and repenting, "Let the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven."

And Lucio, not being able to contain himself any longer, wept, and then murmured, "Like you, Rosa, I will only be happy there where you are. God bless your soul for you were true to your words!"

The child lay on the humble bed. Her eyes were closed, but a sweet angelic smile was on her virgin face, her hands were devoutly folded, and she looked as if asleep and only dreaming of the joys and the raptures and ecstasies of heaven. Rosa was dead.

All prayed for the peace of her soul.

The shrieks of a crying woman, Rosa's mother Felipa, were heard, and people outside and their neighbors heard them and divined all. They, too, were

silent, and sorrowfully folded their arms crosswise, and their pity and sympathy flowed to the unhappy Lucio and to the departed Rosa.

The many passers-by stopped, as they also heard the inmates cry, especially the bereaved mother, who uttered a wild despairing cry, like a howling creature at bay.

In the midst of silence, they saw a man depart alone, bowed down in immense grief, without a hat, and with the heavy burden of sorrows upon him, going to where they could not tell.

Juan and Camilo were alike heavily overwhelmed with pity, grief and sorrow.

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see Love,” said Camilo to Juan, as they followed behind Lucio mournfully.

He was a lonely man, a broken man—an orphan of love—of parents—of everything—poor child of sorrow!

O blasted dreams of happiness! . . .

* * * * *

The fatal news at last reached Oscar in a far away den of brutes. He returned home, as a duty, to see Rosa's last remains, but did not see any trace of her any more—she was already safely buried—nothing was left of her except the history of her fatal sorrows and endless sufferings. Ah! really the cross of man's

inhumanity to man was visible on his face. But in his heart was the feeling of genuine repentance.

Thirteen days after, Oscar died in his own hands. And people believed that Governor Ismael was the only person who knew the cause of it.

One evening twilight a farmer of Merry Town, as he wearily went home, said that he saw a lonesome man, probably a certain forlorn orphan of love, put a wreath of immortelles over the forgotten grave of a forgotten person,—solemnly prayed and then read with tearful eyes a letter which, after perusal, he put back with trembling hands into his bosom. Going nearer to that sacred spot where a black bird was singing its evening song, this was the only word inscribed which would meet our eyes:

“ R O S A . ”

Days, months, and years passed by, and from that time on, wherever Lucio was seen, men, women and children pointed to him and said:

“There is the Child of Sorrow!”

THE END

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