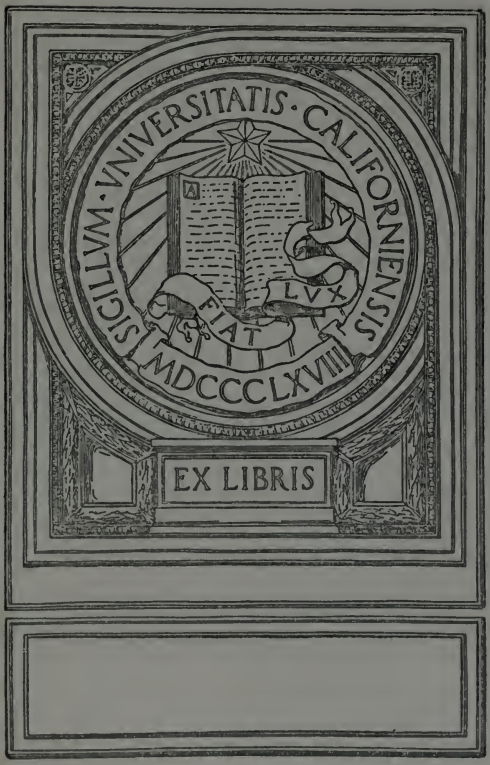
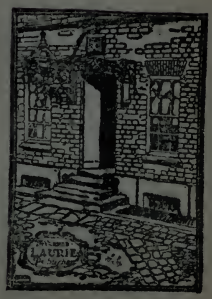

SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

# THE LAW OF THE BOLO



# NEW NOVELS

THE MUMMY MOVES. By Mary Gaunt.

DOWNWARD; "SLICE OF LIFE." By Maud Churton Braby.

VERITY LADS. By Keighley Snowden.

SCARLET KISS. By Gertie de S. Wentworth-James.

THE CROSS OF HONOUR. By Mary Openshaw.

HER SOUL'S DESIRE. By Alice Maud Meadows.

THE QUESTION. By Parry Truscott.

THE WICKED WORLD. By Alice Maud Meadows.

JOHN MARVEL. By Thomas Nelson Page.

THE UNCOUNTED COST. By Mary Gaunt.

A WINTER'S COMEDY. By Halliwell Sutcliffe.

ETERNAL FIRES. By Victoria Cross.

MASTER JOHN. By Shan F. Bullock.

BLACK SHEEP. By S. P. Hyatt.

SPECIAL MESSENGER. By Robert W. Chambers.

# THE LAW OF THE BOLO

BY

STANLEY PORTAL HYATT

Author of
"Black Sheep,"
"The Marriage of Hilary Carden,"
"The Little Brown Brother," etc.

Second Impression

Published at Clifford's Inn, London

By T. WERNER LAURIE

"Black Sheep" is without doubt a clever novel. It is one that should be read, if only for the life-like drawing of Jimmy Grierson. (*a*) Mr Hyatt has the art of making his people and his situations very real. (*b*) This is a strong, courageous story, worthy of Mr Hyatt's reputation. (*c*) The book is written in a series of terse and vivid phrases, and is fat with good things. (*d*) The writing of "Black Sheep" is far above the average in style and strength. (*e*) There is much to admire in Mr Hyatt's capable treatment of his subject, and his story never loses its grip. (*f*) It is one of very much more than ordinary merit, and one the theme of which will not be easily forgotten after the book has been laid aside. (*g*) May, Ida, and their respective husbands are inimitably drawn. (*h*) So long as the Magdalen remains a Christian saint, work like "Black Sheep" cannot be ruled out of literature, nor can it be held to be immoral. (*i*).

(*a*) Globe.
(*b*) Morning Post.
(*c*) Bookman.
(*d*) Daily Mirror.
(*e*) Pall Mall Gazette.
(*f*) Evening Standard.
(*g*) Liverpool Post.
(*h*) Manchester Courier.
(*i*) Nation.

# CONTENTS

## FOREWORD

The Law of the Bolo, which runs throughout the Philippine Islands, has the crowning merit of simplicity. Unlike the codes of other countries, with their folios of verbiage, their precedents, decisions, and interpretations, their hair-splitting subtleties and refinements of phrase, their hidden dangers for the unwary and unfortunate, the Law of the Bolo, of the terrible two-foot-long knife, with which a Filipino can cleave his enemy from collar-bone to the waist, has but one clause—that the spoil shall go to the man with the longest reach. Possibly the process is crude, but, at least, it is speedy and final. Judge, jury, counsel, the Bolo takes the place of all these; and there is no appeal, at any rate in this life.

The Law of the Bolo has also the merit of antiquity. It was in force when the Spaniards annexed the Archipelago; it is in force there

to-day, under the American successors of the Spaniards; and probably it will still be in force when, not only this generation, but half a dozen of its successors as well, have passed away—not because it is perfect, no law is, but because it is so admirably suited to local conditions.

Half the troubles in the Islands during the last century or so—a great many more than half, probably—have been due to the fact that white men would not recognise this elemental code. Mr Commissioner Furber, the head of the department of Constabulary and Trade in Manila, regarded it as scandalous, as did also Mr Dwight P. Sharler, the Chief Collector of Customs, and Mr Joseph Gobbitt, of the British firm of Gobbitt & Dunk, Eastern merchants; but both old Felizardo, the ladrone leader, and Captain Basil Hayle of the Philippines Constabulary, understood it, and acted on that knowledge, thereby avoiding many mistakes, as this story will show. . . .

# THE LAW OF THE BOLO

## CHAPTER I

### HOW FELIZARDO TOOK TO THE HILLS

Felizardo was sixty years of age, a wizened little man, quiet of voice, emphatic of gesture, when the Americans displaced the Spaniards, and began to preach the doctrines of Law and Order, coupled with those of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, as defined by the Declaration of Independence. In appearance, Felizardo was not unlike a Japanese, being purely Asiatic by descent; but, so far as essential characteristics, were concerned, he was a son of the Tropics, with the qualities of his kind.

For all practical purposes, Felizardo's history begins thirty-five years before the coming of the Americans. Up till that point in his career, he had been an ordinary tao, one of the peasantry of a village some ten miles from Manila, outwardly apathetic and inoffensive,

respecting, or at least fearing, the Law as represented by the Presidente and the Guardia Civile, and earning such money as he needed—which was not much—by an occasional day's work in his hemp-patch up on the mountain-side. For the rest, he fished when he had sufficient energy, or was sufficiently hungry so to do, or gathered cocoa-nuts in the grove which stretched for a couple of miles along the sea-shore. Then, suddenly, Dolores Lasara came into his life, and his character developed.

Dolores was the daughter of Juan Lasara, the Teniente of San Polycarpio, the next village to that in which Felizardo had been born and bred. Rumour in the village, which possibly spoke the truth, declared that Juan was connected with the local band of ladrones, and, as that body enjoyed a degree of immunity unusual even in the Philippines, there may have been grounds for the suspicion.

Juan Lasara was a mestizo, a half-caste, and Dolores herself showed strong traces of her white ancestry. Felizardo, on the other hand, was a native pure and simple, and, unlike most of his kind, prided himself on the fact.

Dolores and Felizardo first met after a festa, the feast of the patron saint of San Polycarpio. The girl, clad all in white, was walking in the procession round the plaza, following closely in the wake of the stout priest and the gaudily-painted image, when the man, lounging against

the timbers of the crude belfry, smoking the eternal cigarette, suddenly awakened to the fact that there were other things in life besides tobacco and native spirits and game-cocks. He did not follow Dolores into the church—that would have involved abstention from several cigarettes, and would, to his mind, have served no useful purpose — but he waited outside patiently, and, when she emerged, followed her home, where he made the acquaintance of her father, whom he knew well by sight.

Juan Lasara, the Teniente of San Polycarpio, was a very able man, as his hidden store of greasy Bank of Spain notes would have told you, if you had been able to unearth them from the hiding-place up on the mountain-side; and, being able, he realised that there were latent possibilities in the rather shy young tao who was so obviously taken with Dolores; consequently, he was perfectly ready to let the girl accompany Felizardo down to the cockpit to see the fights, which, as every Filipino knows, are the most important part of a religious festival.

The Teniente saw the young people off from the veranda of his house, the only stone-built one in San Polycarpio; then he went back to his office, where presently there came to him Father Pablo, the parish priest, also a mestizo, and Cinicio Dagujob, a fierce little man, with two bolos strapped on his waist. The last-named had come in, unostentatiously, from the jungle

behind the house, after the two Guardia Civile, who had been sent to attend the festa, had gone off to keep order at the cockpit; and even now he did not seem quite at ease, knowing that those dreaded Spanish *gens d'armes* were still in the village. "There might be trouble at the cockpit, and they might bring their prisoners here," he muttered.

Juan Lasara laughed. "If there were trouble, they would only beat the causes of it with the flat of their sabres. That is their way—with the tao. It is only you and your kind that they take as prisoners, or kill."

Cinicio's beady eyes flashed. "And how about you and the reverend father?" he snarled.

Once more Lasara laughed. "He is the priest of San Polycarpio, and I am the Teniente. If they came—which they would not do without warning—you would be Dagujob, the ladrone chief, whom we had lured here, in order that he might be taken and hanged on the new gallows at Calocan. You understand, Cinicio?"

A sudden movement of his hand to his side showed that the robber did comprehend; then the half-drawn bolo was thrust back into its wooden sheath, contemptuously. "Bah!" its owner growled, "you dare not. I should talk, and there is room on that gallows for three of us, even when one is a fat priest. And now—what is the business we are to discuss?"

Father Pablo blew out a cloud of smoke

and watched it curling upwards. "Don José Ramirez will be receiving three thousand pesos next month to pay for the new hemp land he is buying from the Friars," he said.

Cinicio Dagujob leaned forward. "Don José, the Spanish merchant at Calocan?" he asked.

The priest nodded, whilst the Teniente added with a grin: "His place is opposite the new gallows, which they have put up for you and your kind, Cinicio."

The ladrone ignored the last remark; this was now a purely professional matter.

"How are we to get in?" he demanded. "The house is of stone, well shuttered; and, if we tried force, the noise would bring down the Guardia Civile, who are only a quarter of a mile away."

Father Pablo had gone to the window, and was staring out. He preferred not to listen to such discussions, which accorded ill with his calling; but the Teniente had no such scruples. "You must have some one inside, to open the door, then when Don José comes down——" He finished with a suggestive motion.

"That is easy to say," growled the ladrone —"very easy to say; but whom can you get? Our own men are"—he shrugged his shoulders expressively—"suspected; and they might not like to be so near your gallows; whilst your people here are fools, every one—just common tao. Then a man from Manila would get in one

of his own hands. It is rubbish. I know Don José Ramirez of old. He will keep his pesos safe until he hands them over to the Friars; and then, of course, one cannot rob the Church."

Father Pablo, standing with his back to them, seemed to have missed everything else, but he heard those last words, and nodded his head, apparently in approval of the sentiment; though possibly, could the others have seen it, the smile on his face might have explained various things to them.

The Teniente of San Polycarpio did not answer at once, but lighted a fresh cigar very carefully, and got it drawing well; then, "I have the man," he said quietly. "He came to me to-day, by chance, following my daughter, Dolores." Father Pablo started slightly. "He is a tao, with brains. I know Don José wants a man to live in the house. If I send this young Felizardo to him, he will take him; and if I promise Felizardo that he shall marry Dolores, the door will be opened to you. I only met him to-day, but"—he laughed pleasantly—"I know men and women; and I saw how it was with those two, at once."

There was no smile on Father Pablo's face now, and one of his hands was gripping the window frame more tightly than a casual observer might have thought necessary; but the two other men were not watching him, being interested in the details of their plan.

It was sundown when Felizardo and Dolores came back, chattering gaily. On the road they passed the two Guardia Civile, in their gorgeous uniforms, with their clattering sabres and horse pistols in vast leather holsters. Felizardo received a friendly nod from them, being known as a decent young tao; but Father Pablo, whom they met a little further on, had no blessing to bestow, only a scowl.

"I do not like him," the man said abruptly.

The girl shivered slightly. "Nor I. He is a priest, I know; but still——" She broke off significantly, and, for the first time in his life, Felizardo felt the instinct to kill awaken in him. Unconsciously, he became a convert to the Law of the Bolo; consciously, he decided that Father Pablo must be watched.

The Teniente of San Polycarpio was alone when the couple returned, and received Felizardo very graciously. He was interested in the young man, and asked him many questions, whilst Dolores was preparing some supper, a far more elaborate supper than usual.

"You ought to do better," Lasara said kindly. "I see you are not like the majority; and there are careers for those who are ready to work. Look at myself"—he was a hemp-buyer—"I started to learn in a Spaniard's store, and made all this myself. I should be a very happy man, if only I had a son. As it is, there is Dolores alone; and my ambition now is to see her

married to an honourable man, a man of the people like myself, not a frothy agitator from Manila."

Felizardo fumbled badly with the cigarette he was rolling; but before he could make any reply, his host had got up abruptly. "Come and see me again soon—the day after to-morrow, if you like. I believe I know of a post which might suit you."

They make love quickly in the Tropics; consequently, it was not out of the natural order of things that, as he walked home through the cocoa-nut groves that night, Felizardo should feel sure both of his own feelings and of those of Dolores. Somehow, the world seemed to have grown a very different place. He had never noticed the moon quite so bright before, never realised how wonderfully beautiful was the effect of the light dancing on the waters. Then, suddenly, with a sense of shame, he remembered how he had wasted his life. He had eaten, smoked, and gambled on fighting-cocks—that was his whole record so far; but it should be different for the future. He turned into his little nipa-thatched house full of this good resolution, and awakened in the morning still of the same mind. There was a festa on in his own village that day, and he had saved five pesos in order to have an unusually large bet on his own favourite fighting-cock, hitherto the champion of the place; but, instead of doing so,

he donned his working clothes, took his working bolo, and started off towards his hemp-patch, two miles away, up the hillside. One or two women he passed—the men rose late on festa-days—stared after him in astonishment; whilst a youth, who was taking a game-cock for its morning airing, hugging the over-fed bird closely in his arms, endeavoured to call him back; but Felizardo knew his own mind. That evening, just as the cock-fighting was over, he staggered down with the biggest load of hemp a man had ever brought into the village—one or two complained afterwards that he had cleaned up some of their hemp in addition to his own—took it into the Spanish hemp-buyers' warehouse, and presently emerged with the best suit of white linen he could buy.

In after years they used to talk of the look which was on Felizardo's face that last evening he spent in the village. They chaffed him, of course—who but a fool would clean up hemp on a festa-day?—but he walked past them all without appearing to notice them. He was not angry—there was no question of that; it was only that he seemed to have urgent, and very pleasant, business of his own on hand. He had become a man apart from them; and, though none could have foreseen it, he was to remain a man apart, in a very different sense.

By noon the following day, Felizardo was sitting on the broad, cool veranda of Juan

Lasara's house, talking to Dolores. There was no hurry about business, the Teniente said cheerfully. He himself was likely to be fully occupied until evening. Let the visitor stay the night, and on the morrow they would go over and interview Don José Ramirez, to whom he had already written—a proposal which suited both Dolores and Felizardo.

They talked all that afternoon and all that evening—the Teniente was wonderfully discreet in keeping out of the way—and when, on the following day, Felizardo took a reluctant farewell, they were perfectly sure they understood one another. Other people of their ages have made up their minds, temporarily at least, just as quickly, even under colder skies than those of the Philippines.

As the two men were going down to the beach—Calocan lay round a headland, a long stretch of mangrove swamp, and you had to reach it by canoe—they met Father Pablo, apparently going to the Teniente's. The Teniente stopped a minute and spoke to the priest in a low voice, then rejoined Felizardo, whilst the Father continued on his way.

Felizardo thought of Dolores, alone in the house, with only a couple of servants working in the courtyard, thought of the fat, sensual face, the self-assertive swagger, and once more that instinct to kill, which is one of the elemental corollaries of love, came back to him, stronger

than ever. For a moment he hesitated, half inclined to go back; but he had not yet felt the full strength of that instinct; and so in the end he went on, reluctantly. Juan Lasara, thinking deeply over the priest's words—"It will be five thousand pesos now. Don José has bought a second hemp-patch from the Friars"—did not notice his hesitation, and might not have understood it in any case, having got over his days of love, or at least of the love of woman. He worshipped the peso only.

Don José, white-haired and courtly, was gravely polite to the Teniente, as a white gentleman must be to a half-caste; but he was almost cordial to Felizardo.

"I have already asked the Guardia Civile, and they speak well of you," he said; then, as if fearing his words might seem slighting to Juan Lasara, he hastened to add: "Of course, in any case, the recommendation of Senor Lasara would suffice. Still, in these days there are so many ladrones—you see my shutters and bars? You can read and write? Yes, the good Friars taught you? Well, then it is arranged. Good!"

So Felizardo became warehouseman, and, in a humble way, junior clerk, to Don José Ramirez, to live in the house, and, if need arose, to fire at ladrones with a musket through one of the loopholes of those same shutters, an arrangement satisfactory to himself, to the Spaniard, and perhaps most of all to his patron, the

Teniente of San Polycarpio. There was no mistaking the cordiality of the latter's farewell. "Come and see us the first holiday," he said; "I shall be pleased, and"—he smiled meaningly—"so will Dolores."

If there had been no woman in the case, Felizardo would not have stayed two days in the warehouse. True, on the rare occasions when he did see Don José, the old man was kindness personified; but the merchant spent his time in his private office, whilst the other clerks, all mestizos, looked on what they called "a wild tao" as a fitting subject for jests and practical jokes. But Felizardo thought of Dolores, who could only be won by his success in that warehouse; moreover, he was wiry and strong as a leopard, as the practical jokers soon learned; consequently, at the end of the first week he had not only decided to stay, but had also made a definite position for himself.

"A good boy, a very good boy," Don José remarked to the corporal of the Guardia Civile.

The latter nodded. "Yes, but watch him. They all want watching, these Filipinos. I say it with all respect—but what has the Holy Church done for them, save teach them our secrets and make them more dangerous than ever." He sighed heavily, and twirled his huge, dyed moustache. "Thirty years I have been out here, Don José, thirty years, and only home to Spain once, and I still look on them as savages,

who will get my head in the end. I shall never see Spain again."

Don José took him by the arm; it was Sunday, and they were standing on the veranda. "Come inside," he said; "I have some choice wine which came in the other day, wine of Spain; and some cigars such as you could not get elsewhere, even in Spain. Come inside, corporal, and drink to the day when we both return to Spain."

Meanwhile, Felizardo had borrowed a dug-out canoe, and paddled round the long headland to San Polycarpio. Dolores was waiting for him. "I knew you would come," she said simply, "because Don José always closes his warehouse on Sunday."

The implied assurance in her words made him the happiest man in the Islands; and as he sat talking to the Teniente that afternoon, he was very full of the possibilities of a commercial career, and very severe on the subject of ladrones and the injury they did to trade, which was perhaps not very pleasant hearing to his host, for after the guest had gone—this time Dolores accompanied him down to the beach—Lasara remarked to the priest: "He will not open the door of the warehouse, even if I ask him. He is a fool, after all."

The priest shook his head. "He will open it, because he is a special fool on one point."

"What is that?" demanded the other.

Father Pablo smiled grimly. "You will see.

Leave it to me." And with that promise the Teniente of San Polycarpio had to be content, though, knowing the priest well, he was not really uneasy in his own mind. Certainly, they would eventually share those five thousand pesos of Don José's, and if, as was probable, Don José himself were eliminated during the process of removal, so much the better. The disappearance of a rival is never felt very keenly by a good business man.

The pesos for the purchase of the Friars' hemp lands came on the appointed day, and Felizardo helped to carry them into the warehouse, wondering greatly at the amount, and envying the man who possessed so much wealth. He was still thinking over the matter at closing time, when a strange youth hurried up, thrust a note into his hand, and disappeared as suddenly as he had come. Felizardo read the letter slowly, and forthwith forgot all about the pesos; for Dolores was in trouble; Dolores had fled from her father's house, fearing a forced marriage with a wealthy cousin, who had unexpectedly re-appeared after years of absence; and, what was most important of all, Dolores was coming to him for shelter and protection. At eleven o'clock that very night, she would be outside the small door at the back of the warehouse, where he must join her, and take her somewhere for safety.

Felizardo sat down on a pile of cases in the

corner of the warehouse, where he smoked innumerable cigarettes, and tried to think out the situation. For a moment, he was inclined to consult Don José, then dismissed the idea as impossible. It seemed like treason to Dolores. Above everything, no one must know that she had come to him secretly, in the dead of night —no one, that is, except the person who actually gave her shelter until he could marry her openly, in the light of day. Yet who would give her shelter? Who would not talk? He racked his brains for an answer, and then it came to him—the good Sisters at the little convent on the far-side of the plaza. It was only a few moments' walk, and when he took Dolores there, and she knocked, and told her story, and showed the letter she had written him—the first line he had ever received from her—there would be no question of her welcome or her safety. All the Tenientes in the Islands would be powerless to wrest her from the Sisters.

Felizardo waited with almost savage impatience for eleven o'clock. If she missed her way, if by any chance she were overtaken, if some one should be watching outside to see if she were coming to him! Full of the latter thought, he slipped into the warehouse again and searched for a bolo, a particularly fine and keen weapon, which, only that afternoon, one of his fellow-clerks had bought from a hill-

man. Felizardo found it, strapped it round his waist, saw that it was loose in its sheath, crept cautiously to the little back door, unlocked it, taking the key so as to be able to lock it again from the outside, took down the heavy bars, opened the door cautiously—and saw a dozen figures crouching on the ground, ready to spring at him.

Then he understood. Like a flash his bolo was out, and, with his back to the door, he was facing them, shouting, "The ladrones, the ladrones!" whilst unconsciously he crumpled up, and dropped, that forged letter.

It was his first fight. An old man, telling Captain Basil Hayle of it thirty-five years later, declared that it was his greatest fight; and Felizardo had then been in hundreds. Be that as it may, the fact remains that he had killed two ladrones, and mortally wounded two more, himself receiving only a gash across the forehead, before help came, in the form of the Guardia Civile from without, and Don José and his five men from within.

Of the twelve ladrones, only four escaped, crawling away wounded. Four they killed out of hand, and four more, including Cinicio Dagujob himself, they hanged on that new gallows opposite Don José's warehouse, as a warning to all men.

Felizardo staggered back against the wall, half-blinded by the blood from his forehead,

trembling, as a man does after his first fight; then, without the slightest premeditation, he made the mistake of his life. He slipped away in the darkness, down to the beach, launched a canoe, and began frenziedly to paddle towards San Polycarpio. He had remembered Dolores and her possible peril, and forgotten all else—Don José, the Guardia Civile, the questions he would be expected to answer.

The corporal asked one of those same questions of Don José half an hour later, after the prisoners had been safely locked in the cells.

"Who gave the alarm?" he demanded.

"Felizardo," the merchant answered. "He was fighting in the doorway when we rushed down, fighting like a dozen devils."

The corporal frowned. "Then he must have opened the door himself. Why? Where is he now?"

Don José poured himself out another glass of wine with a rather shaky hand. He was an old man, and his nerves were upset. "Felizardo is gone, they tell me. They have searched, thinking he might be lying wounded, but they cannot find a trace anywhere."

Once more the corporal frowned, and drummed on the table with his fingers. He was not very brilliant, and he was trying to construct a theory. At last, "Let them search again," he said severely.

A few minutes later, one of the clerks came

back with a crumpled slip of paper in his hand. "We have found this, Senor," he said.

The corporal handed it to Don José—despite that huge, dyed moustache and his straight back, his eyes were growing old, and one does not take spectacles when one is on service. "Will you read it, Don José, read it aloud slowly?" he asked with dignity, then turned a fierce gaze on the knot of clerks gathered in the doorway, who fled hurriedly.

When the merchant had finished, the corporal brought his hand down on the table with a thump which made all the wine-glasses dance. "A love affair, as I think I said, or rather a false assignation. He has got frightened at his mistake, and gone to the hills."

Don José sighed. "I liked him. He is a good, sensible boy, and I hope he will come back."

The corporal shook his head. "He will never come back. Thirty years I have been here, in this service, only going home to Spain once, and I should know that they are only savages, after all. I think I have said before that the Holy Church makes a mistake in trying to tame them. Let them be brought to hear Mass every Sunday—that would be only fitting, and would doubtless save their souls, if they have any—but books and learning are not for them. When I get back to Spain I shall make a journey to Rome to tell his Holiness these things. Doubt-

less, he will listen to an old soldier of Spain. . . . No, Don José, your Felizardo will never come back here. Yet"—he sighed regretfully—"he is a fine fighter. He was the only one on our side with a bolo, and two have been killed with the bolo, and two wounded so badly that we must hurry on the hanging of them. A fine fighter—but what will you——? They are all savages at heart, as I hope to tell his Holiness one day." He stood up abruptly, saluted, and stalked out with his hand on the hilt of his great sabre.

There was only one light showing in San Polycarpio when Felizardo beached his canoe on the shingle by the palm grove; and only one mangy dog, which relapsed into silence after the first stone, noted his arrival. On the other hand, the light was in the Teniente's house, which made things easier for the newcomer.

Felizardo had bandaged his forehead with a strip torn off his shirt, and as soon as he came to the stream of fresh water which ran down the one long street, he bathed the blood from his face carefully. He did not want to alarm Dolores — about himself. Then, bolo in hand, he made his way to the house, clambered cautiously on to the veranda, and peered in through a tiny hole in the matting blind. He could see very little — only Dolores standing, pale and trembling, against the further wall, and the heads of Lasara and Father Pablo, who

were seated at the table. But he could hear, and that was almost better than seeing.

The voices were a little thick—it had been a weary task waiting for the return of the messenger Cinicio Dagujob was to send, and the native spirit had been very strong — but the priest, at least, knew what he wanted.

"You must let her come to me as housekeeper," he was saying. "You would like that, wouldn't you, girl"—he turned towards Dolores—"to keep house for your parish priest? I would get rid of the other. Answer me, Juan Lasara. Will you agree, or shall I denounce you as Cinicio's partner?" There was a snarl in his voice. "After to-night's work there will be a hue-and-cry; and you remember the new gallows at Calocan. Answer me, you ladrone Teniente of San Polycarpio."

But the reply did not come from Juan Lasara. With one cut of his bolo Felizardo cleared away the matting, and was in the room. Dolores gave a scream and fainted; Lasara fumbled drunkenly for his knife, and, failing to find it, seized a bottle; but the priest stood back unarmed—trembling, perhaps, but still apparently secure in the protection of his cloth.

"You dare not touch me," he said. And for answer Felizardo slew him with a single slash of that terrible bolo. Then he dealt with Lasara, whom he maimed for life; and after that he gathered together the remains of the

food and the wine—he was looking ahead even then — put out the lamp, took the insensible girl in his arms, and made his way to the jungle.

So in the one night Felizardo killed two ladrones and a priest who was worse than a ladrone, secured the hanging of two others, and then, possibly because, as the corporal said, he was a savage at heart, took Dolores Lasara with him to the hills, and became a ladrone himself.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW THE CORPORAL WENT BACK TO SPAIN

For six months the tao of the district talked of Felizardo, the man who had slain a priest; then, as nothing more had been heard of the outlaw, and a new band of ladrones had been formed in the neighbourhood of Calocan, the centre of interest shifted, and the crime at San Polycarpio, if not forgotten, at least ceased to be discussed.

The tao knew nothing about Father Pablo's connection with the band of the late Cinicio Dagujob — the Church had seen to that fact being suppressed—but the corporal knew, in fact he had been the first to suspect it, and he took the information across to Don José Ramirez.

"This Pablo was a mestizo," he said. "You knew him, I suppose. No? A big scoundrel, gross and burly. I wonder why the Church will allow natives to be priests. I am sure the Holy Father cannot know. Some day, perhaps, I may have the chance of telling him, if I get back to Spain. A villain, that Pablo; but still

your Felizardo was wrong to kill him. Nothing can save him now. I told you that night, even after we found how splendidly he had boloed those ladrones, that he would not come back. I was right, of course. Have I not been thirty years in these accursed Islands, and if I do not know the Filipinos, who should know them, Senor? A fine fighter, that Felizardo. Had he been in our native troops, he would have risen high. And now, because he is a savage at heart, he has become a ladrone."

Don José sighed—there had been a romance and a tragedy in his own life, many years before, in Spain. "No, corporal. He went because he loved one woman too well to leave her to some one else."

The corporal twisted his moustache. "Therein he was a savage, as I said before. He got one idea in his mind, and he could not forget it, not having room for two. I have loved women, Senor, and women have loved me, many of them; but as for turning highwayman, or at least outlaw, for the sake of one—pouf!" He shook his head with a great assumption of scorn.

"I see." Don José smiled. They had been friends for many years, these two, and he knew the story of the girl in Spain whom the other had gone back to marry—and found dead; therefore, he always listened patiently to those stories of subsequent love affairs, none of which ever had the slightest foundation in fact. "I see,"

he repeated. "Then you think a man should have as many wives as he can get, like a Moor or a Chino?"

"No, no"—the corporal frowned—"the Church would not allow that, only—well," he got up rather hastily. "I was forgetting the time. I must be off. After thirty years' service in these accursed Islands, one must not begin to neglect one's duty, Senor." At the door he stopped and looked back. "Think no more of your Felizardo, Don José. He will never return; and, if he did, we should have to hang him. A fine fighter, certainly—but, to kill a priest!"

"But you say the priest was also a ladrone," the merchant objected.

The corporal shook his head. "A priest is a priest, and the Church will not forgive, or admit excuses. How can she, when she has the souls of all these savages to save? Still, if I ever get the chance of seeing the Holy Father, and explaining——" and he went out, still frowning and shaking his head.

Don José helped himself slowly to another glass of wine, and sighed. "We shall never go back to Spain, he and I. It is getting too late now, and so"—he smiled sadly—"the Holy Father will lose much useful information."

When Felizardo slew Pablo the priest, and took to the bush, carrying Dolores Lasara in his arms, he had no definite aim, save that of

gaining a temporary hiding-place; but the moment he had found this, and even whilst he was bringing the girl round with some of the wine he had taken from her father's table —the bottle itself was sticky with her father's blood—his mind became busy with the problem of the future.

He was an outlaw for life. He had killed a priest—had offended far beyond the offence of the ordinary ladrone, who only kills ordinary men, and tortures women and children. True, the priest was a ladrone, even worse than a ladrone, but it was the cloth, and not the man beneath it, which mattered. Felizardo faced the issue squarely. Somehow, it seemed as though he had learned many things during that night. He had taken up the bolo, and thenceforth the Law of the Bolo must be his only code. A few hours before, no one had less desire to be an outlaw than he; now, he had become an outlaw, despite himself; but he did not rail against Fate, because he was an Asiatic, and also because, after all, he had got Dolores.

Still, there was one trouble, which would be greater for her than for him. He put it to her very gently after he had told her of the end of Father Pablo.

"We cannot be married now, dear one," he said. "No priest would do it, even though I captured him, and threatened him with death."

She looked at him with shining eyes. "What matter? I shall have you, all the same."

He turned away. "It is not too late for you to go back, even now. The good Sisters at the convent would take you."

For answer, she kissed him, the first kiss she had ever given him, and they said no more of that matter.

From Felizardo's own village, from every village for miles round in fact, you can see a great range of mountains, rugged and forbidding, beginning practically at the shore of a huge bay and running inland for many miles. The lower slopes of the range are covered with dense jungle; but when you have climbed a thousand feet or so, you leave all this behind, and find bald rock, and lava-beds, and ashes, for there are half a dozen active volcanoes there, as well as many which are merely quiescent, and hot springs, and geysers, and other dangers to life and peace of mind.

Felizardo had often looked at those mountains, especially when he had been fishing in the bay, waiting lazily for a bite. Then, they had always seemed to suggest harshness and danger, the very antithesis to the dreamy life amongst the cocoa-nut groves and the hemp-patches; now, however, he thought of them in a very different light, as offering an ideal refuge; and even if, as was rumoured, they were the home of many bad men—well, was he, himself, not a bad man too?

He made up his mind quickly. It was no use thinking of remaining in the jungle by the coast. He was not greatly afraid of the authorities finding him, although the Church might insist on a hue-and-cry of an unusually vigorous nature; but he was afraid of coming across some of the local ladrones, who would assuredly take vengeance on him for what he had done to their friends. So, at the first streak of dawn he and Dolores set out for the mountains, where the rest of their lives were to be spent.

It was a long and slow journey, for Dolores was not used to the bush, and they had to avoid all footpaths and villages. Time after time, Felizardo had to carry her through those steep-banked, narrow little streams, which on the paths you cross by shaky pole-bridges; and twice he had to cut down hemp-palms, and make rafts on which to get to the other bank of larger streams. The second night out it rained, a veritable deluge; but he had foreseen it, and had made a little shelter of palm-leaves, which kept them perfectly dry, greatly to the surprise of Dolores.

"You seem to know everything, and to be prepared for everything," she said; and he felt prouder than he had ever felt in his life.

Early next morning, whilst she still slept, he went out to a neighbouring village, where they were also asleep, and when she awakened he

was plucking a newly-killed fowl, whilst there was a basket of sweet potatoes beside him. It was his first definite act of ladronism, and he shifted uneasily under her gaze, until she, understanding, laid a soft hand on his arm and said: "They drove you to it, dearest, and you have done it for me;" so Felizardo enjoyed his meal after all.

That night, Felizardo went much further. He found a water-buffalo belonging to the priest of the village they were skirting; and from that point onwards, until they were well up the lower slopes of the range, there was plenty of meat, whilst, of course, if you are a Filipino, you can always find sweet potatoes, and beans, and cocoa-nuts.

They built a little shelter in the jungle, and there they lived like children of nature for a week.

"I should be content to stay here for ever," Dolores said; but the man shook his head.

"It will rain every day soon, and then you would die. There are caves on the slope overlooking the bay. We will take one. Then we can store a supply of food, and, if I can get a pig and some fowls from one of the villages in the valley, we shall have no need to trouble."

The first two caves they explored were damp and dark, then they went into a third—and came on two men and a woman, sitting in the entrance, smoking some fish.

The men sprang to their feet, and one, the elder, came forward, bolo in hand; but the woman held the other back. "He may not be an enemy, and at least be fair," she cried, for which Dolores loved her ever afterwards.

The other man was a little unsteady—there was a jar of spirits beside the fire—and his eyes were staring and bloodshot. He did not stop to ask any questions, and Felizardo said nothing, except, very quietly: "Go back, Dolores."

It was not a fight: it did not last more than a few seconds; then, as he wiped his bolo on the white tunic of his attacker, Felizardo looked at the man beside the fire: "And you now?" he asked.

The other shook his head, and sheathed the bolo, which, despite the woman's efforts, he had drawn.

"You are the better man," he replied. "And he," nodding towards the body—"he was a scoundrel;" whereat the woman gave a queer little sob, gratitude, relief, horror perhaps, which brought Dolores running to her side, and they cried together; whilst the men carried the body out, and threw it over the cliff, returning with dry earth with which to cover the stains.

They sat down beside the fire, Felizardo in his late foe's place, and the stranger poured out some spirit, which they drank in silence.

After a while Felizardo spoke. "Why did you come up here, on the mountains?"

The stranger, whose name was Carlos, pointed to the woman: "I took her from a convent."

Felizardo smiled grimly. "And I killed a priest, for her," nodding towards Dolores.

Carlos leaned forward quickly. "Are you named Felizardo? I thought so. Even here, on the mountains, we hear things. . . . Let me, let us, stay here with you in this cave—as I said, you are the better man and can take it if you will—but I can help you; and the women will not be lonely."

For answer, Felizardo held out his hand; and so was started his band, which afterwards became the most famous in the Islands.

The band grew rapidly, as is the way of such organisations, when the leader is infinitely stronger than any of his followers; then, after a while, Felizardo determined to weed it out. He would have no men who were outlaws merely because of their own vicious natures, to whom ladronism was a natural calling. There were many of these already in the mountains, and they formed a rival band against him, on hearing of which he sallied out one night and cut them to pieces. From that time onwards, for many years, no native challenged his sovereign rights over the mountain range.

He made peace with the tribe of head-hunters, who were his northern neighbours, respecting their customs, so long as they took none of his men's heads, and with the tao to

the south, from whom he bought live-stock, the money he gave being obtained from Presidentes and Tenientes and planters, and other folk who oppress the common people, though it was taken as tribute, Felizardo not being a midnight robber, like Cinicio Dagujob had been.

News might go up from the coastal towns to the mountains, in fact it did go freely—news of what the Government was doing, of how the Presidentes and Tenientes were robbing the tao, of where the Guardia Civile was; but very little came down from the mountains, at least to the white men, and, of that little, practically none reached Calocan. Consequently, five years after Felizardo had turned ladrone, neither Don José nor the corporal knew that he was the chief of the big band, consisting of outlaws rather than of ladrones, of which they had heard vague rumours.

"They are in the mountains—pouf! I should let them stay there," the corporal said. "They do not seem to do much harm, and it would cost a fabulous sum to hunt them out from amongst the caves and craters;" an opinion with which Don José, being already heavily taxed, agreed heartily.

"I wonder if Felizardo is there," he added.

The corporal shrugged his shoulders. "Who knows? Let me see—he went four, or was it five, years ago. Five, that is it. Probably he is dead by now; he was not of the true ladrone

breed. Anyway, I was right when I said he would never come back, just as I was right when I said I should never go home to Spain."

"Have you applied for your pension?" the merchant asked.

The old soldier drew himself up. "How can I, Senor, when I am still active, and—and not old, declare I am no longer fit for my work? No, if they offer it, I shall take it; but until they offer——" and he went out, shaking his head.

That night a runner came in with a message for the corporal. A large band of ladrones, or rather a combination of a number of small bands, had raided and burned the village of Igut, which was about ten miles from the foot of the mountains, on the edge of the bay. Most of the tao had been killed; the Spanish trader had been tortured to death, and all the women and girls carried off. Troops were being hurried from Manila—in the Spanish way of hurrying, which did not mean much—but, meanwhile, all the small detachments were to go in pursuit. The corporal was to take two of his troopers, and twenty of the native soldiers attached to his post.

It was a great grief to the corporal that he had to make the trip by canoe in order to save time. He disliked service on foot, being a little stiff and short of wind; whilst, more important than that, it was always more dignified to ride

in full uniform, at the head of your men. Now, however, not only his horse, but his great thigh-boots as well, would have to remain behind. Even his sabre must be carried by a native orderly. Still, as he said to Don José, who came to the landing-stage to see him off, one's duty came before one's sense of dignity, and an old soldier of Spain could afford to do things which would make a lesser man look absurd.

They landed on the beach at Igut, which now consisted of some piles of still-smoking ashes, a hundred or two charred posts, the remains of the nipa-houses, and the blackened walls of the church and the Spanish merchant's house. There were bodies everywhere, slashed hideously with bolo-cuts; and beside the post in the plaza, where they had done him to death, in the hope of making him confess how he had hidden the wealth he did not possess, was all that remained of the Spanish merchant himself; seeing which, the corporal swore great oaths, unconsciously drew his hand across his eyes —curious how dim they were growing!—then, like a good Catholic, knelt down and prayed for the soul of the man he had never seen in life; and after that he donned the parade uniform he had brought in case of emergency, buckled on his sabre, and carried out the funeral of his fellow-countryman.

There was no trace of the other detachments which were supposed to be coming; but that

fact did not weigh with the corporal. He had been ordered to pursue the ladrones, so he marched inland on the trail of the robbers. It was not difficult to follow them, at least for the first few miles; they were a large body, and they were taking along much loot and many prisoners. A little way out, the pursuers came on the body of a woman, and then those of two children, all boloed, apparently because they could not travel.

The trail led towards the foot of the range of mountains, Felizardo's territory; and the corporal groaned involuntarily. He had to keep at the head of his little force, yet he was very stiff, and the climbing tried him severely. Once or twice, he was sorely inclined to call a halt, just to get his breath again; but he could not let his native soldiers see any signs of weakness, and so he struggled on. It was rather curious. After thirty-five years' service, a man should be fit for anything, inured to all hardships. Probably it was only fancy after all, he told himself, as he squared his shoulders, and looked back sternly for any possible stragglers. Then suddenly, his orderly, who was just behind him, cried out that he had seen a ladrone scout, moving amongst the trees; and a moment later, almost before the corporal had time to take his sabre from the orderly, the ladrones were on them, three to one, cutting and slashing with their bolos. The corporal's men, winded and

exhausted, fired a volley from their muskets, but only one of the enemy was hit, and there was no chance of reloading. It became a case of the butt-end against the bolo, and, naturally, the bolo won. A few seconds afterwards, the corporal, one of his white troopers, and a native sergeant were the only survivors in sight, standing with their backs to a huge tree.

The corporal had drawn his pistol with his left hand, but a slash from a bolo had taken off three of his fingers before he could fire, though he was hardly conscious of the fact. All he knew was that he must die like a soldier of Spain, with his sabre in his hand.

For a minute, they kept the bolomen at bay, then the native sergeant went down, and the enemy began to close in, twenty of them, at least.

"It is over. Good-bye!" the corporal cried to his one remaining comrade.

There had never been any chance, and now there were more bolomen coming, scores of them, rushing down the hillside, yelling. The corporal braced himself up. His strength was almost gone, but he meant to kill one more enemy of Spain before he himself was killed.

And then a miracle seemed to happen. Suddenly, there was not an enemy within reach of his sabre, for boloman was fighting boloman, or, rather, the newcomers were slaying his enemies for him. The corporal lowered

the point of his sabre—he had lost a great deal of blood, and the weight of the weapon now seemed almost unbearable—then he turned to his comrade with a question in his eyes, and, before the other had time to answer, lurched forward in a dead faint.

When the corporal recovered his senses, he was lying on a pile of blankets under a palm-leaf shelter. His left hand, which was bandaged up, was very painful—that was his first impression; then he began to remember, vaguely at the outset, seeing everything as through a mist of blood, which cleared away suddenly when it struck him that he was a prisoner amongst the ladrones, and he knew how ladrones treated Spanish prisoners. Better to have died there, at the foot of the big tree. Still, they should get no sign of weakness from him.

He closed his eyes whilst he repeated a prayer, then opened them again, to see a native, whose face was somehow familiar, standing beside him, regarding him with grave interest.

The corporal returned the look, then raised himself on his unwounded arm. "You are Felizardo!" he cried.

Felizardo nodded. "Yes, Senor, it is Felizardo. You remember last time, outside Don José's warehouse, you saved me? Now"—he bowed slightly—"I am able to save you, also from ladrones."

The corporal lay back again. This was an unprecedented situation, for which there was

no provision made in the Regulations; for this same Felizardo was a ladrone who had slain a priest. At first, he tried to think what would be the correct thing to do; but in the end he could only jerk out a question: "Why did you do it?"

Felizardo waved his hand. "Those ladrones who burned Igut captured some of my men's wives—that was all. We came on you by chance, and I was glad to pay my debt."

The corporal breathed heavily. He did not intend to show any anxiety, but he wanted to know his fate. "And now?" he asked.

Felizardo smiled slightly. "Now, if you like, you may go back to Calocan at once; or, if you would honour me, stay with me in my mountains until your wound is healed."

From any other native, the mere invitation, even without the phrase "my mountains," would have stirred the corporal's deepest wrath; but somehow he realised, almost with a sense of humiliation, that this native was a stronger man than himself. For a moment, he was inclined to accept, then he remembered he must go back and report—his defeat.

"Senor Felizardo," he said, "I must go back;" he looked away and went on, a little brokenly: "Thank you, Senor. I told Don José we should never see you again, either of us. Now I, at least, have seen you, and I am glad, and—and very grateful."

Again Felizardo smiled. "So you told Don José that? Well, we shall see;" and he began to walk away slowly.

The corporal called him back. "I might get you a pardon, even now, though . . . you know . . . the Church——"

The other man's face grew hard. "I take no pardons," he said sternly; then he shrugged his shoulders and laughed. "And, anyway, Senor, they would grant none. Still, it was kind of you."

They carried the corporal down to Igut, where to his surprise he found eight survivors out of his force, and they put him on board a canoe, after what seemed a day's unnecessary delay. Then they started back to Calocan, his own men paddling the canoe. The corporal was very unhappy. He knew now that he must be invalided out of the service: not honourably, however, but in disgrace, for his haste, or rather his over-devotion to duty, had brought disaster on the arms of Spain.

True, it would be a difficult matter to explain, for the women and children and the loot as well were back in Igut, and the surviving men had crept in from the jungle and begun to rebuild the nipa-houses, whilst, as a price for his rescue, Felizardo had made him promise not to tell how the mountaineers had rescued him. He wished now he had not given that promise—it was, probably, like the rest of the business,

contrary to the Regulations—but, having given it, he must abide by it. He puzzled over the matter all the way back to Calocan, wondering what his men would say, not knowing that they had received orders on that point—orders which they now dare not disobey — from Felizardo himself.

When the canoe reached Calocan, the whole population was waiting on the beach to greet him. They cheered, and they crowded round him, and the women showered blessings on him; whilst there was even an orderly from Manila, commanding him to go to the Governor-General himself, a Grandee of Spain, as soon as his wounds permitted. The corporal flushed and stammered and looked round helplessly; then Don José came forward and took his arm. "Come up to my house. It will be quiet there."

He led the corporal into the well-remembered room, which, somehow, seemed different now to the visitor, possibly because he had always entered it before as a proud and important man, whilst this time he felt himself an impostor. He took his glass of wine with trembling hands, put it to his lips, then set it down untasted. He might have to deceive every one else, but he could not be false to this old friend. He drew his hand across his forehead slowly, then he blurted out: "It's a lie. I was beaten. I thought all my men were killed."

Don José leaned forward and laid a hand on his arm. "I know the truth, my friend—everything. Felizardo told me."

The corporal sat up erect in his chair and gasped. "Felizardo? When? How?"

"In this room, last night. He came alone, by canoe, and walked straight in. He wanted me to see you said nothing foolish, and he wanted to prove you had been wrong when you said he would never come back."

For a full minute they sat in silence, then the corporal broke out. "He is a strong man, Senor."

Don José nodded.

"He is a gentleman, Senor, even if he did kill a priest;" there was almost a note of defiance in the corporal's voice.

Again Don José nodded.

There was another spell of silence, which was broken by the merchant saying: "You will do as he wishes? You will hear all, and say nothing? Then you will go back to Spain with your pension. Why not? You tried your best; you held up the ladrones—you, single-handed—and gave Felizardo his chance. It was your victory, after all."

They took the corporal's reticence and his rather muddled statements as the results of the wound he had received, coupled with his modesty. How could one doubt when one had been to Igut and seen the released prisoners, and the

restored loot, and the heads of the ladrones stuck on posts along the beach?

Don José came to Manila to see him start on his journey to Spain.

"Will you see the Holy Father—now?" the merchant asked.

The corporal's eyes brightened. "Why, yes, if I can. Why should I have changed—I, who have had thirty-five years in which to learn the truth?"

Don José laughed. "But has not Felizardo changed you? Is he only a savage, then?"

For a moment, the corporal was at a loss, then, "If he had not been educated, he would never have been able to read that letter, and would not have had to take to the hills," he answered stoutly.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW CAPTAIN BASIL HAYLE WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS

THE corporal never went to Rome, after all, and, as a result, his message to the Holy Father remained undelivered. True, he talked about going often during the ten years which elapsed before he himself was gathered to his mundane fathers, but, somehow, life was very pleasant in his own little village, where there were no ladrones to worry you, and plenty of untravelled folk ready to listen to your stories of ladrones. Moreover, Rome was a long way off, a very long way, and the journey needed many preparations; so, in the end, the only journey he did make was when he went on a visit to Don José Ramirez, who had also come home, rich and very weary.

They talked of Calocan, of San Polycarpio, and of the new gallows, on which Cinicio Dagujob was hanged, of many familiar spots and old friends; but most of all they talked of Felizardo and his doings.

"We were both wrong," the corporal said. "He came back to Calocan, and we have come

back to Spain. Curious, I am seldom wrong; but I was over those matters. Still, even an old soldier of thirty-five years' service may make mistakes sometimes. . . . You say Felizardo is still in those same mountains?"

Don José nodded.

"He, at least, will never go back to his home to stay," the corporal went on. "If there were nothing else, there is the Church, you know." He shook his head gravely. "Felizardo killed a priest, and even though that Father Pablo was a ladrone, the cloth remains, always. And the Church does not forget. How can she afford to forget, with all those half-heathen souls to be saved?"

The corporal stayed a week in Don José's big house, and then he went home to his own little house, in the village at the foot of the mountains, and with that both he and Don José Ramirez go out of this story, leaving only Felizardo and Dolores Lasara, who were still in the mountains in the distant Philippines, outlaws and, if you will, ladrones.

The corporal had been dead twenty years when Captain Basil Hayle, who was then only Serjeant Hayle of the Garrison Artillery, United States Army, landed in Manila. From the transport, he had seen a great range of mountains, running right down to the sea, and had admired them in his silent way, though

he made no remark about them, even to the comrade who was leaning on the rail beside him, for, as a rule, the more he liked a thing, the less he said about it. It was only when his aversion was roused that he was moved to speech. If any one had told him then that those same mountains, and the people on them, were destined to play the most important part in his life, he might not have disbelieved the statement—in fact, he had a vein of superstition, or fatalism, which might have inclined him to believe it—but he would have gone on just the same until the crisis arrived.

Basil Hayle came of good stock on both sides. His father had been a Virginian, his mother a Swedish girl, a combination which usually turns out well, both the breeds being good ones. From his father he had inherited his sense of chivalry, his inability to know when he was beaten, and a certain deceptive strength which looked like laziness; from his mother had come his tall figure, his fair hair, and his unwillingness to cause unnecessary pain.

When, on the outbreak of the war, Basil Hayle had volunteered for the front, they had drafted him into the Garrison Artillery on account of his size and apparent slowness, qualities which are usually considered more suitable in garrison gunners than in any other branch of the service; but they quickly discovered that they had misjudged their man. The superfluous flesh he had

recently acquired during a leisurely trip to Europe was soon got rid of, his education raised him above the level of the majority of his comrades, and before the transport left San Francisco he was a full serjeant. Still, he was in the Garrison Artillery, and a garrison gunner he had to remain, kicking his heels in a sweltering fort on the shore of Cavite Bay — with his largest gun he could almost have thrown a shell on to the lower slopes of Felizardo's mountains — whilst the other regiments were having a splendid time amongst the insurrectos.

As every one knows, the Americans went to the Philippines to save the Filipinos from the Spanish tyranny; and, as is also well known, the Filipinos responded in characteristic fashion. For a few brief weeks, the agitators in the towns believed, and proclaimed, that the millennium had come, the reign of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity — Liberty to do what was good in your own sight, and evil in the sight of every decent man; Equality, so far as the goods of a richer man than yourself were concerned; Fraternity in the Cain-and-Abel sense. The tao repeated the words, taking them to mean that the Presidentes and Tenientes would be hanged, and that there would be cock-fights every day of the week; the ladrones took them to mean the entire abolition of any form of police; but old Felizardo, who was now sixty

years of age and the wisest man in the Islands, laughed scornfully.

"The Americanos will let them bolo one another for a while," he said, "then they will send an army to put those who remain in order. Still, it is not my quarrel. I claim nothing beyond my mountains."

None the less, he strengthened the outposts on the lower slopes of the range, and when the Provisional Government in Manila sent envoys to ask him to join them, the rather nervous mestizos who brought the message were sent back, very flustered, with their mission unfulfilled. Then came other envoys, truculent ones this time, with orders to Felizardo to make his submission to the Sovereign People, the latter being represented by a few score of coffee-coloured little men in khaki uniforms, with huge red sashes, huge red epaulettes, and even more huge sabres, which they loved to jangle over the cobble-stones of the towns, greatly to their own glory, and much to the detriment of their scabbards. Felizardo, hearing of them, laughed again—his official uniform was a suit of white duck and a broad-brimmed straw hat—then he said to Dolores, whose girlish prettiness had changed now to a sweet-faced dignity: "The corporal of the Guardia Civile at Calocan—you remember, the old one—would alone have put them to flight, beating them with the flat of his sword. They tell me those patriots have hewn

down the gallows at Calocan. Well, it was old; and, in any case, the Americanos would doubtless have put up a new one—for these patriots."

But when the second deputation, that to demand his instant submission to the will of the Sovereign People, arrived, and Felizardo heard that the envoys were generals, wearing that same gorgeous uniform, he waxed wroth, and ordered that those distinguished soldier-diplomats should be brought to him. "Bring them, sabres, revolvers, and all," he said. "Let them climb the mountains, and climb rather fast, as I am in a hurry to see the great sight."

Possibly, his orders were taken too literally. At any rate, two of the envoys fainted half way up the mountain-side, and had to be revived with pricks from the point of a bolo; whilst even the third, who was of a tougher breed, had none of his truculence left when he found himself face to face with that quiet, wizened little man. Moreover, the ends of the scabbards were worn and dented beyond all hope of repair, and when, in obedience to Felizardo's order, the owners attempted to draw their sabres in salute, not one of them could get the blade out.

One or two of Felizardo's men—there were over a hundred clustered round—laughed; but the chief himself looked grave. "Patriot generals should do better than that," he said. "I fear you would be certain to die for your

country if an enemy were to meet you in that state. I can remember the days when our people were content with a bolo in a wooden sheath."

A laugh went round the semicircle of his followers, each of whom had one of the weapons in question strapped round his waist. But the envoys did not laugh. Somehow, Felizardo's courtesy seemed to jar on their nerves.

"What do you want here, on my mountains? Where is the message you have to bring me?" The chief's manner changed suddenly.

The envoys exchanged glances; then the eldest of them, rather reluctantly, produced an official-looking document, decorated with a large seal. Felizardo read the paper carefully, then handed it to a youngster who was standing behind his chair. "Burn that, Enrique," he said; and after that he turned to the envoys again. "What are your names, O Generals of the Sovereign People?" he asked.

They gave him names, and then, after telling the eldest to stand to one side, he called to his men. "Do you know these two?" he asked.

One they identified as the late door-keeper at the Palace, and the other as a money-lender in a Manila suburb.

Felizardo nodded; then he beckoned to the third man. "You are the son of Cinicio Dagujob," he said. "You were one of the band of ladrones which burned San Juan two years ago. Do not

deny it. I know you." Then he nodded to his men. "Hang him," he said curtly; and they led the general away, sullen, defiant, unresisting, a ladrone to the end, and hanged him, with his great sabre still on him.

After that, Felizardo called up the other two. "You shall go back to Manila, with this message from Felizardo.—Your government talks of the will of the Sovereign People and the Law of Liberty. I, Felizardo, say that here, in my mountains, where I am the sovereign chief, there is only one law, the Law of the Bolo, to which every man becomes subject the moment he sets foot on my land. Tell them that in Manila. See that you tell it faithfully, lest I come down to Manila and tell it them myself. And now, O Generals of the Sovereign People, you shall be well flogged, so that you may remember Felizardo, and then you shall go back with the message of the Bolo."

The Provisional Government passed a resolution, or rather a series of resolutions, on the subject of Felizardo, declaring him to be a rebel, an outlaw, a tyrant, and an Enemy of the People, whilst a bishop whom it had appointed—ratification from Rome was sure to come to Catholic patriots—solemnly excommunicated the whole band; but when they called for a volunteer to deliver copies of the resolutions to Felizardo, none was forthcoming, even though they promised a general's commission to

any man who undertook the task. But they sent no force against the chief of the mountains, and, almost before they had got half-way through their discussions on the subject of dealing with him, the American Army arrived and, as the soldiers put it, began to clear up the mess.

A few weeks later, the Provisional Government itself had taken to the hills; and many a time, when the Americans were hard on their heels, members of that same government looked longingly at Felizardo's mountains, and thought of the shelter to be obtained there, or rather of the shelter which might have been obtained there, had Felizardo not been a tyrant and an Enemy of the People. Yet none even set foot in his territory, for that message of his concerning the Law of the Bolo had been repeated faithfully in Manila; and all men, at least all Filipinos, knew that Felizardo was a man of his word.

So the Americans chased the insurrectos — that is, the troops of the late Provisional Government—and the ladrones, and the head-hunters who were Felizardo's northern neigh bours, gathered in the stragglers on both sides, each doing in accordance with his customs; but the mountains were left alone. Then, as all the world knows, or ought to know, just as the army had the insurrectos nicely in hand, and was about to capture, and hang comfortably, the worst offenders, the exigencies of party

politics in the United States led to the institution of Civil Government throughout the Islands. The army was withdrawn; the members of the late Provisional Government were absolved of their murders and their rapes, and their other abominations, and made governors of provinces, and commissioners, and even judges; and from these the Civil Government first learned of Felizardo and his wicked ways, how he had flogged, and even hanged, pure Filipino patriots; and Mr Commissioner Furber, the head of the new department of Constabulary and Trade—a rather infelicitous, or invidious, combination—decided that Felizardo, the Enemy of the People, must be rooted out and destroyed; for Mr Commissioner Furber, like Mr Collector Sharler of the Customs, who had a native wife, was a firm believer in that great and glorious and democratic doctrine, which declared that the Filipino was the white man's Little Brown Brother, whilst, obviously, this same Felizardo, whom the ex-generals declared to be a common ladrone, had no fraternal feelings at all. So the doom of Felizardo was signed and sealed, and the only thing remaining to be done was the carrying out of the sentence—a small matter surely when the latter had been pronounced by a Commissioner of great power. It is at this point that Captain Basil Hayle of the Philippines Constabulary, late Sergeant Hayle of the Garrison Artillery, U.S.A., comes

into the story; for he was the man deputed to carry out the dread fiat of Mr Commissioner Furber, which led to his going up into the mountains and learning the Law of the Bolo.

Basil Hayle took his discharge from the Army in Manila at the earliest possible opportunity. He was a little tired of garrison gunnery as practised in the Islands, and was anxious to join one of the new corps of native troops then being formed. The chance came quickly. The Civil Government, desirous of proving to the Army how beautifully it could manage without professional assistance, raised a force of its own, the Philippines Constabulary, the rank and file of which was composed of any stray natives who felt sufficiently energetic to enlist, whilst the officers consisted mainly of discharged private soldiers. The equipping of the Constabulary gave the politicians in the Government offices the chance of their lives. The rifles were Springfield carbines, manufactured in the early 'seventies; most of the ammunition would not fire; whilst the clothing and boots were of the very worst quality imaginable, purchased at the very best prices.

It is one thing to raise officers for such a corps, quite another thing to keep them. Basil Hayle, however, was amongst those who remained, and, as a result, he quickly found himself promoted captain of a company of some sixty surly, ragged little men, natives of Manila

and its immediate neighbourhood, who could neither drill nor shoot, whose objects in life were to smoke cigarettes, play monte, and, whenever the chance occurred, slip away to a cock-fight, from which they generally returned penniless and incoherent.

Basil did his best with them. He contrived to be sent to an out-station, in the hopes of getting them in hand; but the sole result was that five joined a local band of ladrones, taking their carbines and their friends' money with them, whilst five more returned hurriedly, and without leave, to Manila, to lay their grievances before a fellow-countryman, an ex-colonel of the Army of Liberty, who was now chief secretary to Mr Commissioner Furber. Meanwhile, Captain Hayle's subaltern, a youth from Boston, had married a native woman, a proceeding which aroused all Basil's bitterest Southern prejudices. The incident moved him to speech, and he spoke with so much emphasis, and so much effect, that from that time onwards he was short of an officer. Then, to crown it all, a runner came in with peremptory orders from the Commissioner for him to bring his company back to Manila and explain his arbitrary proceedings.

This time, there was no one to whom he could speak emphatically, save the messenger, who knew no English, whilst, so far, his own knowledge of Spanish expletives was limited;

consequently, he had to keep it all for the Commissioner, who, having regarded him hitherto as a silent, docile man, even if he were a Southerner—Furber himself came from Boston—was distinctly surprised and pained, as Basil had intended he should be. Still, in the end, they parted, if not good friends, at least with a temporary understanding. So many useful officers had resigned recently that the Commissioner dare not let another go; moreover, he had just been made fully acquainted with the evil deeds of Felizardo, that enemy of Progress and the Sovereign People; and Basil Hayle seemed a very suitable man to go and rout out the nest of brigands in the mountains.

Hayle accepted the commission joyfully, knowing nothing of Felizardo, of whom he now heard for the first time. He was in the service purely for the sake of excitement and experience, and this task of clearing those mountains, which he had so often admired, of a gang of brigands and murderers seemed to promise him both. That same night, after dinner, he went to the Orpheum, the music-hall of Manila, and, meeting Clancy of the *Manila Star* in the entrance, was taken into the Press box, whence you can obtain the finest view of those young ladies who are imported at vast expense, and apparently with only part of their wardrobes, from Australia and the China Coast to elevate and amuse the public of Manila.

Clancy had known the Philippines in the Spanish days, and Basil turned to him for information.

"Ever heard of a ladrone called Felizardo?" he asked.

"No"—Clancy had a passion for correct expressions — "but I have heard of an old man called Felizardo, who for the last five-and-twenty years has been recognised by the Spaniards as the chief of that range of mountains over there. He was an outlaw, certainly, but a regular ladrone, never. The Spaniards were too wise to worry him, and he left them alone. Why, what's the matter with him now? Has he been hanging any more patriots?"

"No, only I've got to go out and catch him, and break up his band." There was a note of defiance in Hayle's voice. He was young, after all, a bare eight-and-twenty, and he did not like even the possibility of ridicule.

But Clancy was very grave now. "You are going up there?" he said. "You, who are new at the game yourself, going up against Felizardo, with that ragged crowd of yours? Why, man, it's absurd. Twenty companies like yours wouldn't suffice for the job. Your people must be stark raving mad"—Clancy was an Irishman. "Take my advice and go sick. You'll be cut to pieces the moment you set foot on Felizardo's mountains."

Basil got up stiffly. "Thanks," he said, "but I shall not take your advice. I have been ordered to go, and I shall go—to-morrow, if possible," and he went out.

Clancy looked after him, and shrugged his shoulders. "A fool and his folly," he muttered; "or, rather, fools and their folly. Still, it is a pity."

However, Captain Hayle did not start for the mountains the following day, nor for many days after. Incautiously, or perhaps fortunately, he mentioned their destination to his serjeant, who repeated the news to the men, with the result that there were only three members of the company, the serjeant and two corporals, old soldiers of the Spanish times, who answered to the roll-call that evening. The rest had found urgent business elsewhere, and half of them had forgotten to leave their carbines behind.

It was a very angry and shamed-faced Captain of Constabulary who reported the occurrence to the Commissioner on the following morning; but, greatly to his surprise, that official was almost sympathetic.

"I cannot say I was altogether unprepared for it," he said. "In fact, since I saw you, I have heard so many absurd stories concerning this Felizardo, who seems to be a kind of supernatural person in the eyes of the common people here, that I can understand your poor, ignorant soldiers going."

"They took twenty-eight carbines," Hayle interjected grimly.

The Commissioner smiled. "My secretary assures me those will be returned. There is no vice in those Little Brown Brothers of ours. It is only men like this Felizardo who cause all the trouble. . . . Well, Captain Hayle, there is a company in Manila now, one which was raised in the Island of Samar by Captain Marten, who has just died. You had better take command of that. You will find those Samar men are not afraid of Felizardo."

So Basil Hayle took over the sixty-five little brown men from Samar, and spent the better part of a fortnight trying to instil some idea of discipline into their heads; then, with infinite trouble, he managed to get some tolerably reliable ammunition from the stores, and bought boots for his men out of his own pocket, though he knew that the money would be stolen. And after that he went back to the Commissioner, and reported that he was ready, adding: "It would be as well if one of these Manila men, who gave you the information about Felizardo, came along as guide." But all those same Manila men had, it appeared, very pressing private business which they could not leave, and, anyway, as the Commissioner said: "If you search long enough, you are bound to come on these outlaws;" whereat, Captain Hayle went out, shrugging his shoulders. He

had been making a few enquiries, from Spaniards and other folk likely to know, and he had come to the conclusion that it was far more probable that Felizardo would find him. Still, Clancy of the *Star* had put him on his mettle, and he was determined to go through with it.

At Igut, where the corporal of the Guardia Civile had landed thirty years before, there was a garrison consisting of a company of the Philippine Scouts, a force which held itself to be vastly superior to the Constabulary, for, though the rank and file of both were drawn from the same classes, the Scouts were under the Army, and so had food and clothing and high pay, and other advantages, which, if given to an Asiatic, tend to make him proud and mutinous and careful of his own skin. They had rebuilt Igut since the corporal's day, and there was now a regular plaza with half a dozen stone-built houses on it, and a gaol and barracks and many nipa-shacks and a church; in fact, there was accommodation for all classes of the community, save the pigs, and fowls, and pariah-dogs, which wandered at large, spreading disease. Still, even with these drawbacks, it was an important place. The Presidente was an ex-member of the Provisional Government, whom the army was just going to hang for torturing a bugler to death, when the Civil Government saved him; the principal merchant was a nephew of old Don José Ramirez of

Calocan; whilst Captain Bush, the officer in command of the Scouts, lived with his wife in the large white-washed house at the top corner of the plaza. Igut had changed greatly since the day when Felizardo had the heads of the ladrones stuck on posts along the beach, and insisted on the corporal having the credit for the victory.

A wheezy little steamer took Captain Hayle and his men across the bay. At first, the skipper suggested that he should land the party at Igut; but, greatly to his disgust, Hayle declined. There was another tiny harbour practically at the foot of the mountains, and there was no sense in tramping ten miles or so through the jungle when you could go much more comfortably by water. It was nothing to Basil if the mestizo skipper happened to be in a hurry to get back in time for a big cock-fight. So, in the end, they disembarked at the village of Katubig, which consisted of a score of nipa-shacks along the edge of the beach, the sort of place which could be burned with the greatest ease any night, if you were not on good terms with the ladrones—or, more important still, not under the protection of Felizardo—facts which struck Captain Hayle at once, and made him very careful and a little anxious.

Felizardo had received ample warning of the coming of the Constabulary; in fact, ten of the deserters from Hayle's old company had arrived,

with their carbines, and begged to be admitted to the band; but, though the chief had retained the weapons, which would be useful, he had declined the services of the men, arguing that if they had been unfaithful to the Americanos, they would possibly be unfaithful to him.

He was perfectly able to hold his own in the mountains, of that he had no doubt; but still Hayle's expedition worried him, because it showed that the Americanos did not mean to continue the sensible Spanish policy of leaving him alone. For years past he had given up active ladronism, having no further need to practise anything of the kind, and he was both annoyed and astonished that the new authorities in Manila should think of interfering with him. It never occurred to him that, in addition to having incurred the enmity of the Manila mestizos, he was also an anachronism—that he represented a condition of affairs which Mr Commissioner Furber and his colleagues could not allow to continue, that his personal independence was contrary to all the accepted theories of law and order, as well as to the Declaration of Independence, because, as the Commissioners had heard on the very best authority, he was a tyrant and an Enemy of the People.

If Felizardo had understood these things, he might have acted differently, and have made his peace with Manila. True, he was growing

old, and a little weary, and old men are less ready for strife than are the younger ones; but, at the same time, they are less ready to change their points of view, and the one fixed idea in Felizardo's mind was that the mountains belonged to him. Still, he did not want to bring on a crisis; and so he sent word to his outposts on the lower slopes, to the villages in the valley, and to the head-hunters on the northern side, that the Americanos were to be turned back with as little bloodshed as possible —which was fortunate for Captain Basil Hayle and his men.

The Constabulary remained one night at Katubig, the Teniente of which proved to be a most courteous old native, very full of information concerning Felizardo and his evil ways; in fact, so anxious was he to see the band broken up, that he even offered to let his own servant guide Hayle and his men to the brigands' camp, which, he said, was some twenty miles away, towards the end of the range. For a moment, Basil hesitated. It seemed a little too easy. Then he recollected that his only alternative was to blunder forward without a guide of any sort, and so he accepted the offer.

Twenty miles may not seem a great distance in a civilised country, where there are roads, or, at least, paths; but twenty miles along the lower slopes of Felizardo's mountains, forcing one's way through the dense jungle, with the

necessity of being prepared for attack at any moment, is a very different matter. It took two days to do the journey, and when the column arrived, weary and hungry, at the spur of the big volcano, just beyond which Felizardo's camp was supposed to be, and camped down for the night, Basil discovered that the guide had slipped away into the bush.

The situation was not a pleasant one. The whole way they had seen no trace either of ladrones or of tao. There was no chance of getting another guide, no chance of obtaining information; whilst for lack of cargadores, or carriers, they had only been able to take five days' food supply with them. In the circumstances, most men would have made their way straight back to Katubig, and then have started afresh; but the idea was utterly repugnant to Captain Hayle. He felt that, so far, he had shown himself a helpless amateur, and that to return meekly would be to make a public confession of failure. He spent half the night sitting beside the fire, smoking, and trying to think out a plan. He realised now the extreme difficulty of his task, the absurdity of it even—they had set a white man who had not the slightest idea of the geography of the range to track down a native outlaw who had spent thirty-five years there, and knew every inch of the ground.

Nine Constabulary officers out of ten would

have reported the job to be hopeless. Basil Hayle happened to be the tenth man, and, before he lay down to sleep, he had decided to do the thing scientifically—to explore the range from end to end, even if he took months over doing it, and then to ask for an adequate force with which to round up the outlaws. It was the only way.

In accordance with this plan, he did the one thing which neither Felizardo, nor any one else, would have expected him to do—at the first streak of dawn he started to climb straight up the mountain-side, beyond the jungle, beyond the scrub which succeeded the jungle, on to the rocky ground itself, and there he had his first fight.

Afterwards, Felizardo hanged two of the survivors for not keeping a proper lookout; but, though that prevented similar mishaps for the future, it did not alter the essential fact that the outlaws were badly beaten. They had a camp—it was one of their largest outpost stations—on a great ledge of rock, from which, on a clear day, you could see Manila itself. Two large caves furnished the main shelter, but in addition to these there were half a dozen little huts, amongst which the men were sitting, smoking and playing cards, when Basil Hayle and his men suddenly appeared. For once, the rifle had its chance against the bolo, or rather the bolo had no chance at all. Moreover, the

Constabulary were superior numerically. The first volley really settled the question; and when a dozen bolomen did rally and attempt a rush, half-heartedly, knowing that the bolo should be used in the jungle or in the darkness, they were beaten back easily.

Five minutes later, everything was over; and then Basil Hayle made a discovery which was to alter the whole of his after-life. There were half a dozen women and children in one of the caves, weeping and clinging to one another. Basil drew back hurriedly. He did not like to see things like that, especially as most of them were young, and one, a mestiza, was extremely nice-looking. The position was rather awkward, he told himself. He had not the slightest intention of taking them along with him, and yet, if he left them up there, on that ledge of rock, with three or four badly wounded outlaws as their sole guard, no one could tell what might happen. Possibly, Felizardo's main camp was twenty miles away, and, from what he had heard of the old man's character, it was quite likely that none of the few members of the outpost who had escaped unhurt would be in a hurry to return to their leader.

Basil pushed his hat back and scratched his head. What right had women to be mixed up in an affair like this? Then, suddenly, his eyes fell on the only unwounded prisoner, a sullen-looking youth, who had been knocked down

with the butt-end of a carbine. "Come here," he said. "Do you know Felizardo's camp?"

The boy looked at him suspiciously; then Basil went on: "Go and tell him to come and fetch these women and the wounded men. See? Get along now."

He needed no second bidding. He had been expecting to be taken down to the coast and hanged as a ladrone, and he did not feel quite sure that such was not to be his fate until he was actually out of sight round the next spur of the mountain; then he doubled back, and re-passed the Constabulary out of sight, for, like a true outlaw, he had taken the precaution of starting off in the wrong direction.

Had Basil Hayle been a more experienced, or a less chivalrous man, he would have waited, on the chance of Felizardo himself coming along presently, in which case this story would have ended abruptly, so far as the Constabulary officer was concerned; for the force which presently arrived, expecting some such trap, had both rifles and bolos, and crept in cautiously from all sides; but, by that time, the Constabulary were miles away, scrambling over the rocks in great good-humour, for had they not won their first fight, and acquired, not only glory, but loot as well in the form of bolos, and playing cards, and clothes, and, most important of all, cigarettes?

The Captain, too, was satisfied, feeling he had made a good start. Moreover, he had secured

an additional two days' provisions, and so would be able to explore the whole of one side of the range before returning to Katubig.

The Teniente of Katubig was very apologetic about the guide. It was all a mistake, he said. The man had taken them to the foot of the wrong volcano, and then, fearing to be punished, had fled. Still, every one was glad to hear that the Senor Capitaine had inflicted a severe blow on that villain, Felizardo, who would doubtless now see the wisdom of submission to those great-hearted Americanos, who had saved the Islands from the oppressions of both the Spaniards and the insurrectos. As for the ladrones——

Basil cut his eloquence short. "How did you hear about our fight?" he demanded.

For an instant the Teniente looked troubled, then he laughed. "I forgot. There is one here, a young tao by his appearance, who has been waiting for three days past with a letter for you. He it was who had heard of the fight."

Hayle frowned. "Send him in to me," he said. The moment the messenger entered, the American knew him again; but the Teniente, who was watching closely, detected no sign of recognition; nor did Basil's face give him any clue to the contents of the letter, which ran :—

"Felizardo thanks the American captain for returning to him his daughter, and the other women, and also the wounded men. That is how brave men make war; and if at any time Felizardo has the opportunity of doing a similar

service, assuredly it will be performed. On the other hand, in the mountains, which belong to Felizardo, there is only one law, the Law of the Bolo, and those who come as enemies will be met with the bolo. This was the word Felizardo sent to the insurrectos, and he sends the same message to the Americanos. Though, perhaps, some day he may be able to show the captain of the Samar men that he can be an enemy and a friend at the same time."

Captain Basil Hayle folded the letter carefully, and thrust it into an inner pocket. "H'm!" he muttered, "Felizardo's own daughter—the well-dressed, pretty mestiza, I suppose. I don't think I shall mention this to Furber—or to any one else, for that matter, as they wouldn't understand."

## CHAPTER IV

### HOW MRS BUSH HEARD OF THE LAW OF THE BOLO

After he received the letter from Felizardo, thanking him for returning his daughter, promising to repay the service when an opportunity occurred, and threatening him with the Law of the Bolo if he dared to come, as an American officer, on to his mountains, Captain Basil Hayle spent three days in Katubig, resting his men, and preparing to do the very thing which Felizardo had forbidden. His duty was to destroy the community of outlaws in the mountains; yet, though at the first encounter he had scored an easy victory, he was by no means sure that he could repeat the process. It is one thing for troops armed with carbines to surprise bolomen in the open, quite another thing when the bolomen jump out on the troops in the dense jungle, where you hardly have time to bring your carbine to your shoulder once, much less have time to reload, before they are right on you, slashing and jabbing with their hateful knives, under cover of the smoke.

So far, Basil Hayle had had practically no experience of jungle fighting, but he had a very shrewd notion of what it would be like; and, whilst his little Constabulary soldiers were full of confidence and ardour, as a result of their first victory, he looked forward with a certain amount of misgiving, not because he was afraid—he was physically incapable of fear—but because, having started the hunting of Felizardo, he was anxious to see the job through to the end.

He heard a good deal of Felizardo during those three days; for on the night of his return a curious little tramp steamer wheezed into the bay, and put ashore an equally curious old Spaniard, a hemp-buyer; and from him Basil Hayle learned many things; for the newcomer had known Don José Ramirez and the corporal of the Guardia Civile, and could remember the building of what was then the new gallows at Calocan, on which they had hanged Cinicio Dagujob the ladrone thirty-five years before. Consequently, he was able to tell Basil, who was only too ready to hear, all about how Felizardo had slain Pablo the priest, and had run off with Dolores Lasara, and had taken to the mountains, of which he was now the ruler.

Basil Hayle asked many questions, and with each answer he grew to have more respect for the power of the wizened little man whom he was to hunt down—if he could. Of Dolores

Lasara the Spaniard could tell him little. "I saw her once, and—I was very young then, younger than you are now—I thought her the most beautiful mestiza in the Islands. Perhaps she was; at any rate, many men have died because Felizardo loved her so well. She is still alive, they say; and I hear there is a daughter." Basil coloured involuntarily. "How do I hear all these things? Oh, now that they no longer have reason to fear us, we Spaniards can go anywhere, just as the English have always done. The Law of the Bolo is for other Filipinos, and for you Americanos"—he laughed gently—"you will learn that law by and by. So far, you have hardly begun to know it. If we had taken those insurrectos, those generals and colonels and majors, we should have hanged them, and finished all the foolishness. You create them judges and governors, and make it worse. This same Felizardo knows better than that, even though he may have been born a tao and have killed a priest."

Just as the Constabulary were starting out on the fourth morning, the old Spaniard gave their officer one last word of advice. "I say you are mad to go on Felizardo's mountains at all—what harm does the old man do to your American politicians in Manila? — but you will be more than mad if you go round on the northern slopes."

"Why?" Hayle demanded.

The Spaniard smiled. "Head-hunters—hundreds of them they say, more dangerous than any bolomen. I have never been there to see. No, Senor; but I have heard often. What are they, Senor? How much you Americanos have to learn about these Islands! Why, just savages—quite different from the Filipinos—nearly naked. Their pleasure in life is to collect heads, just as your great men collect millions of dollars."

"What a pleasant notion!" Hayle's voice was quite cheerful. "No, Senor, I am not going the head-hunters' direction this time; but I may do so soon. Still, if I do, I shall come back to tell you all about it."

The old man shook his head rather sadly as he walked away. "Perhaps," he muttered, "perhaps — but first old Felizardo, then the head-hunters, and only sixty half-trained Samar tao as his troops. They are rash, very rash, these young Americans. A nice lad, too." He sighed heavily, and went back to the weighing of his hemp.

Captain Hayle had decided to explore the seaward end of the range, where the mountains ran almost down to the shore of the great bay; consequently, from Katubig he followed the coast until he came to what looked like a suitable place for beginning his climb. Up to that point, he had not seen a sign of any human being, not heard a sound, save that of the

waves breaking on the shore, and the wind murmuring through the cocoa-nut palms; but no sooner had he started to force his way iuto the jungle on the lower slopes, than a deep note boomed out, apparently from the tree-tops a few hundred yards away; a moment later, it was repeated, higher up the hill, and then again and yet again, in a dozen places, until every native for miles round must have heard it.

Basil stopped abruptly. "What is that?" he demanded of his serjeant.

The man made an expressive gesture. "The Boudjon, Senor, the alarm-horn. Now, every one of these ladrones knows we are coming. Either we shall see none at all, or we shall see too many."

Basil muttered an oath, then, "Come on," he said. "The quicker we move, the better our chances;" but already his own hopes of another successful fight had vanished. Obviously, Felizardo's men were not to be caught asleep a second time.

It had been raining all night, and as a result the slope, bad enough at any time by reason of its horrible steepness, was now trebly bad on account of the slippery red clay underfoot. There was no trail of any sort; it was just a matter of forcing one's way through the dense, soaking undergrowth, of fighting one's way upwards, half-blinded with perspiration all

the time, of dragging one's boots, which now seemed to weigh a hundred pounds each, out of that horrible mire at every step, and then sliding back half the distance one had advanced. It was impossible to keep in any sort of order so as to be ready to meet an attack. There were always stragglers, those who got tangled up in the vines, or had their boots wrenched off by the mud. Basil Hayle went ahead, and trusted that his men, who were born to the jungle, were keeping up with him, for at no time could he actually see them all, on account of the dense bush.

They had gone, perhaps, half a mile up the hillside when he was suddenly convinced that men were watching him, that in the jungle ahead, and on both sides too, there were bolomen closing in. He paused and looked round, and saw nothing; looked round again and caught a glimpse of something white behind a bush. At the same moment, the serjeant, who was just behind him, saw it too, and gave a shout. The Constabulary tried to close up, but the last man was a full hundred yards behind, down the slope, and it was too late. The bolomen broke cover—a couple of hundred of them at least—whilst the Constabulary were still a helpless rabble, and the ragged volley which the plucky little Samar men let off only made matters worse. Possibly, it injured some of the trees and bushes; certainly, one bullet did get a boloman square

in the throat; but under cover of the smoke, which hung like a pall in that breathless atmosphere, the outlaws rushed in.

The Constabulary died game. They were from Samar, Visayans by race, and the outlaws were natives of Luzon, Tagalogs; and between Visayan and Tagalog there is a never-dying blood-feud. Those who had bolos dropped their carbines, and set to work in their national fashion; those who had no bolos clubbed their carbines, and did their best that way. All died standing up, and almost every Visayan killed or wounded a Tagalog before he himself went down. They upheld the honour of Samar that day on the slopes of Felizardo's mountains, when the Tagalog outlaws were three to one, and had the additional advantage of surprising a winded column.

Basil found himself with a little group of some fifteen men. The bolomen were in between him and the rest of his party, and so thick was the smoke—for, despite his orders, those round him continued to blaze away wildly—that he could see nothing of what was occurring below. Only, knowing that the outlaws were in overwhelming force, and hearing no more shots from the rest of his column, he could guess with a fair degree of certainty.

There were no bolomen above him now, so far as he could make out, and when at last the smoke cleared away, he could see none on

the slope below. Nor could he see any of his other men, at least until he went down to look for them. Then he found them, and every one he saw was dead, usually with a dead outlaw somewhere near him.

He did not stay to count the bodies; he did not even go through what would have been the perfectly useless formality of ascertaining if any were still alive. For some inexplicable reason the outlaws had disappeared — they had not even made an attempt against him and his own little group — but they might be back at any moment, and his first duty was to get his pitiful handful of survivors into a place of safety.

As they hurried down the hillside, Basil blamed himself savagely for his folly. He had gone on blindly, in face of the warning of the alarm-horn, in face of Felizardo's warning, taking his brave little fellows to certain death; and then, in the end, he had escaped without even one single boloman having attempted his life. Moreover, he had remained where he was, whilst his men were being cut to pieces below him. At first, this latter thought was the most bitter of all; then suddenly he understood, with a great sense of relief—Felizardo had ordered his life to be spared, and if he had led those last fifteen through the smoke they, too, would have been sacrificed uselessly. Still, it was galling to feel you owed your life to the clemency of an old outlaw, whom you had been sent out to catch.

He wondered what they would say in Manila. They would get his first message, telling how he had surprised the outpost on the slope of the volcano; and now he would have to send a second message—a message of a very different character—reporting that he had lost fifty men and fifty carbines, that the outlaws had scored a victory, the news of which would carry hope and encouragement to the hearts of all the criminal and all the disloyal elements in the Islands.

He wondered too what his men would think of him. They were keeping very close at his heels, expecting another attack any moment. He glanced back over his shoulder, half-fearing to meet with scornful or reproachful looks; but they were loyal little fellows, being simple tao, and, in their half-savage way, they were very sorry for him. The serjeant, a grizzled veteran who had received his first training at Calocan, under the successor of the old corporal of the Guardia Civile, tried to comfort him. "It is Fate, Senor. Why worry? Last time we had the luck; to-day the luck is with those accursed ladrones. Doubtless, next time we shall have our chance again. We could not help it. If we had charged, instead of keeping where we were, they would have had us too, and there would have been none to avenge our comrades. They were three to one all the time; and they were fresh, whilst we were exhausted

with the climbing and the mud. It was their day to-day, Senor; to-morrow, it will be ours!"

The little men following behind grunted approval, which eased Basil's mind considerably, knowing, as he did, that they were reliable judges.

They saw no trace of the outlaws as they made their way down to the beach, though three of the men whom they had reckoned dead, scrambled through the jungle to rejoin them. Basil breathed more freely when he found himself back in the cocoa-nut grove, off Felizardo's ground, where, at least, one had a chance to shoot.

"We will get to Katubig as quickly as possible," he said to the serjeant. "I don't think they will follow us there; but, even if they do, we can put up a fight in one of the houses."

Five minutes later, however, he began to think his confidence had not been justified; for one of the men, happening to look back, caught sight of a figure moving along the edge of the jungle, where the bush ended and the cocoa-nut grove began, and then they caught fleeting glimpses of many, though all the time there was nothing at which to shoot.

Basil did the right thing. He led his men on to the beach itself, where the boloman has to come within range of the carbines long before he reaches you, and there is always sufficient breeze to clear away the smoke.

They marched quickly, or rather they hurried along — as Basil Hayle told himself bitterly, they were the remnant of a defeated force in full retreat—and all the time they were aware that the bolomen were following just at the edge of the jungle; then, suddenly, they rounded the point by Katubig, when you come in sight of the village, and for a moment they forgot even the bolomen, for Katubig was in flames. Half the nipa and bamboo houses, including that in which the Constabulary supplies were stored, had already collapsed, whilst another five minutes would see the rest practically gutted.

Captain Hayle groaned. "Well, of all the infernal luck——" he began; then he noticed that there was not a single native in sight, not a single canoe left on the beach, and straightway he understood. Katubig was practically one of Felizardo's villages—he was a fool not to have thought of that before—and the old chief no longer intended it to be used as a base for operations against himself.

There was practically only one course open to Basil, and he decided instantly to take it. He had no axes, no tools of any sort; consequently, there was no possibility of making anything in the way of a stockade, whilst to remain in the open with only eighteen men was to invite a further and final disaster. No, he must cover the ten or twelve miles to Igut, where there was a company of the Philippine

Scouts quartered. There he would be safe, and from there he could send a report of his defeat to Manila. It was not a pleasant prospect. The Constabulary and the Scouts did not love one another overmuch, and it was humiliating to have to seek refuge with the rival force. Still, he could see no alternative. Even as he decided, he could catch glimpses of Felizardo's bolomen in the background, dodging from bush to bush, never giving a chance for a shot, but still driving him back from Felizardo's mountains. He glanced at the sun. It was about one o'clock—Heavens, how much seemed to have happened since sunrise!—if he went straight on, and there was no sense in going into the burning village itself, he would be at Igut by sunset, provided the path were not unusually bad.

The men heaved sighs of relief when they learned their destination. They had had enough of the mountains to last them for a day or two; it was going to pour with rain again that night; and the prospect of sleeping, or rather of trying to sleep, in the open with Felizardo's bolomen prowling round, just outside the circle of firelight, was not an exhilarating one. Consequently, they started off for Igut very cheerfully. True, they had lost most of their comrades, and had been badly beaten by the accursed Tagalog outlaws; but, after all, what matter? They themselves were all right.

They had plenty of cigarettes for the march: they could buy plenty more in Igut, in addition to spirits; whilst, doubtless, the Scouts would have money to lose at monte; moreover, next time they met Felizardo's men, the fight would go the other way—of that they felt sure. . . .

Somehow, Igut seemed well-named. The word might mean anything, but the sound expressed the town itself, at least to Western ears. The place might appear picturesque, almost fascinating, to a chance visitor, who knew that he was going to leave it in a few hours; but when you had to live there, you quickly came to see it in a very different light, as Mrs Bush, the wife of Captain Bush of the Philippine Scouts, who had not been out of it for a whole year, could have told you.

From the balcony of her house at the corner of the plaza, Mrs Bush could survey the whole scene; and, as time hung very heavily on her hands, she used to spend many an hour lying back in her long bamboo chair, watching the view with languid disfavour, striving hard not to resent the fate which had led her to bury her bright young life in such a spot.

There was so little worth looking at, when you got to know it. The same tao were always asleep under the shade of the huge timber belfry in the middle of the plaza, the same hungry dogs were always nosing round for stray pieces of offal, the same shrill-voiced women

wrangling with the Chinaman who kept the general store at the far corner. The priest would come out at a certain hour, meet the Presidente, and they would then make their way together to the spirit shop next to the Chinaman's. A little later, the Supervisor and the school teacher — white officials these — would come round the corner and follow the others to the same place, where presently her own husband would join them. Then, just at sundown, a squad of Scouts would loaf across the plaza to perform what they called mounting guard at the gaol. With that, the day's activities would end, and the long, sweltering, breathless night, when the mosquitoes and the heat, and perhaps, as in her case, your own mental torment, would not allow you an hour's real sleep. On Sundays the only difference was that every small boy in the place was allowed to jangle those terrible bells in the plaza to his heart's content, and the white officials went to the spirit shop earlier in the day.

So much for the town. If you looked seawards — and from that balcony you had an almost uninterrupted view — it was equally monotonous. The palm-fringed bay, with its multicoloured coral bottom, and the vast expanses of mangrove swamp, which, almost closing its entrance, rendered it a safe anchorage, even when the monsoon was booming in its

fiercest, always seemed the same. True, every now and then, at irregular intervals, a Government launch would come in with mails or stores. More rarely still, a trading steamer, with rust-streaked funnel and sides, a veritable maritime curiosity which would have been condemned to the scrap-heap anywhere else, would wheeze and cough her way up to the rickety wooden jetty in quest of a cargo of hemp; but save on these occasions, the waters were disturbed only by the dug-outs of native fishermen, who seemed to put to sea merely for the sake of avoiding the flies on shore; at any rate, they always dozed off to sleep the moment they had dropped the stones which served as anchors.

Mrs Bush knew it all so well, and hated it as well as she knew it. Over a year ago—twelve months and three weeks, to be correct—she had left Manila; and, though the capital was only a few hours' steam away, she had never been back, never spoken to a woman of her own race—for her husband had been told pointedly by the general in command that his only chance of retaining his commission was to remain at his station, and get his men in hand again. Captain Bush had left the capital, raging, and stayed at Igut, sulking; whilst his wife had been too proud to suggest a trip for herself, and he had been too indifferent to all that concerned her to offer it.

There was not even male society, for the

Treasurer, the Supervisor, and the two school teachers, mere political nominees of small mental attainments, had long since sunk to the point of mixing socially with the natives, a thing from which her Southern blood recoiled in horror. Once, and once only, had she turned on her husband, and that was on the occasion when he brought the Supervisor and the Presidente—the latter a mestizo—in to dinner. The experiment was never repeated; possibly because Bush was really frightened at the storm he had aroused, possibly because she frightened the guests themselves; though in the end the latter had their revenge, or what passed with them as revenge, by vilifying her on every possible occasion, and rendering the breach between her and her husband absolutely uncrossable.

On the day of Basil Hayle's defeat on the mountain-side, Igut had been panting and perspiring as only towns amongst the mangrove swamps can perspire and pant. On the plaza nothing had stirred. The women in the Chinaman's store had quickly grown weary of wrangling, and had settled down to sleep in the doorway; even the dogs and the wolfish-looking pigs had ceased to quarrel amongst themselves on the quayside.

Evening brought little or no relief. Every few minutes, Mrs Bush glanced towards the setting sun, longing for it to disappear behind

the line of mangroves, when there might be some chance of a slight breeze.

She was, as usual, on the veranda, behind the light matting blind, when an unwonted commotion made her start up quickly. The dogs had awakened to fresh life, and were barking noisily. A native, who had spread his net across the roadway that morning, with the intention of repairing it, and had then gone to sleep over his task, came to his senses suddenly, and began to gather in his property, as a small party of native soldiers, headed by a white officer, swung down the street. Mrs Bush lay back in her chair, and watched through the blind with languid interest. There was something in the manner of the officer which she liked. He seemed to know his own mind, and when half a dozen natives gathered in his path, apparently with the object of making the white man give way to them, and so raising a snigger at his expense, he brushed them aside like so many flies.

"He is from the South," she said to herself, and, almost unconsciously, came to the rail of the balcony in order to see more easily.

As soon as he reached the dusty patch of grass in the centre of the plaza, Captain Hayle dismissed his men, who, after piling their arms against the timbers of the belfry, threw themselves down on the ground and produced the inevitable cigarettes. From the barracks at

the upper end of the plaza, a score of Scouts emerged, and regarded the newcomers with marked disfavour, commenting on their torn, mud-stained uniforms, and their generally-ragged appearance.

"Only dam' Constabularios," sneered a serjeant, who prided himself on his knowledge of English; but, despite the insults, Hayle's men smoked on unconcernedly. Had they not great things to relate when the women came round; whilst these Scouts, mere Tagalogs after all, had never even set foot on Felizardo's mountains.

Mrs Bush remained at the rail of the balcony. The evening breeze had just begun to blow, and, moreover, she felt vaguely that she would like to get a nearer view of the newly-arrived white man. A minute later, her wish was gratified, for, after asking a question of one of the Scouts, who came forward rather sullenly, Basil Hayle started to cross the plaza towards her house. He was a little weary, his walk showed that; but when he chanced to look up and their eyes met, he seemed to pull himself together; then, probably because he had not expected to see a white woman in Igut, he raised his well-worn felt hat.

At the door, Basil found a sleepy muchacho, who, in reply to his questions, answered that Captain Bush was out, adding gratuitously, "As usual." Nor did he know where the Scout officer was, or when he would be in. He was not at the barracks, nor at the spirit store across

the plaza. Still, the Senora might know; he would call her.

From the glimpse he had obtained of her, Hayle had formed the impression that Mrs Bush was pretty. When she came in, he saw that he had been mistaken, if one judged by recognised codes, as no sane man does judge, either of faces or of character, or—I say it even with the fear of the Outer Darkness of the Podsnaps before me—of morals. There are no rules in these matters, there can be no rules when you are dealing with such infinitely complex subjects as human form and human character. What is beauty in one woman is mere drabness in another, for beauty is three parts soul and one part form to any one but an animal-man, and animal-men should not count for anything—in fact they should be eliminated whenever possible. The same applies to morals. How can you lay down hard and fast rules when the Magdalen is a Christian saint, and whilst those who revere her as such, and dedicate churches to her, fall over themselves in their anxiety to cast the first stone at her latter-day successors? But this is all beside the scope of this story, which deals with the crude code of the Bolo, the law with one clause only.

"I am sorry I kept you," Mrs Bush said, with a soft Southern drawl. "But I get so few visitors I am never ready to receive them."

Basil flushed. "I only came to see Captain

Bush on business. It wasn't fair to worry you. I wanted to get him to lend me some food and kit for my men—Felizardo's people burnt all theirs to-day — and I was going to ask him about sending a dispatch into Manila. The boy said you would know where to find him."

Mrs Bush's face hardened momentarily, and she looked away quickly, then, "No," she replied, "I don't know where—at least, I mean you cannot find him now. But, if you don't mind waiting, he is sure to be in soon. Perhaps you would like to come up on the balcony; it is cooler there."

When they had sat down, Basil laughed rather awkwardly. "I forgot to tell you my name; it is Hayle—Basil Hayle of the Constabulary."

Mrs Bush nodded. "I guessed that, when you mentioned Felizardo. We heard something of your fight up on the volcano, from an old Spaniard who came in to-day; but he said you had gone back there."

The man laughed bitterly, and glanced down at his torn and mud-stained uniform. "So I did, but I have come back quickly."

She looked at him with ready sympathy. "Do you mean they drove you back? What hard luck, after starting so well! But did you go with just that handful of men?"

Mrs Bush was sorry she had asked the question as soon as she saw the look in his

eyes. "No," he answered, "I went out with sixty-five men this morning."

"And the others?" She leaned forward anxiously.

"The others are there still," he replied, with a catch in his voice. "The bolomen were three to one, and they got us on a muddy hillside, you understand." He was looking away, so he did not see the pity in her eyes.

"And the wounded?" she asked gently.

Still, he did not face her. "Felizardo leaves no wounded." Then, suddenly, his pent-up feelings broke out, as was inevitable they would do when he met one of his own race, one to whom he could speak freely. "Oh, I feel such a hound for leaving them. I was at the head of the column, and the bolomen cut us off from the rest; and whilst we, a dozen men and myself, were waiting for it to come, they were boloing the others."

"And then?" she asked.

"Then? Then they just disappeared into the jungle, and we came back, unharmed. They followed us almost to here, and they burned our stores at Katubig—they burned Katubig itself in fact, but they never tried to touch us. That's what makes me feel so bad. To think they wiped out three-quarters of my men, and then let the rest of us go. They — other men, I mean—are sure to say we ran at the start."

Mrs Bush shook her head. "I hardly think

so. They will say you were splendidly brave to go up at all, and splendidly clever to get any of your men safely out of it."

Basil thanked her with his eyes; but still he was not comforted. "It looks bad," he repeated. "And I can't explain. They wouldn't believe the reason."

"What was the reason?" she asked. "Tell me. I shall believe."

He faced her now, fairly; and from that moment there was a new factor, the All-important Factor, something infinitely greater than the Law of the Bolo, in his life. In a flash, he understood how it was that Felizardo had been ready to take to the hills for the sake of Dolores Lasara. Then he told her of Felizardo's daughter, and of Felizardo's letter.

"Of course I believe," she said, when he had finished. "It is just what one would expect of Felizardo. . . . Oh, we hear a great deal about him here, from the servants. No, Captain Hayle, you must not worry, really you must not. I know it is horrible, to lose your men in that way; but you had to obey orders. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have made an excuse for not going; but you are different."

He did not answer her this time, but sat, staring out across the plaza, thinking of his men, away there on Felizardo's mountain-side; at last her voice recalled him. "You are from the South, Captain Hayle?"

He clutched eagerly at the chance of changing the subject completely; and from then, until her husband appeared, there was no more mention of bolomen and their doings.

Captain Bush proved to be a big man, as tall as Hayle himself, though much heavier—flabby, most people would have said—good-looking in a way, though his eye was watery and his chin weak. You could see at a glance why they had transferred him from the Regular Infantry to the Scouts, and sent him to an out-station. They do not like heavy drinkers in the American Service, any more than they like amateur soldiers, or brigadier-generals appointed from the circle of the President's personal friends.

Captain Bush had already heard something of Hayle's defeat, though he did not explain how or where. Basil, on his part, did not trouble to go into the story very fully. He had taken an immediate dislike to Bush, and he felt that the latter was by no means grieved over the disaster which had befallen the rival force. Still, the Scout officer agreed readily enough to let him have the stores he needed, and to allow the remnant of the Constabulary to occupy some vacant quarters in the barracks. As soon as this was arranged, Hayle rose to leave, but Mrs Bush detained him.

"Oh, Captain Hayle, you must stay to dinner now. Mustn't he, John?"

Bush nodded assent, but Basil looked down

at his dirty, torn uniform. "I don't think I can, really——" he began; but his hostess cut him short.

"You say they have burned all your kit, so how can you help that? And, after all, one gets used to things in the Philippines. Where are you going to stay in Igut? I wish we could put you up, but I'm afraid it's quite impossible."

"There's a Spaniard here I know," he answered. "Don Juan Ramirez. I promised I would stay with him, if I ever came to Igut, and I sent one of my men to tell him as soon as I got in. I really ought to go there now, but, still, he will forgive me, I expect, when I tell him that you insisted."

Mrs Bush nodded. "He's a dear old man, quite different from——" She broke off abruptly, and turned to her husband, who was tugging moodily at his moustache. "John, I expect Captain Hayle would like a wash and a drink before dinner."

Bush brightened up considerably after the second cocktail, and after the fourth — his fourth, Basil was more careful — he was quite familiar and sympathetic. "Shame to send you up there," he said. "A rabble like yours is no good. They ought to have sent a couple of companies of Scouts. We should have cleaned them up, sure enough."

Basil bit his lip, but did not reply. Afterwards, when he came to look back on that

dinner, it seemed to him one of the most miserable experiences of his life. It was bad enough to sit down with a couple who, as the husband made only too clear, had nothing in common; but when that husband was also guilty of drinking far too much, showing he had drunk too much, the position became unbearable. Still, there was one redeeming feature—the way in which Mrs Bush tried to make the best of the situation. She talked rapidly, nervously, all the time, trying to avoid any topic which might possibly lead to discussion; but Bush's temporary burst of good-nature quickly changed to aggressiveness, then to actual surliness, and some of the things he said made Basil go white with rage. The Scout officer's friends had lost no opportunity of telling him that his wife's Southern pride was the cause of his domestic unhappiness, and when he found that the guest was also from the South, he felt he had discovered a legitimate source of grievance. Had they been alone, there would have been a fight; but Basil glanced at Mrs Bush, sitting white-faced and rigid, and remembered the duty he owed to his hostess.

At last the meal was over. Mrs Bush rose, and as Hayle opened the door for her, "I think we had better go up on the balcony, Captain Hayle. It will be pleasanter there," she said.

Her husband got up too, then staggered, and went down on to his knees. Basil turned to

help him, but stopped when Mrs Bush laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"I will see to him, Captain Hayle," she said; "I was afraid he was not very well to-night. Perhaps you had better go;" but she saw him out, saying good-bye to him at the door, before she returned to the invalid, who had got back into his chair and greeted her with a curse.

Don Juan Ramirez, who was very like what old Don José had been thirty years previously, shook his head when Basil mentioned that he had dined with the Bushes.

"Was he—was he as usual?" he asked.

Basil's pent-up wrath broke out. "If being as usual means being a foul-mouthed, drunken hog, with a wife a million times too good for him, then he was!"

The Spaniard nodded. "He seldom dines at home. Perhaps she thought that, with a guest there, he would—he would be moderate. Poor lady! He drinks all day with the Presidente, a mestizo insurrecto, and with the Supervisor and the school teacher who came from his own State. Then there is worse. There is a mestiza girl—under his wife's eyes."

Basil Hayle walked up and down the room, raging, whilst the old Spaniard watched him sympathetically, understanding, being a worthy nephew of Don José of Calocan. Then, adroitly, he turned the conversation on to the subject of that morning's fight.

"You were rash," he said, when Basil had finished. "But you were lucky to escape yourself. Why, Felizardo must have three hundred bolomen—five hundred perhaps, as well as many rifles. My uncle knew him well before he took to the hills. Old Don José did not love the Filipinos—who could?—but he used to say always that Felizardo was a gentleman, even though he had killed a priest. Your Government will never catch Felizardo, Senor, never. They will waste lives and money, and they will find that, in the end, Felizardo will be stronger than ever. Why, to-morrow, when the news of your ill-fortune is known, there will be hundreds of fresh recruits clamouring to join his band."

In the morning Basil wrote his report to Mr Commissioner Furber, telling the truth, plainly and baldly; then he sent it off by a launch which happened to come in, and sat down to wait for the reply, half-hoping that the latter would take the form of his dismissal. He wanted to get right away, he told himself, not because of Felizardo's bolomen, but because, as had been the case when Felizardo himself had first met Father Pablo in San Polycarpio, the instinct to kill had awakened in him. He had caught the spirit of the Islands, where the Law of the Bolo is the natural code, and if he remained he knew he should kill Captain Bush.

He told himself that he was a fool, that, after all, they were strangers with whom he had no

concern, that he would avoid them in future; and then, seeing Mrs Bush walking across the plaza, he took his hat and hurried after her, completing the mischief, so far as he himself was concerned—possibly, too, so far as she was concerned.

The school teacher saw them out of the window of the spirit shop, and winked at the Supervisor, who glanced out too, and then called to Bush.

"Say, Captain. The Virginian seems to have cottoned on to your wife. Two Southerners, eh?"

Bush flushed, half-rose with the intention of having a look, then resumed his seat; but he did not forget the words, thereby fulfilling the intentions of his friends.

That night, a messenger left Igut with a letter for Felizardo, written by no less a person than the Supervisor's principal clerk, who was also, in a sense, the Supervisor's brother-in-law. In that letter the clerk, who was no mean observer, made some pointed, and, as it happened, perfectly true remarks concerning Captain Basil Hayle's feelings towards Mrs Bush—remarks which, as subsequent events proved, Felizardo did not forget.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW MR COMMISSIONER GUMPERTZ AND MR JOSEPH GOBBITT TALKED OF HIGH FINANCE

When Mr Joseph Gobbitt's friends heard that "Old Joe" himself was going out to Manila to bring order into the chaos caused by the sudden death of young Albert Dunk, they shook their heads gravely. It was a foolish and unnecessary thing to do, they declared. The firm of Gobbitt and Dunk had not a very large sum at stake in the Philippines, and one of the other young Dunks, or even Pretty, the chief clerk, would have been able to do all that was necessary. Mr Gobbitt, however, knew his own mind, and, after only a week of preparation, started overland, to catch the Hong Kong mail steamer.

It is curious how some people get the names which suit them exactly. Joseph Gobbitt was a case in point. Inevitably, you expected a man of East Anglian tradesman stock; and the moment you set eyes on him, you felt you had been right. Hosea Gobbitt, his father, had been mayor and pork-butcher in a small Suffolk

town, having risen to wealth and position by what he called "judicious trading." "A little bit of all sorts, for all sorts of people," he used to say to his particular friends at the Tradesmen's Meetings—which meant that those customers who were particular got meat for which he had to pay the farmers what he considered a wholly outrageous price, showing a bare profit of sixty per cent.; whilst those who were careless, or in his debt, as well as those who ventured on sausages and similar mysteries, were liable to get the product of those diseased swine which the inspector was kind enough, and wise enough, to let him have for a few shillings each. After all, what is the use of holding Municipal Office unless you make something out of it to pay for your time? What tradesman in England ever did—at least what tradesman of his, Hosea Gobbitt's, ability? Footman the ironmonger, and Woods the grocer—"Sandy" Woods they used to call him amongst themselves, because of his sugar, not because of his hair—did very well over contracts, and there was no reason why he should not do well over pork. After all, the inspector was their servant; they could discharge him at any moment.

Joseph Gobbitt learnt the rudiments of business in his father's shop; but he had no intention of spending his life in a country town; consequently, at the age of eighteen he went to London, and obtained a junior clerkship in

a Mincing Lane house. When he was thirty, he entered into partnership with Henry Dunk, and proceeded to turn the knowledge he had secured to such good use that, within five years, he had pretty well ruined his former employers. When he was sixty, he was reckoned, if not amongst the biggest men of Mincing Lane, at least amongst the bigger ones. He had several branches in the East, including one at Manila, which had been under the charge of Albert Dunk, son of his late partner. Taken all round, matters were going very well when, just about the time that Basil Hayle began the campaign against Felizardo, Albert Dunk died suddenly, and, to Mr Gobbitt's mind, mysteriously. Edward Dunk, the new junior partner, Albert's elder brother, had volunteered to go out; but, greatly to his surprise, Mr Gobbitt had declared his intention of going himself.

"You can manage here by yourself, Edward," he said; "I have every confidence in you, every confidence. The sea-trip will do me good, and possibly there may be complications in Manila which we have not foreseen."

Edward Dunk, not unnaturally, took the latter sentence as a slur on his brother's memory, as foreshadowing unpleasant discoveries, and he laid his plans accordingly, with a view to repaying Mr Gobbitt in kind. As a matter of fact, however, it was a chance conversation with an American consular official

which had determined the senior partner to go to the East. "It's money they want out in the Islands," the American had said. "There's lots of good things to be got cheap—concessions, hemp lands, Church lands even; though our own people hold back, not knowing if we shall stay out there, whilst the British banks and financiers are too fastidious—won't grease the Commissioners' palms. There's a fortune, sir, for the man who will risk his dollars. And it isn't much risk, anyway. We are bound to stay in the Islands, now we've been chuckle-heads enough to take them."

Mr Joseph Gobbitt pondered deeply over these words during the long journey to Hong Kong, where, from his own manager, he obtained a certain degree of confirmation; but before he had been in Manila two days, he knew that they were true. He called officially on Mr Commissioner Gumpertz, head of the Departments of Lands and Registration, in the hope of obtaining full particulars concerning the end of Albert Dunk, who had met his death somewhere near Hippapad, which, of course, is on the other side of Felizardo's mountains, a full ten miles—more, perhaps—to the north of the range.

"The report was that he died of fever," the official said. "They buried him where he died. Violence? Murder? My dear sir, no. The Islands are pacified now. You could go from

end to end of them unarmed. Pay no heed to the wild stories you will hear, stories circulated deliberately by our political enemies, and by the Army, which is jealous of our success. You are sure to hear them all, perhaps more than I hear." Unconsciously he slipped some blank sheets of paper over a copy of Captain Basil Hayle's report, which he had just been studying anew—the grim record of forty-seven men out of sixty-five slaughtered on Felizardo's mountains by Felizardo's bolomen. "You will hear them because you are the type of man, a broad-minded capitalist, whom they are specially anxious to keep out."

His words gave Mr Gobbitt his cue, and a few minutes later they were no longer talking officially, but privately, about a railway concession and a copra concession, but most of all about some hemp lands. Mr Gobbitt was essentially a business man, and he put his finger on the weak spot, or what seemed the weak spot, at once. "Why," he asked, "if there is all this splendid hemp land vacant, have not people, the natives for instance, or the Spaniards, made use of it?" And he leaned back in his chair, twirling his gold-rimmed glasses.

The Commissioner met his objections with an easy smile. "You know what the Spaniards were. Did they make use of anything? Moreover, in their days there were large bands of ladrones in the neighbourhood." Mr Gobbitt

knit his forehead, and was making a mental note of the drawback, when the Commissioner went on: "But there are none now. We have cleared them all out, all; and we have a company of Constabulary under a most energetic officer, Captain Hayle, quartered permanently in the district. Then, as to your other point, is it likely we should allow any unauthorised person to seize this land?"

Mr Joseph Gobbitt got up. He divined that, at the first interview with a high official, it would hardly be diplomatic to talk of business, of the sort of business which was obviously intended. "I will think it over," he said. "Possibly I may hear from you."

The Commissioner rose, too. "Very possibly some friends of mine might call," he answered.

Down at the Consulate, the Vice-Consul received Mr Gobbitt with what that pillar of finance considered most unbecoming levity. "Got anything out of old Gumpertz?" he asked. "I suppose you had a long lecture on Liberty and Brown Brothers. No? You are lucky, then. He's not what you might call inspired, unless it's on a question of dollars. He got his job because he kept some big city solid for the Party, they say. He owned, or bought up, all the bars in the place, lost his money over it, and so, to keep him quiet and give him a chance to retrieve his fortune, they sent him out here. He is retrieving fast, but he's really still what

he was by birth, a petty, huckstering tradesman. They say that his father used to be a pork-butcher in the Happy Fatherland."

Had it not been for the last few words, Mr Gobbitt might have paid some attention to the rest; but those decided him. Obviously, the whole thing was rank prejudice. He got up, waving aside a proffered cigar. "Thank you. I do not smoke. Is the Consul in?"

The Vice-Consul got up wearily. "Shan't I do? Oh, very well. I'll see. He was having an extra siesta; didn't feel quite the thing after tiffin. I'd be careful of the Club whisky, if I were you. Rotten brand they've got on tap now;" and, without noticing Mr Gobbitt's indignant looks, he lounged into the inner office.

The Consul, or rather Acting-Consul, the regular Consul-General being on leave, did not seem exactly delighted to see Mr Gobbitt.

"Well, did you hear anything new from Gumpertz?" he asked.

Mr Gobbitt shook his head. "He says Mr Dunk died of fever and was buried in the jungle. That is all they know."

The Consul yawned. "It's about their mark. The Army would have sent out to see quick, and so would the Guardia Civile. Those people get in a fluster if a native is killed, and don't worry about a white man. Is that all? Find your books all right?"

The visitor flushed. He did not like this man any better than he liked the Vice-Consul. "They were correct," he said severely. "The books of our firm always are. But there is one curious thing — the day before he left Manila Mr Dunk drew ten thousand pesos from the bank; and we cannot trace to whom he paid it."

"Whew! Ten thousand pesos, eh?" The Consul whistled in what struck Mr Gobbitt as a most undignified manner. "A big sum that. Was he — do you think he was mixed up in any sort of graft here — corruption, you'd call it—with the officials?"

There was wrath on Mr Gobbitt's face as he got up from his chair. "Sir, members of our firm are not mixed up in such things. . . . No, sir, I do not smoke; nor will I have a whisky-and-soda. I, myself, drink only at meals."

When he had gone, with such dignity as a large and perspiring man, who wears a frock-coat in the Tropics, can command, the Acting-Consul yawned again. "Queer old chap. Isn't he in a paddy-whack!" Then he went to the door and called the Vice-Consul. "I say, Blackiston, come and drink the whisky-and-soda our heavy friend refused. Did he slam the door as he went out?"

Mr Joseph Gobbitt did not go to the English Club that night, partly because he was unwilling

to run the risk of further shocks to his dignity, but chiefly because he thought it possible that some friends of Mr Commissioner Gumpertz might chance to call on him. The latter supposition proved to be correct. He had just finished dinner, and was waiting on the veranda of the hotel for his coffee, when the waiter announced two gentlemen, who introduced themselves as Mr William P. Hart and Senor de Vega, the latter being a mestizo. Mr Gobbitt received them graciously, scenting business, and it only needed two liqueurs to produce a definite proposition. Mr William P. Hart was not shy, whilst Senor de Vega backed him loyally in all he had to say. There was this splendid stretch of hemp-growing land on the north of the range of mountains, which Mr Gobbitt had doubtless noticed. Mr Commissioner Gumpertz had the selling of it, and the Commissioner's price would be so much for himself—or rather for himself, Mr Hart, and Senor de Vega—and so much for the Government. There was no useless beating about the bush, a feature which Mr Gobbitt rather appreciated. It was, after all, a plain matter of business, and, as it was shorn of all pretence and shams, a business man could discuss it.

They came to terms, provisionally. Mr Gobbitt had made careful enquiries as to the value of really good hemp land in that part of the island, and he knew that, if he bought at the

figure named, he would be making an amazingly good bargain. Unfortunately, however, he did not know good hemp land from bad—or, for that matter, from any other sort of land; and much though he respected the cleverness, the money-making genius, of Commissioner Gumpertz, he was not going to take that gentleman's word for anything which involved financial risk to himself.

"I must inspect this land first, of course," he said. "That is only a matter of common sense. I will find some reliable person who can give me an expert opinion on it, and then, if he reports favourably, I will come to terms with . . . with your Government."

"And the Commissioner?" Mr Hart asked, with a leer.

The merchant bowed gravely. "And the Commissioner, of course. That is understood."

"Can't be done without him." Mr Hart was inclined to frankness.

"It is quite unnecessary to tell me that." Mr Gobbitt spoke severely. "I am accustomed to business."

"There is one thing more." Mr Hart laid a hand which was none too clean on his host's knee. "The Commissioner wants a deposit, so that he has something to show the Government, in case another buyer happens along. He wants six thousand dollars, gold, down; to be refunded if you do not wish to complete the purchase at the end of three months."

Mr Gobbitt frowned. It was a large sum; but then the value of the land would be enormous. "Six thousand dollars. Humph! Twelve hundred pounds—a great deal of money. If I considered the proposal—I do not say I shall—I should require the proper receipt of the Department, not the mere private receipt of the Commissioner."

The readiness with which Mr Hart assented dissipated the other's suspicions. "Certainly, sir, it would be an official receipt; and any time you wished to call off you could get your money back. It is proposed just in your interest, to give you a free run with no competition."

When they had gone, Mr Gobbitt sat for a long time deep in thought. This was the sort of business he had come out hoping to do, and therefore he was prepared to make certain allowances for the weakness of those with whom he was dealing. When one is about to reap huge profits, one cannot be over-censorious concerning those who are assisting one. He thought the whole scheme out before he went to bed that night, the sum he would expend on it—it would be his private venture, nothing to do with the firm of Gobbitt & Dunk—the sum for which he would float it as soon as he had got it into working order, and the profits which he himself would make out of the flotation. It was all very simple and straightforward. There

was always a demand for hemp, always would be a demand for it. No crop paid better to raise, no crop, so far as he knew, involved less capital expenditure on clearing the land and planting. As for security of title, he would make certain on that point before he parted with any of the purchase-money, whilst he was shrewd enough to see that there was no prospect of the Americans withdrawing from the Islands for many years to come, until long after he had floated his company.

The matter of the deposit did not trouble him greatly. After all, the sum was not a large one to him; he ran no risk of losing it; and it would be a distinct advantage to have what would amount to a three months' option. It was a cheap option, after all, a very cheap one; and the more he thought of it, the more convinced he became that, in the end, he would be able to get the better of Mr Gumpertz in many ways. He, himself, would have insisted on a payment outright, in addition to the deposit.

In the morning, Mr Gobbitt set out to find a reliable man to advise him on the question of the hemp lands. It was rather a delicate matter. He did not want to advertise the fact that he had any business of the kind in contemplation, yet, at the same time, he was anxious to secure some one who would be thoroughly trustworthy. It would not do to

go to the new manager of the Manila branch of Gobbitt & Dunk, for this was his personal affair—the Dunk family had done well enough out of him already, even though old Dunk had found the capital in the first instance—and he did not fancy the idea of consulting the Acting-Consul. In the end, he decided to call on the bank manager, to whom he could speak in confidence.

The bank manager looked dubious. "Yes, I can get you a good man—several, if you like, men you can trust. There's John Mackay, a Scotchman, and Lucio Morales, a Spaniard—either would do well; and I would take the opinion of either as final. Only, let me warn you, Mr Gobbitt, that this is a risky form of speculation. Hemp pays well enough until the insurrectos, or the pulajanes, or the ladrones come along and burn your place and cut your men's throats. It's all very well for Furber and Gumpertz and the rest to say the Islands are at peace. Gumpertz may know all about pork-chops and public-houses, but it doesn't follow he understands these things."

The son of Hosea Gobbitt, pork-butcher and mayor, flushed. It was only too clear that Mr Gumpertz had been right when he talked about unreasoning prejudice and a desire to injure the Government.

"I think I am fully aware of the conditions," he said severely. "I have made the most

exhaustive enquiries from those who should know." Unconsciously he emphasised the last five words. "And now, if you would give me the addresses of these two men, Mackay and Morales, I will ask them to call on me."

Senor Morales was the first to make his appearance at the hotel, a grave young Spaniard, whose rather elaborate courtesy disconcerted Mr Gobbitt somewhat; but when the proposition was put to him bluntly, as such things should be put, he shook his head. "No, Senor. It is impossible that I go. These Americans have got the country into such a state, that——" He spread out his hands expressively, and rose to leave.

Mr Gobbitt rose too, a little annoyed at the waste of his time. "You don't like the Americans?" he said, with what he took for sternness, and the other for rudeness.

The Spaniard laughed gently. "Why, no, Senor. Why should I, a Spaniard, like them?" And he went out, leaving Mr Gobbitt more than ever convinced of the intense prejudice against the administration.

Mr John Mackay, who did not arrive till late in the afternoon, proved to be more suitable. He was middle-aged and hard-faced, at least when he was talking business, and he went to the root of the matter at once — the question of his professional fee, which was finally settled more to his own satisfaction than to that of

Mr Gobbitt, who had a distinct aversion to giving mere employés a chance to imitate the late Jeshurun, of whom the one recorded fact is that "he waxed fat and kicked." Still, John Mackay knew what he himself wanted, and he had the knowledge which Mr Gobbitt wanted, so, for once in his life at least, the merchant agreed to pay a fair wage.

"And where are we going to?" John Mackay asked.

Mr Gobbitt hesitated. "Well, I must tell you, I suppose; but it is in confidence, the strictest confidence."

The Scotchman gave a quick little nod; he was not prone to unnecessary speech.

"We land at a place called Igut, and from there make our way round the end of that large range of mountains to some land on the northern side. They tell me — Commissioner Gumpertz tells me—that the journey will not be a difficult one. We keep in the valley for some twenty-five miles, then cross at an easy pass."

"Taking any escort?" the Scotchman asked.

The merchant shook his head. "I am informed it is quite unnecessary; though some of the native soldiers — Scouts, I think they are called — will come along to help us with transport arrangements."

John Mackay stroked his chin thoughtfully. "Well, at least they all know me well enough

—Felizardo, and the others as well. I myself can go anywhere;" a saying which gave food for thought to Mr Gobbitt, who could not decide whether it was to be construed as encouraging or otherwise.

Commissioner Gumpertz received Mr Gobbitt very graciously when that gentleman came to pay the deposit. "I am delighted, sir," he said, "flattered to think you are taking my advice, which was given in the interests of these Islands and their people, and proves, most fortunately, to be in your interest as well. I might tell you, in confidence, that there will be a bill before Congress next session forbidding these large sales of land—a most unfortunate proposal; but your business will be through long before then."

When, however, Mr Gobbitt handed him a cheque, crossed, for the deposit, the Commissioner looked doubtful. "I am afraid, sir, I cannot take this — my dear sir, I mean no slight on yourself—but the rules of the Department are very strict. No cheques taken, they say. Still, would you write another one, a bearer cheque, and I will send a messenger down to the bank with it. That will only take ten minutes, and we can fix up the matter at once. If you will excuse me, I will get the secretary to make out the receipt."

He came back, a few minutes later, with the receipt which his secretary, whose name was William P. Hart, had made out in due

form. It was already signed, and, as he handed it to his visitor, the Commissioner for Lands and Registration remarked jocularly: "Now, Mr Gobbitt, you have my receipt before I have the money. You have only to stop the messenger on the way, and you can make six thousand dollars out of the Department, or rather out of me, for they would hold me responsible."

Mr Gobbitt, who had assured himself at a glance that the receipt was in due form, laughed too. "I don't think in my firm we do things like that," he said. "We rather pride ourselves on being old-fashioned—almost straight-laced, perhaps. My father always impressed on me that honesty paid in the long run, and I have found that he was right. I have no doubt your experience has been the same."

The Commissioner nodded. This was a most admirable and tactful man of business. It is always pleasant to keep affairs of this sort on a certain high plane. If you talk of the Welfare of the People, or the Will of the Multitude, or the Moral Aspect, you can make infinitely more money than if you adopt a crudely-commercial tone, especially if you have a William P. Hart in the background.

The messenger returned with the package of notes, which he handed to Mr Gobbitt, who in turn handed them to Mr Commissioner Gumpertz; and then the two men parted.

"The launch will be ready for you early to-morrow," the official said. "I will send you down letters of introduction from Commissioner Furber—you must meet him on your return—to Captain Bush at Igut, and Captain Basil Hayle, who has a camp somewhere on the edge of the jungle. Captain Bush will arrange all your equipment for you, or at least he will get the local officials to do so. Now, good-bye, Mr Gobbitt, and good luck. I shall look forward to your early return."

Mr Joseph Gobbitt was an experienced business man. He prided himself on the fact that there was little he did not know about certain forms of finance; yet, had he learnt that, instead of being paid into the account of the Government, those notes of his were, that very night, distributed, at a slight discount, through some of the most shady, and even improper, quarters in Manila, he might have found food for much speculation and thought.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCERNING MR JOSEPH GOBBITT, CAPTAIN BASIL HAYLE, AND THE HEAD OF ALBERT DUNK

Mr Joseph Gobbitt was tall and stout, and possessed a pair of side-whiskers of which he was distinctly proud; consequently, though he certainly did appear impressive when carrying the bag — he was vicar's churchwarden in a suburban church—he looked almost ridiculous when he landed on the quay at Igut, attired in a very tight khaki suit, with an immense khaki-coloured helmet on his head. At least, he appeared ridiculous to Mrs Bush, who watched his arrival from the balcony of her house, and, for the first time since Basil Hayle had left, five weeks previously, her face lighted up with a smile.

Basil Hayle had not been dismissed in consequence of his crushing defeat at the hands of Felizardo's bolomen; in fact, greatly to his surprise, he had not even been reprimanded. Commissioner Furber had been quick to see that really he, himself, was to blame for having

sent the small force of Constabulary against the outlaws; and he was not anxious to have Basil back in Manila, telling all men of what had happened on the mountain-side. Consequently, he had sent Basil fifty fresh men—from the Island of Samar, like those who had been killed—and had ordered him to proceed to the northern side of the range, and build a regular stockaded camp in the neighbourhood of one of the villages; meanwhile, Captain Bush's Scouts were to watch the southern side of the range, learning the lay of the country, endeavouring to obtain information concerning Felizardo and his band, and, as far as possible, preparing the way for a large expedition, which the Government intended to despatch in a few months' time.

From first to last, Basil Hayle had only remained ten days in Igut, but the time had sufficed to complete his infatuation for Mrs Bush, and to confirm his detestation of her husband. At first by accident, then by design, he had met Mrs Bush practically every day, whilst he had barely spoken to Bush or his white associates. Old Don Juan Ramirez, the Spanish merchant, had told him all about the lives they led—of the mestiza girls at the other end of the town, and the drinking bouts in the spirit shop at the corner of the plaza; with the result that Basil had considered himself perfectly justified in taking the part of Mrs

Bush against all the others, in showing his respect for her, and his scorn for them—which was very chivalrous in theory, and very injudicious in practice, as he had realised the moment he received orders to leave Igut. Still, in the end, his parting from her had been admirably unemotional; and if she did cry for hours after he had gone, and if his feelings did find vent in Language, no one in Igut had been aware of these facts.

In Europe and America, where men and women are discreet, such things do not happen —at least they are supposed not to happen —for fear of the Law, or the Church, or of the Mightiest One of all, Mrs Grundy; but in the Tropics, especially in the Philippines, and more especially under the shadow of places like Felizardo's mountains, where Death is stalking by your side all day, squatting just outside the circle of firelight at night, conventions are apt to lose much of their force. Basil Hayle was in love with Mrs Bush. That would have been very wicked elsewhere, possibly it was wicked in Igut; but what was wholly admirable was that, in the circumstances, Basil Hayle did not become an open convert to the Law of the Bolo, and deal with Captain Bush according to that code. But this is a view of the case which few could understand, unless they had lived with bolomen as the background of their lives.

Basil Hayle had marched away up the valley

to the end of Felizardo's range, over the pass which formed the boundary of the old outlaw's territory, and down into the rich hemp lands on the other side where, near a village called Silang, he had built a stockaded post, after the custom of the Islands—big nipa-covered shacks, surrounded at a little distance by a high palisade, with a platform at a convenient height, and little watch-towers at each corner; and then he had sat down, and drilled his little brown men, and taught them to shoot, and, incidentally, taught them to love him above everything else on earth, and had waited patiently for the coming of Felizardo, or the ladrones, or the head-hunters, or any one else who was in search of trouble, being tired of looking for trouble for himself. Yet, all the time, he was thinking of Mrs Bush, wishing he could write, but not writing for fear of the letter going astray; though, had he but known, she heard of him, of his safety and his continued good health, every few days, and she concluded that the messages came from him, never suspecting that the servant who delivered them received them from a certain clerk in the Supervisor's office, the same clerk who had sent word concerning Basil and Mrs Bush to Felizardo; and whence that clerk now obtained the messages it is not hard to guess. Old Felizardo or Dolores Lasara could have told you. . . .

When he landed at Igut and found that there was no hotel in the place, Mr Joseph Gobbitt turned angrily to John Mackay. "Most scandalous thing! You should have warned me about this. We may be here a day, even two days. What are we going to do?"

The Scotchman answered without removing his cigar from his mouth—Mr Gobbitt hated to see an employé, a mere paid person, smoking in his presence, as Mackay had already divined. "I guess the Bushes will put you up, whilst I shall go to old Don Juan's," he answered.

Mr Gobbitt snorted, not liking the casual disposal of himself, and his temper was not improved when, without the slightest warning, he found himself the centre of an unusually vigorous dog-and-pig fight, none of the combatants in which was over-clean. "Most scandalous thing," he repeated, "most scandalous! I wonder what the police can be about to allow it. I shall certainly summons the owners if I can. . . . I am sure I see nothing to smile at, Mr Mackay," he added with great dignity.

A moment later, Captain Bush lounged up, and nodded to Mackay. "Hullo, John. What's on now? Coming across soon?" indicating the spirit shop with a jerk of his thumb. He was passing on, to see if there were any mails on the launch, when Mackay stopped him. "Here, Captain. This is Mr Joseph Gobbitt of London,

who has a letter of introduction to you from the Commission."

Captain Bush pulled himself together. "Glad to meet you, sir. If you'll wait a moment, we might go up to the house together. It is only a step. I suppose you're not going on. No? Well, you must stay with us. My wife will be delighted. Here, muchachos, take the Senor's luggage up to my house."

Captain Bush was in an exceptionally good humour, having just won some money off the Treasurer; but, in addition to that, he had understood instantly that the stranger must be a man of position, probably a wealthy English merchant and his own state of chronic insolvency made it necessary for him to lose no chances.

Perhaps Mrs Bush was not favourably impressed with this suddenly-arrived guest; certainly, he was not favourably impressed with her, or at least he did not like her. Amongst men, even amongst those of far better social position than himself, he was able to hold his own by reason of a certain aggressive strength of character; but when he found himself in the company of a lady, he was hopelessly at a loss, and, as is the way of his kind, revenged himself by abusing her afterwards.

Mrs Bush did not stay long in the room. "I see you have business to discuss," she said, "so I will leave you till dinner. Be sure and look after Mr—Mr Gobbitt, John."

At first, Mr Gobbitt was not very communicative, telling his host little beyond what was contained in the letter of introduction; but after a while, under the Scout officer's skilful handling, he began to thaw, and finally unfolded the whole of his scheme. After all, he told himself, why not? This American had to give him active aid, was bound to know everything very shortly, whilst his deposit of six thousand dollars secured him against possible competitors.

Captain Bush was a little puzzled. He was an experienced soldier, despite his recently-acquired habits; he knew the Islands well, and therefore could see various weak points in the business; on the other hand, this man Gobbitt obviously had capital, obviously had the Government behind him; and it would be most unwise to venture on any interference at that stage. Later on, perhaps, there might be a chance of turning the affair to account; but at the moment it was safer merely to provide the carriers and equipment for which Mr Gumpertz asked, and detail half a dozen Scouts to go along with the party and keep the carriers in order. Once the expedition was across the pass, it would be Basil Hayle's task to look after it, and Captain Bush grinned to himself as he thought of the possible trouble which this stout and pompous old man might cause the Constabulary officer.

At dinner, Mrs Bush made an attempt to talk to Mr Gobbitt, then, finding they had no interests in common, relapsed into silence. When she rose to leave the room, somehow she had to open the door for herself, whereat she raised her eyebrows slightly. Mr Gobbitt, deep in conversation with his host, never seemed to notice her go.

After a while, Captain Bush yawned. "It's slow here. Ever seen a Filipino town at night? No, I don't suppose you have. Would you like a walk round?"

They went first to the spirit shop, where the Englishman became almost jovial. It may have been the sense of being free for once from his frock-coat; it may have been the cocktails on which Captain Bush had insisted before dinner; it may have been the native spirit which the Supervisor suggested he should taste; but whatever the cause, time seemed to pass very quickly indeed, and when, about midnight, the school teacher suggested they should have a stroll down to the lower end of the town, Mr Joseph Gobbitt, merchant and churchwarden, had no objection to make.

When he awakened in the morning, in the big spare room which Mrs Bush had prepared for him, he had rather a vague recollection of the walk home. Other things were vague also, but of two things he was certain—that he had a splitting headache, and that the beauty of the

mestizas was not overrated. When Captain Bush came in, the merchant mentioned the former fact, whereat his host laughed, and went on to refer to the latter, thereby making Mr Gobbitt rather uncomfortable.

Mrs Bush did not come down to breakfast that morning, and she did not trouble to make any excuses. She had heard certain rumours from her maid, which had sent her white with passion. She was used to her husband's ways—but her guest! It was absolutely abominable. Mr Gobbitt, on his part, was thankful for her absence. He made no reference to the fact, however, nor did his host; and as soon as the meal was over, they went out together to make arrangements for the carriers.

"There's a road part of the way, twenty miles or so up the valley, and you can ride so far in a bullock-cart"—Mr Gobbitt had declined the offer of a horse—"but from there onwards it'll be a case of walking," the Scout officer said.

The merchant sighed. He was not a good walker; then he thought of the profits he would make out of the trip, and straightway became reconciled to the idea.

The arrangements were quickly made, thanks to the help of the Presidente, and Mr Gobbitt breathed more freely. He was anxious to get away as soon as possible for various reasons, of which Mrs Bush was one.

As they walked back to the house, the

Englishman remembered a question he had meant to ask before. "Did you ever meet a son of my late partner, Dunk—Albert Dunk, who was our manager in Manila? He died near Hippapad some months back."

The Captain shook his head. "He never passed through here. Probably he landed at Catarman, further round the bay. You might have gone in that way, too. I wonder old Gumpertz didn't suggest it. . . . No, very little news of that sort drifts across the mountains to us. You see, there're so few white men on that side for a good many miles; then, of course, you get plenty again."

Meanwhile, John Mackay had strolled out of the town, carrying a small switch as his sole weapon. About a mile past the last shack, he sat down at the edge of the cocoa-nut grove, lit a cigar, and puffed away contentedly. A few minutes later, a little man, clad in blue jean and wearing two formidable-looking bolos, emerged from the bush some twenty yards away, looked cautiously up and down the grove, then came forward.

"Good-morning, Senor," he said.

John Mackay nodded. "Good-morning, Simon. Can a message go to the Senor Felizardo? It is this—I am going round this side of his mountain and across the pass with an Englishman. There will be six Scouts to look after the carriers, that is all. He will leave us alone?"

The little man grinned. "Assuredly he will leave the Senor alone, as always. Only he will ask—where does the Senor go there?"

"Down the northern valley. Not on to his mountains at all."

"Very well, Senor. The message will go;" and the outlaw disappeared as silently as he had come.

Felizardo said afterwards that John Mackay should have been more explicit as to his exact destination, in which case the latter part of this story would have been very different. . . .

Mr Joseph Gobbitt did not like the twenty-mile ride in the cart, which was drawn by a couple of water-buffalo, beasts for which he seemed to entertain a most wholesome dread. He was absolutely shaken to pieces, as he told John Mackay, with what that naturally-silent person seemed to consider wearisome persistency; yet he liked the climb over the pass still less; and when they reached the northern valley, he insisted on a rest of two days, despite the protests of John Mackay, who urged: "Why, it's only some fifteen miles now to Hayle's stockade at Silang. He can put you up comfortably there, whilst I have a run round and look at the land. From what I can see, it is all right. We are at a fair elevation, even here, quite high enough above sea-level."

But Mr Gobbitt was firm. "I will rest here, and then we will go straight on. I see no

reason for wasting time going to this stockade, which appears to be well off our route."

The Scotchman shrugged his shoulders, and rested too; then, on the third morning, they moved down the valley slowly, cutting across from one side to another, so as to get an accurate idea of the whole area. On the fifth morning their task was practically complete. Mackay's verdict was wholly favourable. "It's valuable land," he said—"as good as any I know, except, of course, that in Samar. Only, it is curious no one has made use of it before. But I suppose they were afraid of the ladrones or of old Felizardo."

"Who is Felizardo?" the merchant demanded.

The Scotchman jerked his thumb in the direction of the mountains. "He's the chief up there. An outlaw."

Mr Gobbitt flushed. "Rubbish! They assure me that all that sort of thing has been put down, and I can see it now for myself."

Mackay shrugged his shoulders. "Very well. I suppose you know best. You are my employer, and I have come here merely to advise you on the nature of the land;" and, from that point onwards, he declined to discuss anything but hemp and hemp-growing.

The following morning they decided to turn back. Mr Gobbitt was now in great good-humour. There was no question that, at the price arranged, including the payment to Mr

Gumpertz, or rather to Mr Hart on behalf of Mr Gumpertz, he would be making an extraordinarily good bargain. He forgot the trials of the journey, that horrible cart, his sore feet and aching limbs; and thought only of what those trials would bring him ultimately. They were then taking a route slightly different from that by which they had come, and were just thinking of making a halt for breakfast, when, to the surprise of every one, they saw the roofs of some nipa-shacks through the trees.

The place proved to be the most miserable little village Mackay had ever seen. There was not a soul in sight, and, as the carriers filed in, they looked at one another with anxious, questioning faces.

John Mackay turned to the serjeant of the Scouts. "What is this?" he asked. Then, as the man shook his head, a sudden thought struck the Scotchman, and he clambered on to the veranda of the largest house, a dilapidated place of some size, pulled aside the matting at the door and went in, revolver in hand. Half a minute later he came out again, a little pale. "As I thought," he said. "Head-hunters."

The natives looked at one another with wide-open eyes, whilst Mr Gobbitt's jaw dropped suddenly. "What . . . what do you mean?" he quavered. "Head-hunters? What are they?"

"People who hunt heads — your head and

mine, for instance." The Scotchman's temper was up. "There're a dozen heads hanging up inside, if you want to see, including a white man's. We must get out of this, quick."

However, it was already too late. As he spoke a score of practically naked savages, armed with spears and primitive bolos, appeared on the edge of the clearing. "Up here, all of you." Mackay grasped the situation instantly, but, even whilst the carriers and Scouts were scrambling on to the platform of the shack, the enemy secured two heads.

Mr Gobbitt was one of the last up; in fact, had not three carriers assisted him, he would have been in a bad case, for the little ladder had given way, and climbing was impossible for him.

Meanwhile, the Scouts had begun to blaze away, hitting no one, but none the less preventing any rush; then Mackay himself took one of the carbines, and dropped a head-hunter stone-dead — a lesson which was not lost, for the rest promptly withdrew to cover.

"They will wait till evening now," the serjeant remarked, "then they will attack. They will not try and burn the place because of those," pointing towards the ghastly trophies hanging from the roof.

Mackay nodded, and went on with his task of making loopholes in the walls, although, as he told himself, six carbines and a revolver would not go very far as means of defence.

Mr Gobbitt was lying back against some of the hastily-thrown-down packs, panting. He had lost his helmet, and both his coat and trousers were torn. "It's disgraceful," he said, "absolutely disgraceful! I shall report it to the Consul or to the Foreign Office. Why, I actually saw them kill two of the men in my presence."

He spoke to nobody in particular, but Mackay overheard him and smiled grimly, thinking of the killing which was yet to come; but, in spite of that, when the merchant had recovered sufficiently to ask questions, he spoke hopefully, though he added: "You see now why no one has made use of this hemp land, and why they offered it to you cheaply."

Mr Gobbitt's business instinct overmastered his fear, and he sat up suddenly. "Do you mean that Mr Gumpertz knew?"

Once again the Scotchman shrugged his shoulders. "It is quite possible," he said dryly. "And if we had taken a slightly different route, you would have bought it, not knowing."

The merchant lay back again thinking of many things, of his present danger, of his narrow escape from buying land having such undesirable inhabitants, of his deposit which he might not return to claim. Then he happened to glance upwards and received the greatest shock of his life, for there, amongst those grisly treasures of the village, was the head of Albert Dunk.

John Mackay looked round sharply at the cry, and hurried to his employer's side. As soon as the Scotchman could make sense out of the other man's almost incoherent utterance, he reached up and pulled down the trophy, which he placed beneath a blanket in the corner; then he gave Mr Gobbitt half a glass of neat brandy, the only liquid they had, and strove, without much success, to calm him down.

"We shall get out of it all right, we shall get out of it," he repeated. "And then we'll get Basil Hayle to come along, and clear out this gang."

"Can't we go now?" the merchant asked feebly.

"And be cut to pieces before we've gone a quarter of a mile? No, we must stay here, and chance beating them off when they attack to-night. Then they'll probably leave us alone altogether."

It is always a weary job, waiting for savages to come and attempt to kill you, but it becomes even more than a weariness when you are half-mad with thirst, when you know there is water near by and you dare not go to it. John Mackay found it long; and the Scouts and carriers found it long; but it is doubtful whether Mr Joseph Gobbitt, lying in the corner, was conscious of the passage of time. His thoughts were just one long nightmare,

in which Albert Dunk's head, Commissioner Gumpertz, two dead carriers outside, and a bearer cheque for six thousand dollars played the principal parts. Once only was his mind clear for a few minutes; and that was when he remembered Albert Dunk's bearer cheque for ten thousand pesos — five thousand dollars. That had been cashed just as the drawer was starting for this same district. How he wished that head could speak! Then he fell a-shuddering at the idea.

John Mackay watched the sun set with unusual interest, possibly because he did not expect to see it rise again. "The attack will come soon now," he remarked to the serjeant, who was endeavouring to smoke, despite his parched mouth.

The little man nodded. "Yes, Senor. I, for one, am glad I went to Mass last Sunday. There was a girl who asked me to meet her afterwards"; then, for the fiftieth time, he tried the action of his carbine. . . .

"The head-hunters have them in the big shack. They will kill them all soon after sunset." There was a perfectly matter-of-fact ring in the messenger's voice.

Felizardo knit his brows. He had given certain orders to the head-hunters, and he was not used to being disobeyed; moreover, he had a very kindly feeling towards John Mackay, who had once done him a good turn; conse-

quently, he did not share the messenger's cheerful frame of mind.

"What are you at the outpost doing, that you allow this?" he thundered. "You know the orders I have given to those savages, to leave all Englishmen alone. I suppose they think that, because I left them unpunished last time, I shall do the same again. Go down now, at once, and tell Manuel to make them withdraw, and then go to the Constabulario at Silang, and tell the Captain to come and fetch Senor Mackay and the fat fool away. Of course, you will tell the Captain you come from me. What else would you say? I can trust him."

The result was that dawn found the little garrison, half-dead with thirst, but still awaiting the attack; and an hour after dawn John Mackay caught sight of Captain Hayle's tall figure coming through the trees, with thirty of his men at his heels.

When Mr Gobbitt had swallowed a quart or so of water, followed by some brandy, his courage began to revive. "I told you we should be all right," he said peevishly to Mackay; "I never thought they were in earnest"; then he remembered the two carriers, slain in his presence, and that ghastly head, and he went a little pale, though the shuddering had ceased.

They buried the heads—a useless formality, for the head-hunters unearthed them within a few hours—and then Basil Hayle escorted the

party back to his stockade, to rest for a day or two. That evening, whilst Mr Gobbitt was having a much-needed wash and change, Mackay turned suddenly to his host. "By the way, I've got a message for you from Mrs Bush. She says she is very well, and hears of you often through the natives."

Basil did not look up from the cigar he was cutting. "Thanks very much," he said briefly.

Mr Gobbitt felt much better after the evening meal, so much better, in fact, that he could discuss matters calmly. "And did you know anything of the fate of my late partner's son?" he asked.

"Of course I did," Hayle answered promptly. "Didn't they tell you in Manila? It was before I came to this side of the range; but Lieutenant Stott at Catarman told me, and I saw the copy of the report he sent to the Commission. He asked permission to hunt those savages down, but he never got any reply. Oh, all the Commissioners knew, and I supposed it had been made public."

The merchant got up suddenly and began to pace the rather rickety floor. "I see it now," he growled, "I see it all. Either I am to buy this land which no one else will look at, because of these abominable persons who tried to take my head; or else I shall not come back at all, and they will keep the deposit. I will lay the matter before the Consul — no, I will lay it

before the Foreign Office. I will have compensation. I—I——" and he spluttered with rage.

Mackay winked at Basil, who smiled in return, unseen by the merchant, who went on. "It is scandalous, an outrage. I can see how I have been misled. They say the Islands are at peace; and yet two men are killed actually in my presence, and no arrests are made. Whilst the head of my late partner's son is used as a trophy! Abominable! Even in Igut, when I wished to summons the owners of those most offensive pigs, they laughed at me. Which is my quickest way back to Manila?"

"Through Catarman," Basil answered. "That is the route you should have come, only in that case Stott would have told you of Mr Dunk's death. Do you see?"

Mr Gobbitt's first visit in Manila was to the Consulate, when he demanded to see the Acting-Consul instantly. The Consul received him without effusion.

"Had a good time in the bush, Mr Gobbitt? You look a bit thinner—yes, a lot thinner. What can I do for you?"

"It is a long story," Mr Gobbitt began; whereupon the Acting-Consul put his feet on the table, and selected an extra large cigar.

"Fire away," he said; but before the merchant had got very far the cigar had been allowed to go out, and the official was all attention. When it was finished, he drew a deep breath.

"You had a lucky escape, a very lucky escape;" there was no levity in his voice now. "But you must admit that I warned you against Gumpertz. And I am afraid we can do nothing in the matter."

"Why? What are you here for then, sir?" It was the voice of the British tax-payer talking to his employé.

The Consul explained patiently. "As regards the negotiations. You were alone, were you not? Yes, your word, the word of an unknown man —pardon me, I mean unknown in America— against that of a high official. And I take it —I must speak plainly—you offered something in the nature of a bribe. You did? A present." He smiled a little grimly. "The price asked shows that, and it comes to the same thing. Graft, they call it here. That fact destroys your case at once."

Mr Gobbitt breathed heavily. "And how about my deposit of six thousand dollars? The receipt is at the bank."

"Then ask the bank to collect it," answered the Consul; "they may succeed."

"May succeed, sir! They must succeed." Again there was the British tax-payer note.

The Consul smiled. "We will say we hope they succeed. Still, after your other experiences——"

"They've had the old boy this time, Blackiston," the Consul said to the Vice-Consul, when

the visitor had departed. "Proper murder trick. Seems to have shaken his nerves badly. It would have shaken mine, too. Head-hunters —ugh!"

The Vice-Consul closed the letter-book wearily. "Serve him right. He shouldn't be so cock-sure and pompous."

One of the senior clerks from the bank took the receipt of Commissioner Gumpertz to the Palace, presently returning with a grave face. "They know nothing about any such sum, sir; and it is neither a regular official receipt, nor is it the Commissioner's signature."

Mr Gobbitt gasped. "Why, he gave it to me himself! There must be some mistake."

The clerk shook his head. "They are positive, sir."

"Did you see him sign it?" the manager asked, a little coldly.

The merchant mopped the perspiration off his forehead. "No, I cannot say I did. He went into another room. But your cashier can identify the messenger—one of those belonging to the Palace."

When the cashier came, he remembered the incident perfectly. "It was a large sum, and I should not have handed it to a strange native; but I knew the porter at the hotel was reliable."

It was the last straw, so far as Mr Gobbitt was concerned. "They have swindled me out

of twelve hundred pounds," he groaned, fanning himself with his handkerchief the while; then a thought struck him. "You have the numbers of the notes? You can trace them?"

The manager looked doubtful. "Some, perhaps. We will do our best. Come in again to-morrow, Mr Gobbitt. Meanwhile, if I were you, I should say nothing, and stay indoors. You need rest."

In the morning, the merchant found the bank manager very cold and distant in his manner. "We have traced several of the notes," he said. "In each case they have come from most questionable places—places of no repute, in fact. I presume you have witnesses to prove where you were that night."

"I was in my room at the hotel. I went to bed very early, as I was starting early next morning."

"Ah!" There was no mistaking the tone. "So no one saw you after dinner. That is a pity."

Mr Gobbitt brought his hand down on the table with a thump. "Do you mean to insinuate, sir, that I myself passed those notes at those infamous places? Never in my life" —he had forgotten Igut—"never in my life was I in one."

"I mean to insinuate nothing," the manager answered wearily. "Only you cannot prove that you were not out, and, if you make a

fuss, the Commissioners will quickly prove that you were. They will get police, native officials, and perhaps even a native judge or two, to remember having met you. You can do nothing, and I can do nothing, and, if you will excuse me, I am very busy. Good-morning."

Basil Hayle spent several hours in drawing up a report concerning Mr Gobbitt, the head-hunters, and Felizardo, then he read it through again, and straightway destroyed it.

"The less said, the better," he muttered. "They'll never believe anything to the old man's credit, and they might shift me over it."

So, instead of sending the report, he marched out by night to the head-hunters' village, hoping to catch them there; but only found the ashes of the houses, and had one of his men wounded by a spear thrown in the darkness. Then he went back to his stockade at Silang, where he sat down, and thought of Felizardo and of Captain Bush, and most of all of Mrs Bush, and cursed at the dreary inaction, and prayed that the ladrones would come along and give him a fight.

## CHAPTER VII

### HOW THEY REBUILT THE GALLOWS AT CALOCAN

During the two months following Mr Gobbitt's adventure, things were very quiet in the neighbourhood of Felizardo's mountains. The old outlaw kept to his policy of trying to avoid trouble by acting strictly on the defensive; and, as neither Captain Bush nor Captain Hayle received orders to make an attack, during the whole of that time not a shot was fired in anger, and Captain Bush's Scouts grew so fat and soft, and got so completely out of hand, that they were hardly fit to do even one day's work in the field—unlike Hayle's Constabulary at Silang, who had much less to eat and were given much more to do, which was good, both for them and for the service.

In Manila, however, neither Commissioner Furber nor the late members of the Provisional Government had forgotten Felizardo. The Commissioner was smarting over the failure of his plans. The ex-insurrecto generals and colonels

had not forgiven the old chief, who, besides refusing help at a critical juncture, had also hanged ignominiously an envoy of the Sovereign People. Consequently, having the ear of the Commissioner, they lost no opportunity of relating the evil deeds of Felizardo; and when their imaginations failed them, they ascribed to him some of their own abominable doings during the rebellion. Mr Furber believed it all—were they not his Little Brown Brothers? — and he found an ally in Commissioner Gumpertz, who also had reason for feeling sore against Felizardo; but one or two of the other Commissioners shook their heads. "What harm does the old man do?" they asked. "As it is, we have to waste enough money on active ladrones, and a small war of this kind would not leave much balance"—which, being interpreted, meant "much to be divided amongst the faithful supporters of the Party."

So Commissioner Furber had to give way, for a time at least; and the ex-generals and colonels gnashed their teeth with rage, for, in addition to the old scores, they had one or two new plans, the preliminaries to a fresh insurrection, which might be nipped in the bud if Felizardo came to hear of them, as he probably would do. So they put their heads together, smoking many cigarettes and drinking much spirit during secret conclaves in closely-shuttered old houses in the Walled City—which

is the name for Old Manila—and at last they evolved a scheme which seemed to them excellent.

"It will set the Americanos against Felizardo," they said. "Nothing enrages them so much as to have their women carried off. Then there will be a long and expensive war in the mountains, with the loss of many men; and our doings will not be noticed—until we are ready."

So they appointed a committee, including, amongst others, Senor Guiterrez, Mr Furber's secretary, and Senor Vagas, an assistant collector of Customs, brother-in-law to Chief Collector Sharler, and Senor Talibat, the judge; and, after that, they dispersed, in great good-humour, feeling sure that, before many months had passed, they would once more be wearing large red epaulettes and large red sashes, and trailing huge cavalry sabres behind them.

However, you cannot arrange matters of such grave national importance in a few days; consequently, weeks went by before anything could be attempted in the Islands themselves. There were funds to be collected and sent to other Brown Brothers in Hong Kong, who, after taking as much as they thought would not be noticed —patriots are never greedy—handed the balance to certain discreet Chinamen, wherewith to purchase certain articles, which, packed in small and convenient cases and crates, were presently

put on board the German steamer *Bertha Helwig* and dispatched to Manila.

Chief Collector Sharler was a young man with a clean-shaven face, gold-rimmed spectacles, and ideas. It is the latter only which are really important so far as this story is concerned. His appearance certainly suited his theories; but had he been gross and sensual-looking like Mr Gumpertz, or lean and wolfish like Mr Furber, and still held those same theories, the result would have been the same.

The Chief Collector had come out from the United States full of ardour for the cause of the Filipino victims of Spanish tyranny. When I said he had ideas, perhaps I was wrong; certainly, I understated the case. He had obsessions, the chief of which was the doctrine of Racial Equality, which may be quite harmless when practised in a small American city, where there is no native problem, but becomes positively and actively dangerous when preached in the Tropics. Another obsession of his, a very strange one in the eyes of his colleagues, was his objection to all forms of corruption, a doctrine which is admirable everywhere, and practised in very few places.

Mr Sharler had not been in the Islands long before he showed his faith in the first of his theories by marrying a mestiza, the sister of Enrique Vagas, then one of the junior clerks in his office. It cannot be said that this

practical demonstration of his principles was welcome, even to those other heads of the Civil Service who had been the loudest in their praise of the "Little Brown Brother" policy of the Governor-General. It made things awkward with their own wives, they said; whilst, as for the Army, orders were given to the porters of the Military Club that no one was to be permitted to bring Mr Sharler into the building again as a guest. The result of all this was that the Chief Collector went more and more into the society of his wife's own people, and became more and more rabid on the subject of Racial Equality, discovering in his new relatives virtues which they themselves, even in their wildest moments, had never imagined they possessed—such as truthfulness, for instance.

The other white members of the Customs staff encouraged their Chief in his obsession, and all those who had not actually got their white wives on the spot went through forms of marriage with mestizas; moreover, the Chief's earnestness on this question left him less time for translating his other theory, his objection to graft, into practice, so for a time things went very smoothly, and bank balances grew at a most pleasant rate. Then, one day, Enrique Vagas, having been soundly and deservedly kicked by an irate white chief assistant, suddenly remembered many instances of corruption,

and straightway related them to his brother-in-law and superior officer. After the enquiry, there was a considerable number of vacancies, and what was more natural and fitting than that Enrique Vagas, and those other incorruptible Brown Brothers who had helped him track the offenders, should be promoted to the posts? From that time onwards, whatever the importers might say, matters went smoothly in the office. The Chief Collector heard not a single rumour of graft now, save from interested parties outside, and, so convinced was he of the integrity and loyalty of everybody, that more than once, at the suggestion of Vagas, he attempted to secure the withdrawal of those officious and useless military detectives who were detailed to watch for smuggled arms. But on that point he failed signally. "We have had some before," the General answered curtly. "Good-morning."

By a curious coincidence, the *Bertha Helwig* happened to arrive early on the morning of a public holiday. It was equally curious that Senor Vagas had arranged an outing for that day. One of the large Customs launches was to convey a party, of which the Chief Collector was to be a member, to a charming spot some fifteen miles away, where everybody would land and have lunch, and afterwards talk of Equality and the Rights of the People.

When the other guests assembled on the quay, they found Senor Vagas in the highest spirits.

"Congratulate me," he said. "My *fiancée* has returned on that steamer, the *Bertha Helwig*. We will fetch her, and some other friends of mine who are aboard, and take them with us."

The Chief Collector beamed through his glasses. "It was a good idea," he said, and ordered the launch to go alongside the German steamer. As they went out—the *Bertha Helwig* was some distance from the shore—they passed close to the police boat, whose captain, seeing the Chief Collector in the other craft, paid no more attention to her and her doings, as was but natural, and very convenient for Senor Vagas, who would have been watched had he been alone, and would have been stopped had he headed away up the bay when he left the *Bertha Helwig*.

As it was, there was plenty of time to transfer all those cases and crates, which the discreet Chinaman in Hong Kong had shipped, from the steamer to the launch, whilst the Chief Collector was in the little saloon, going through a series of introductions, and drinking the beer of the Fatherland with the skipper. By the time he came on deck again, everything had been stowed out of sight on the launch, which then made her way to the appointed landing place. The next transfer of those cases took place a couple of hours later, whilst the party was lunching in a charming little banana grove,

about half a mile away. This transhipment, like the other, did not take long. Two large dug-outs appeared from out of what was apparently an impenetrable mangrove swamp, took the cases aboard, and in the space of a few minutes had vanished again down the narrow passage from which they had emerged. Later on, when their crews opened those cases and crates in the moonlight, they unpacked a hundred small-bore rifles, and many thousands of rounds of ammunition, a fact which goes to prove the statement that Mr Sharler's views were a danger to the community.

Neither Basil Hayle nor Captain Bush had any system of Intelligence worth mentioning; and, as their official reports were the only source of information the authorities had, it follows that the latter knew as little, less perhaps, than they did of what was happening in that part of the Island. True, each of the officers did his best according to his lights—rather dim lights in the case of Captain Bush—but the results obtained were quite out of proportion to the trouble taken, because nineteen statements out of every twenty collected were untrue, and the twentieth was usually valueless. Practically every native in the district was in sympathy with the old insurrecto party, or else was one of Felizardo's agents; consequently, it was absurd to blame either of the officers for not hearing of the landing of the

guns, or for not being forewarned concerning the schemes of Senor Vagas and his fellow-patriots.

On the other hand, Felizardo heard about the guns, and sent fifty of his best bolomen to try and borrow them; but they were just too late, for when they reached the town of San Francisco, which is some fifteen miles inland from Igut, the weapons were already stored in the house of the Presidente, who was a former member of the Provisional Government, and a cousin of the wife of Chief Collector Sharler. Felizardo had forbidden his men to make an attack on any of the towns, so they were compelled to leave the guns alone; but they had a little compensation, for they came on two ex-members of the band, who had deserted to the insurrectos, and these they hanged during the night, on the great timber belfry in the middle of the plaza, facing the Presidente's house.

Felizardo paid well for information, and he usually eliminated those who played him false; consequently, he was not long in obtaining an insight into the plans of the patriots. Men of his, who had been with him for years, said they had never before seen him so angry. Even Dolores Lasara was unable to calm him down. For half a day he sat alone, smoking innumerable cigarettes, and thinking out schemes of revenge; then suddenly he came back to the camp, apparently calm, and gave his orders.

There were to be outposts all round San Francisco and its neighbourhood, and a chain of boudjon-blowers to pass any alarm back to the mountains, and another chain across the pass, up to Basil Hayle's stockade at Silang, where the last man was to have a letter ready to deliver to the Constabulary officer as soon as he heard the warning notes on the horns. Then the old chief himself, with fifty of his best men, all of whom had rifles as well as bolos, shifted down to the outpost nearest to Igut, and waited patiently for the maturing of the scheme of Senor Vagas of the Customs, and Senor Guiterrez the secretary to Mr Furber, and Senor Talibat the judge, each of whom would probably have taken the first steamer to Hong Kong, had he known of the plans of this Enemy of the Sovereign People.

Basil Hayle was sitting in his quarters within the stockade, reading, when he caught the sound of a boudjon—faint, two miles away perhaps, but perfectly distinct. He put his book down quickly, and went out on to the platform of the stockade, where he found the serjeant of the guard listening intently. A minute later, another boudjon sounded, very loud and clear, within a few hundred yards this time, evidently answering the other.

Basil and the serjeant exchanged glances. This was the first hint of anything in the nature of hostilities they had received since Mr Gobbitt's adventure with the head-hunters.

"Pretty close, that," the Captain said.

The serjeant nodded. "Yes, Senor. But it does not mean an attack. They would not warn us beforehand in that way. Possibly, it means a message. We shall see."

A quarter of an hour later, his prediction was justified, for a native, an ordinary tao by his dress, strolled up to the gate of the stockade, announced that he had a letter for the Senor in command of the Constabulario, delivered the envelope to the corporal of the guard, then, without another word, strolled back into the bush.

The corporal lingered a few moments, until the expression on Basil's face told him what he wanted to know. "The cooks might hurry on the dinner," he said, as he got back to the little guard-house; "we shall be going out. It was from Felizardo. I recognised the messenger. He was in the fight on the hillside." And, having the first information, he set to work to borrow as many cigarettes as possible, so as to be well supplied for the march.

Basil read the note once, rapidly; then re-read it very carefully, and immediately made up his mind. It ran:—

"The Senor Felizardo, Chief of the Mountains, sends a greeting to the Chief of the Constabulario. This morning a band of a hundred men, all formerly of the foolish insurrecto army, started from the neighbourhood of San Francisco. At dawn to-morrow morning they will burn

Igut. They wish it to be thought in Manila that the Senor Felizardo has done this thing, so that the Government will send an army against him, and, meanwhile, they will be able to prepare another rebellion, unobserved.

"If the Captain of the Constabulario marches quickly, he may take them in the rear. His stockade at Silang will be safe, on the word of Felizardo.

"They wish to kill all at Igut, save the Senora, who is promised to one Juan Vagas, the leader, brother to Enrique Vagas in the Customs."

Then followed a brief supplementary note on the way in which the rifles had been introduced.

Basil Hayle did not hesitate. Had it been his first experience of Felizardo, he would have feared a trap. As it was, however, no suspicion of that kind entered his mind. All he thought about now was to be in time, to take those insurrectos in the rear, just as they were attacking, and himself to kill Juan Vagas. He was more like a wild beast than a man when he thought of what Felizardo really meant—but a dangerously quiet wild beast, one which means to kill. The Law of the Bolo had come into his life now, fully, absolutely displacing all other rules of conduct. There was to be no quarter this time, as he told the serjeant, who grinned in great appreciation.

In little over twenty minutes the column had started, leaving only five sick men in the stockade. So far as the latter was concerned, Basil trusted to Felizardo's word. He could not spare enough men to defend it,

so he decided, very wisely, to leave it undefended.

They wasted no time on the road, and before sundown they were across the pass, where they found a solitary boloman seated on a large rock, apparently awaiting them.

"I am the guide," he said briefly. "There is a short cut. The ladrones passed down two hours ago."

Most men would have called Basil Hayle a rash fool when he nodded and said: "Very well. Lead on;" but it was a question of taking risks, or of allowing the promise to Juan Vagas to be kept.

They halted once, and once only, during the night, and then it was at the suggestion of the guide. "We shall be in time," he said; "the soldiers might rest a little."

The men threw themselves down, and smoked and chattered in undertones about the great killing they were going to do; but Captain Basil Hayle stalked up and down, chewing fiercely on the end of his cigar.

After a while, the guide spoke again. "We should be going now. One thing first, though. Tell your soldiers that the ladrones all have rifles, and are dressed in blue, like Felizardo's men usually are. Possibly, however, there will be bolomen dressed in white come out of the jungle to help you. Tell your men, so that they will know."

The little soldiers grinned, understanding who those bolomen would be. "He, the old chief, might be there himself," they whispered to one another. "Who knows? We might even see him."

Half a mile from Igut, the guide brought them back into the main road. "They have passed already," he said, pointing to the spoor.

They went on very cautiously then, for there was just the faintest hint of dawn in the east, and they knew it was only a question of a few minutes before the attack would begin; in fact, had the patriots been bolomen, it would have begun already, but it is different when you have rifles.

The enemy had no rear guard, partially because they had no thought of being attacked, partially because each man was so anxious for his share of the glory and of the loot. Consequently, Basil Hayle was quite close behind them when they entered the plaza and slew the sleeping Scout sentry—so close, in fact, that his men managed to get a most telling volley into the crowd of patriots bunched in the gateway of the barracks.

After that, it did not take very long. True, half a dozen Scouts were killed before the rest could awaken and start shooting; but the sudden attack from behind had paralysed the patriots, and, after the second volley from Hayle's little men, they broke and fled. It was

then that those bolomen in white appeared, seemingly from nowhere, at the corners of the plaza, and got to work quietly.

Basil Hayle stood in the middle of the plaza, repeating shot-gun in hand, wondering whether by any chance Juan Vagas had been trapped in the barracks. He had no orders to give his men —he had given the only one necessary immediately after the last volley—"No quarter"—and he knew that the fight, if fight it could be called, had passed clean out of his control. It was getting light now, and he looked round towards the Bushes' house—the house he had saved—and saw a white-clad figure standing on the balcony, watching him.

Instantly, he forgot everything, even Juan Vagas, and ran across the plaza. Mrs Bush gripped the balcony to steady herself. "You!" she cried. "You! Thank God! What is it all? Oh, what is it?"

He told her in a few brief sentences. "I was only just in time," he added.

They were still killing patriots at the lower end of the plaza, Constabulary and Felizardo's men in white working together. She gave one glance in that direction, then covered her face.

"Who are those in white, and the man on the grey horse?"

It was light enough now to see fairly distinctly, and Basil realised at once who the little

horseman, calmly smoking a cigarette, watching the killing, must be.

"It is Felizardo himself," he said; then, thinking the other was looking, he raised his hand in salute. Instantly, the broad-brimmed hat was swept off in reply. Captain Hayle turned round quickly; they had seen one another now, as friends; and he must not know officially that the outlaw was there. When he looked round again, the killing was finished; the Constabulary were collecting together the weapons of the fallen; and both grey horse and white-clad bolomen had disappeared as suddenly as they had come.

"Captain Hayle, have you seen my husband?"

Basil started. "No, I never thought—Oh, there he is," as the Scout officer came hurrying up one of the streets, accompanied by three more breathless white men.

Hayle went to meet them. "Mighty close shave, Captain," he said.

Bush looked at him with wild eyes. "What is it all? What's happened? What are you doing here? I was in the Treasurer's—we had been playing cards late—when we heard the shooting, and saw the streets full of bolomen. I suppose this is Felizardo's doing."

"No, it isn't," Basil answered curtly; he had detected the lie. "It was the old insurrecto gang. If I had been ten minutes later they would have wiped out Igut;" and he gave the

other a brief outline of what had occurred, omitting all mention of Felizardo.

Bush flushed. "I reckon my men would have put up a fight," he said ungraciously, whereupon Basil turned on his heel and left him. Already, the serjeant had reported that, though there were five dead insurrectos in the barracks, there were six dead Scouts, not including the sentry; though the Constabulary had only lost one man, and Felizardo had lost none.

Whilst Bush was going up to the barracks, Basil glanced towards the balcony again; but Mrs Bush had disappeared. Still, he had the knowledge that he had saved her, and, what was better still, he had the memory of her grateful look.

Suddenly, it struck him that he was deadly weary. They had been marching since midday the previous day, and it was now about six in the morning, doing a forced march through jungle, without stopping to cook food. He leaned against the timbers of the belfry and beckoned to the serjeant, who was examining a small-bore rifle he had captured. "I don't see the bugler anywhere, serjeant; but get the men together, and tell them all to pile their arms here and dismiss. They must be hungry and tired, and the Scouts can do the rest."

The serjeant grinned. "We have left no 'rest' for them to do, Senor."

It was not very dignified to be leaning against

one of the posts of the belfry, so Basil tried to stand up erect, whilst waiting for his men; but the sudden relaxation of the strain had left him a little dazed, and, almost unconsciously, he sat down on the ground, with his shot-gun across his knees and his head forward. The thought which had kept him up so far, the memory of Mrs Bush's look, had now been replaced by another, which drummed through his brain with maddening persistency—"Why had Bush himself been allowed to escape?" A stray shot, a chance slash with a bolo, and——

"Captain Hayle, what do you mean by this? Come into the house at once. You must be absolutely done up after that awful march from Silang." Basil felt a hand laid gently on his shoulder, and scrambled to his feet at once.

"Mrs Bush! Oh, I'm all right, really, but tired, you know." Even her touch had not quite cleared his mind yet, then, with an effort, he pulled himself together. "I am waiting for my men, and I am afraid I was almost asleep. No, I don't think I will come in. Captain Bush seemed a little annoyed, you know."

Mrs Bush looked him square in the eyes. "Captain Hayle, I ask whom I think fit into my house. You will come now. You know your men can look after themselves. I have already sent word to Ah Lung to let them

have what they want. The Scouts can guard Igut—now."

He followed her in without a word. First she brought him brandy and soda water; and then she glanced at his torn and muddy uniform, and his soaking boots, one of which was minus a heel.

"I like you in those," she said suddenly. "They tell me—they tell me—many things. Only, you must change. I will put some other clothes in the spare room for you."

When he came out again, dressed in a white suit of Captain Bush's, she had some breakfast ready for him, but he could not touch it for sheer weariness; whereupon she made a couch for him on one of the long cane sofas in the drawing-room, and then she left him. Within a couple of minutes he was fast asleep. Mrs Bush opened the door quietly, looked in, went on tiptoe to his side, and, stooping down, kissed his hair lightly.

"I know you did it for me, dearest," she murmured; then she went out, just as her husband came into the house, accompanied by the Treasurer and the Supervisor. They were talking loudly, and did not appear to notice Mrs Bush until she spoke. "Please be more quiet," she said. "Captain Hayle is asleep in the drawing-room."

The Treasurer and the Supervisor exchanged sheepish glances, but Bush flushed. "I never

asked him in here." Then he was sorry he had spoken, for her answer came, cutting like a lash: "I asked him. But for him, none of us would be asking any one anywhere now."

"There were the Scouts——" her husband began, but she did not let him finish.

"The Scouts! And where was the Scout officer, and the other white heroes, who would have saved Igut?" She turned away scornfully and swept upstairs.

"I say, Bush, we had better get out; we aren't exactly welcome. The Virginian seems to be first favourite." The Supervisor was already moving towards the door, when Captain Bush stopped him.

"You stay here. This is my house, and if I want to ask you in for a drink, I will."

But both the others declined. "We'd sooner not. She may come back. And the spirit shop's open now." So, in the end, Bush had to give way; and, instead of seeing to his wounded, and investigating the whole affair, sat drinking himself into a sodden state, and listening to the vile insinuations of his civilian friends. There was no gratitude to Basil Hayle for having saved the lives of all of them, only bitter jealousy and resentment, coupled with a little fear, at least on the part of the civil officials, who, on the occasion of his former visit, had heard his candid opinion concerning the lives they led.

Meanwhile, out on the plaza the serjeant and half a dozen men were keeping guard over four prisoners. The rest of the Constabulary were scattered. Some were still feeding in Ah Lung's store, some were sitting in the shade of the belfry smoking, but most had drifted away in search of sleeping places. But the serjeant and his little guard remained, for they had received those four prisoners from no less a person than Felizardo himself, who had handed them over with the words: "Tell your captain these must be hanged." And the serjeant, who had been in the Spanish Service, had saluted, and had taken his prizes to the plaza, and trussed them up securely, and then had sat down to wait until it should please his captain to reappear. He knew who those prisoners were. One was Juan Vagas himself, whilst the other three had been majors in the insurrecto army.

Presently there came along the Presidente and many tao, with carts drawn by water-buffalo, and started collecting the dead. Eighty-one they found out of the hundred who had come in—which, as the serjeant said, was a good killing. And when that task was finished the Presidente chanced to notice those four trussed-up prisoners beside the belfry, and came to inspect them; but when he saw their faces he seemed to shiver a little, and a quick glance passed between him and Juan Vagas. Then he spoke

in the voice which had so often made the tao themselves shiver, and pay fines without asking for receipts.

"What are you doing with those men? If they are prisoners, why have you not handed them over to me, so that I can put them in gaol? I will send my police for them at once."

But the serjeant cared for no Presidentes; moreover, he had seen that glance of recognition between Juan Vagas and the official. "These are the prisoners of the Constabulary," he said. "They remain here until I receive orders from my captain."

The Presidente used unofficial language. "I will send my police for them," he retorted, and departed, storming.

When the serjeant saw a dozen or so ragged civil police approaching, he nodded to his men. "Load," he said curtly, and the police halted forthwith.

Once more, the Presidente came forward; it was a matter of absolutely vital importance for him to get possession of those prisoners, even if, as was possible, they did happen to escape during the night. "Where is your captain?" he demanded.

The serjeant pointed with his revolver towards the Bushes' house. "In there," he said.

The Presidente bit his lip. He was not really anxious to meet Basil Hayle, and he was much less anxious to meet Mrs Bush; so, as a com-

promise, he went to the spirit shop to consult Captain Bush, who did not receive him cordially.

"What have I got to do with it?" the Scout growled. "I'm a soldier, not a forsaken policeman like Hayle. If I had taken them, I should have shot them out of hand, to save the trouble of hanging them. Are they friends or relatives of yours?" Usually he and the Presidente were on very good terms, but to-day his nerves were shaken. He knew he deserved, and might possibly get, his dismissal from the Service—that is, if Basil Hayle told the whole truth.

He had got to go to Basil Hayle and ask his forbearance—that was the most bitter thought of all. He was completely in the hands of this Constabulary officer, whom, perhaps, he hated more than any other man living. They could not blame him for not knowing that the attack was coming, but they could, and would, blame him for not being prepared for an attack; whilst, if they learnt that he had been one of the last men on the scene—— He made a grimace at the thought.

It was midday when Basil awakened, wondering at first where he could be; then, as he looked round, he remembered suddenly. A few minutes later Mrs Bush came in. "You look better now," she said. "You were dreadfully tired this morning. You ought to have something to eat, though, before you go out. One of your serjeants has been asking for you; and I have

been watching the Presidente stalking up and down in front of the house like a maniac."

Basil shrugged his shoulders. "They can wait," he said. "I really am hungry now."

Whilst he was eating, he gave her a few more details of the night's adventure. "It was Felizardo who really saved you," he said, whereat she shook her head. "Yes, it was," he went on. "But for him, I should still have been at that dreary hole, Silang."

"Was it very dreary?" she asked.

He looked away. "Of course it was. I never hated a place so much in my life. You see——" He broke off suddenly, and for a few minutes there was silence; then he got up rather abruptly. "If you'll excuse me now, I must see what the serjeant wants."

As he went out, the Presidente stopped him. "May I speak to you a moment, Captain?" the official began, but Basil cut him short.

"Yes, in a few minutes. I must see to my men first. I'll come to your office, if you like."

The serjeant grinned as he saluted. "I wanted to see you about those, Senor," jerking his thumb in the direction of his prisoners. "I received them from — from the Chief of the Mountains himself. He said they must be hanged. One is Juan Vagas, and the other three are his chief lieutenants."

Basil drew a quick breath. Juan Vagas! So he had him, after all. He strode over to them,

and, when Juan Vagas saw the look in his face, he knew that there would be no escape this time.

The serjeant, who was standing beside Captain Hayle, nodded with a kind of grim satisfaction. "Doubtless they will rebuild the gallows at Calocan now, Senor. You do not remember the old ones on which they hanged Cinicio Dagujob and his friends many years ago, when I first came to this island from Samar. I was only a little boy then, but I can recall how this same Felizardo, who is now in the mountains, fought the ladrones behind old Don José's warehouse, and how the old corporal of the Guardia Civile had to hurry on the hanging of those Felizardo had wounded. Without question, these ladrones here will meet Cinicio in purgatory, somewhere near the big fire." Then he drew his officer to one side and spoke very gravely. "Senor, the Presidente has been trying to get the prisoners. I had to tell the men to load with ball cartridge. That Vagas is a friend of the Presidente's, and if they got them into the gaol there would be an escape to-night."

"I understand," Basil nodded; he realised now that this attack on Igut was only a part of a widespread conspiracy against American rule, and the moment he had seen the prisoners he had decided himself to take them into Manila, and fight the question out there. "I understand, serjeant," he repeated. "They are

to be delivered to no one without my orders. Where is Serjeant Reyes? Tell him to get ten men and take the prisoners into that shed at the back of Ah Lung's store. You and these other men had better go and get some rest now. I will see the Presidente myself."

The Presidente was pacing up and down his room when Basil entered. The Constabulary officer wasted no words. "I hear you have demanded those prisoners, Senor. By what authority do you threaten my men?"

The official stuttered a little. "I—I represent the civil arm, Senor, and these — these ladrones should be lodged in gaol."

Basil laughed in a rather disconcerting fashion. "I, too, represent the Civil Government," he retorted; "and I am going to take those prisoners into Manila. I have heard of escapes from Igut Gaol." His tone suddenly became severe, almost fierce. "Take care, Senor. Be very careful. I am inclined to carry you along with me as a prisoner too. Probably I shall come for you later, unless you can clear yourself meanwhile. And now you will send to the gaol for four sets of irons, and have them delivered, without delay, to Serjeant Reyes, in the shed at the back of Ah Lung's store."

The Presidente gave the order with shivering reluctance; then Basil seated himself at the table, in the official's own chair. "Have you

a return of the dead found this morning? Let me see it." But the moment he set eyes on the document, he tore it across. "You head it 'List of Felizardo's brigands killed by the Town Police, the Scouts, and the Constabulary'!" he stormed. "How dare you! You know as well as I do that they were insurrectos, and nothing whatever to do with Felizardo. As for your Town Police and Scouts——" He laughed scornfully. "And now make me out a proper return and sign it."

When, half an hour later, Captain Hayle took his leave, he left a sad and perspiring Presidente behind him, one who had reached the point of wondering whether it would not be wiser, after all, to retire to Hong Kong. In the end, however, the official decided to stay, mainly because he knew that the next coastguard steamer, that which was expected in during the course of the afternoon, would inevitably have as passengers Basil Hayle and Juan Vagas.

Basil went down to Ah Lung's store and saw his prisoners safely ironed, then ordered from the Chinaman sufficient stores to last his men for three days, and sufficient cigarettes for a month, and after that sent for the old serjeant. "Serjeant," he said, "I am going into Manila, taking Serjeant Reyes and ten men as guard for the prisoners. You will take command of the rest, and start at dawn for the stockade at Silang. Ah Lung will give you supplies

for the journey. Also some cigarettes. Have the 'Assembly' sounded. I want to speak to the men."

Perhaps it was not entirely by accident that they fell in opposite the Bushes' house, though for that the old serjeant was responsible. Mrs Bush, sitting as usual on the balcony, behind the matting blind, could hear every word of his short speech, a little broken when he came to thank them for their loyal devotion of the night before, but ringing out clearly when he expressed his conviction that, during his absence, they would take every order the old serjeant gave as coming direct from himself. Two months previously, when they were just raw tao from Samar, they would have ended by breaking ranks and clustering round him; now there was nothing more than a murmur, which swept along the line, and was infinitely grateful both to him, and to the woman who, unknown to him, was listening from the balcony behind.

This time, there were no Scouts clustering in the gateway of the barracks, making disparaging remarks on "dam' Constabulario." They were all inside, wondering how they would explain matters to the girls of Igut. There was to be a festa, and, of course, a cock-fight on the following day, which meant that many questions, awkward to answer, would be asked.

As Basil dismissed his men, the expected

coastguard steamer came in sight round the point, greatly to his relief. True, she would not go out until the morning, but, once his prisoners were aboard, he knew they would be safe. He waited on the quay until she had come to an anchor, then went off to her, calmly taking the Presidente's own boat, and explained matters to her skipper. Half an hour later the Presidente, watching from his window, saw Juan Vagas and his comrades marched down to the quay, bundled, none too gently, into a boat, and taken aboard the coastguard. He drew his hand across his forehead, and found it damp with a cold sweat. If one of those four, young Pablo for instance, turned informer to save his own neck, how many other necks would be in danger?

After seeing his prisoners aboard, Basil walked back slowly to the Bushes' house. He had to say good-bye to Mrs Bush, and, for all he knew, it might be many months before he saw her again. At the back of his mind there was still that haunting sense of resentment against Fate for allowing Bush to escape. The ethical side of the question, the morality or immorality of it, never occurred to him, as was but natural in a district where the Law of the Bolo was the only code which had any force. He hated the Scout officer because he knew what sort of man he was, and he would have welcomed Bush's death, because he believed it would take a

load of misery and humiliation off Mrs Bush's shoulders; but, in justice to him, it must be said that he had never thought of gaining any personal advantage from the disappearance of the Captain. Mrs Bush had never given him any reason to suppose that she regarded him otherwise than as a chance acquaintance, whom the accidents of life, as represented by the insurrectos, had raised to the level of a friend.

Rather to his surprise, he met Bush himself at the doorway of the house; and, even more to his surprise, the Scout officer treated him with rather sheepish cordiality. "Come in, Hayle," he said. "Glad you called back before you went. I hear you sent your prisoners aboard the coastguard. You're a wise man. The Presidente wanted me to rescue them for him, and I told him to go somewhere hotter. . . . Have a drink? My wife will be down in a few minutes." After he had mixed the cocktails and finished his at a gulp, he seemed to get a fresh grip on his own nerves. "I'm sorry if I was a bit short this morning," he said, "but the thing upset me, the suddenness of it; and I thought at first that you might have sent me warning. Now, I hear that there was no time for anything of that sort. Eighteen hours from Silang, most of it in the darkness! It was a thundering good march." For a moment, the soldier in him—and he had been a soldier of no mean quality—got the upper hand of his

more recently-acquired personality. "I wish I had had the chance, and I wish I had been in the fight." For a space he stared out through the window, then he faced round again. "Look here, Hayle, what are you going to tell them in Manila about me?"

Basil flushed. It was an awkward question, one not to be answered off-hand. Had he believed that Bush's absence was due to anything in the nature of cowardice he would have spared him nothing; but, so far as that point was concerned, he had gauged the man accurately. Sober or drunk, Bush was brave enough. And the real reason was ugly, horribly ugly; moreover, if it came out, it would give the natives just cause for scoffing at the white man, and, what was of infinitely greater importance in his eyes, it would deal a deadly blow to Mrs Bush's pride.

"I shall report what my men did," he said at last, "and say that your Scouts were fully occupied with those who tried to rush the barracks. If they ask me concerning you, I shall merely say I had no time to speak to you until it was over. On the other hand, I want you to make a deal. If I do that for you, you are to say nothing of Felizardo being here."

Captain Bush stared at him with wide-open eyes. "Felizardo! Felizardo here! What do you mean, man?"

"Felizardo was at the lower corner of the plaza this morning. It was he who sent word to me at Silang, his men who cut up the insurrectos as they fled. We've got to thank him, and no one else, that Igut wasn't burned." But Captain Hayle said nothing of Mrs Bush and the promise to Juan Vagas. He himself was going to see to the settling of that score.

Captain Bush mopped his forehead. "Old Felizardo himself here, in Igut!" he repeated; then a thought struck him. "Why didn't he send me warning?" he demanded, with sudden suspicion.

Basil looked out of the window at the Presidente, who was just crossing the plaza. "If you had shown a sign of being prepared, the insurrectos would have become suspicious, and would not have come in. As it was, my fellows never entered into their calculations at all."

The explanation satisfied Bush. "It sounds all right," he began, then he was cut short by the entrance of Mrs Bush.

For a while, they talked on indifferent subjects, then Basil rose to leave. "I think I shall go aboard now," he said—he had arranged for his men to spend the night in the Scout barracks. "I haven't got over my long march yet, and the coastguard is sailing at dawn."

Both Captain Bush and his wife accompanied their guest to the door. "We shall see you again?" Mrs Bush asked.

Basil nodded. "Yes, I am sure to call in here on my way back; and very possibly I shall go through to Silang this route. It is as short as the other way, through Catarman"—a statement which was not strictly true.

Mrs Bush smiled. "So it's only *au revoir*?"

"Yes, only *au revoir*," he answered. . . .

The coastguard steamer entered Manila, flying a signal for the police launch, which presently arrived in a great hurry. Basil went aboard her at once.

"I want to speak to you, Jimmy," he said to the captain, who had been one of his fellow-non-commissioned officers in the Garrison Artillery. When they were in the little cabin, "Is there any special news in Manila?" he demanded.

"A story about a big fight at Igut," the other responded promptly, "or rather a lot of stories. The first was that old Felizardo had burned the place, massacred every one, except the Scout officer's wife, whom he had carried off. Now they say he was beaten, after all. Do you know anything?"

Captain Hayle smiled. "A little. It was my fight," then, in the briefest terms, he outlined the story. "And now," he added, "you had better get ashore ahead of us, and telephone up to have these fellows, Enrique Vagas and the others, watched right away. And tell them to send down a strong guard for my prisoners. I don't want to march through the streets with

every one staring at me; besides, my little chaps are in rags. We'll give you half an hour's start."

It did not take long for the news to travel round Manila. Commissioner Furber heard it by telephone from the police, and was dumbfounded. "Do you think it can be true?" he asked of Senor Guiterrez, his secretary, who had gone deadly pale.

"Shall I go and find out more details? I might go down to the coastguard, and tell Captain Hayle to come up at once," the secretary murmured, and, barely waiting for a reply, he hurried away, though not in the direction of the coastguard quay. He took a carromato, which is the local libel on a cab; but, on looking back, he saw that another carromato was following his. He told the driver to take a sharp turn into the Walled City, and found the other vehicle took the same turn; then, realising that the game was up, he took a very small revolver out of his hip-pocket, and shot himself dead.

Down at the Custom House, Senor Enrique Vagas heard the news, and suddenly discovered that he had left some papers aboard the Hong Kong mail steamer, which was just leaving. He slipped out of a side entrance, of the existence of which the detective, who had just arrived, did not know, got aboard the mail-boat unperceived, and from that point onwards he disappears from

the story. Senor Simeon Talibat, the judge, heard the news, and merely smiled, knowing well that they dare not indict him.

Commissioner Furber was sitting very grim and silent when Basil Hayle was shown in. This was, without exception, the worst blow the Civil Government had received, and in the first outburst of bitterness he felt he would sooner that Igut had been destroyed, so that the blame could have fallen on Felizardo, rather than have had this exposure of the treachery of his Little Brown Brothers. Any sort of concealment was practically impossible now, in view of the suicide of his secretary, of which he had just heard. The whole city had heard of it too, and had put its own construction on it. Consequently, he did not feel kindly towards Captain Basil Hayle, and showed so by his manner. The wonderful forced march from Silang, over the pass to Igut, the sudden, paralysing attack, the relentless justice meted out to the insurrectos, were, he knew, things which would appeal to the mob; but they left him and his colleagues cold. They were contrary to the interests of the Party—and of themselves.

The interview with Basil was a brief one. Basil himself had come intending to say nothing of Felizardo's intervention, feeling certain that, by mentioning it, he would only increase the bitterness against the old chief, and lay himself open to suspicion, which would result in his

removal from the district. He had ample proof that it was the insurrectos who had made the attack—proofs, in the form of certain papers found on the prisoners, which he did not mention to the Commissioner.

"Make out a formal report, and let me have it as soon as possible," the Commissioner said, after Basil had given him an outline of what had occurred.

Basil got up. "And the prisoners?" he asked.

"They will be brought to trial, of course," the other snapped. "I presume you have good evidence."

"We took them red-handed," Basil answered grimly, and prepared to go out.

The Commissioner called him back for a parting shot. "How many did you kill?" he asked.

"We found eighty-one dead out of a hundred."

"It is abominable!" Mr Furber's voice shook with indignation. "You should have taken them prisoners. Probably, most of them were poor misguided peasants, who thought they were serving their country. You must have had a carnival of bloodshed. It is monstrous."

Basil did not trouble whether the door banged behind him or no.

Half the non-official white population of Manila seemed to be out in the street waiting for him—the captain of the coastguard steamer had been talking freely, as had also the Con-

stabulary soldiers—and Mr Commissioner Furber could hear the cheers, even after he had closed the windows of his office. When Clancy of the *Manila Star*, and Johnson of the *Herald*, and Hurd of the *Record*, ran Basil to earth in his hotel, he found that they knew as much, or more, of the story than he did—in fact he begged them to delete certain portions relating to himself; but one point he did ask them to emphasise—that, if successful, the raid would have been ascribed to Felizardo.

"Where did they get the guns?" Clancy asked suddenly. "They say they were all new small-bores."

But Basil would not tell him. "Wait for the trial," was all they could get from him.

When the trial came, however, that point, and a great many others as well, did not come out. Juan Vagas and his comrades were tried as ordinary ladrones. No reference was made to any political conspiracy, and the evidence was merely of a formal nature. It was a matter of common knowledge that tremendous efforts had been made to save the accused at any cost, on account of their family connections; but, though the Commission would have given way gladly enough, it dare not face the storm of indignation which would have been aroused amongst the white population. So, in the end, Juan Vagas and the three ex-majors were condemned to be hanged by the neck

as common highway robbers—which they were not.

Still, the subterfuge did not prevent people from talking; because there were the suicide of Mr Furber's secretary, and the disappearance of Chief Collector Sharler's brother-in-law to be explained; also that matter of the smuggling of the rifles, and one or two other little things. But the Commissioners were true to the Party, and to themselves, all through. The Chief Collector continued collecting and preaching Racial Equality; Senor Simeon Talibat continued judging, and often sentencing, honourable men, some of whom were white; and the only unfortunate thing was that Vagas and his friends had to be hanged. Moreover, it had been hinted unmistakably that they must be hanged publicly, so that all men might be sure of their death.

It was over that execution that Commissioner Furber sought to have his revenge on Captain Basil Hayle for the trouble he had caused. "You brought them in. They are your prisoners. You shall have the hanging of them," he snarled, looking to see the Virginian flush with rage. But therein he was disappointed, not knowing of the score against Juan Vagas.

"Where shall I have them hanged?" Basil asked calmly. "On the Luneta, in front of the band-stand? All Manila could see there."

Again Mr Furber snarled. "Of course not. Take them out to Calocan; and do it very early one morning. I'll leave it all to you, as you seem ready enough to do the job."

Basil Hayle looked him squarely in the face, which was a thing the Commissioner himself never did to a man. "I would hang them, and a dozen more, some insurrectos, some white men who are traitors to their race, if I could," he said very quietly. Then he went to Calocan, and arranged for the building of a new gallows on the site of the old one, opposite what had once been Don José Ramirez's store, and was now the store of Lippmann and Klosky, American citizens.

No man except Basil Hayle and the prison officials knew where the prisoners were spending the night before the execution. As a matter of fact, however, they were on board a large launch, which was moored a mile from the shore, and the party of patriots, who were in ambush on the road, with the idea of rescuing their brethren, merely got wet and cramped as a reward for their devotion. Still, there was a crowd of two or three hundred on the plaza, of whom at least half were wearing bolos.

Basil's total force consisted of his own ten men, with twenty more Manila Constabulary under a lieutenant, and even this reinforcement had been granted to him grudgingly.

"There are the local police," the Commissioner

had said, to which Basil had replied in practical fashion by taking all the rifles away from those police on the night previous to the execution. Still, despite this precaution, matters looked dangerous when they marched the prisoners ashore. They had roped in a space over night, and in that space Basil posted the Constabulary, in front of the new gallows, facing the crowd, and told them to load with ball, so that all men might be warned; but he noticed one, at least, of the Manila men slip in a blank cartridge, which made him feel more uneasy than ever.

"We're in for it, properly," he whispered to the lieutenant; then he went to the two ex-soldiers who had volunteered to act as hangman, the insurrectos having roasted some of their chums to death during the war. "Be as quick as you can," he said. "And if we haven't time to hang them, shoot them. I'll take all responsibility."

He had hardly spoken the words before he caught the flash of a bolo being drawn in the crowd. Vagas was then at the foot of the gallows, and Basil was by his side in a moment, pressing the muzzle of his revolver against his head. "Go up the ladder," he said; then he saw another bolo being drawn, and another, and yet another. The crowd was swaying now. "Steady! steady!" he called to his men. "If they break the ropes or cut them, fire at once."

Those in front, against the ropes, heard his words, and seeing the revolver at Juan Vagas's head, tried to draw back, knowing that they would have been the sufferers from the one volley which the Constabulary could have hoped to get off. But those behind, the mass of the crowd, having no such fears, struggled and fought to get forward, or to force the others forward. There were a hundred drawn bolos now. A few seconds more, and the ropes would have been down, when a boudjon brayed out with startling suddenness from the line of bush which formed the top end of the little plaza, and, as men looked round in astonishment, they saw what seemed to be innumerable white-clad bolomen, jumping up out of the long grass into which they had crawled from the jungle, whilst, in the background, was a little old man on a grey horse.

Twice more the boudjon sounded, and then the word passed from man to man in the crowd. "Felizardo! Felizardo himself! He has sworn they shall be hanged, because of what they had planned to do." Before the third blast had died away, every bolo had been sheathed, and every man was standing still, shivering a little.

Basil Hayle thrust his revolver into his holster again, and came back to his place in front of his men, where he stood very still whilst they did justice on Juan Vagas and his fellows. Then, when it was over, for the second time in his

life, he raised his hand in salute to the little old man on the grey horse, and also for the second time Felizardo lifted his hat. A moment later the bush had swallowed up him and his men.

There were three reporters at the execution, and the copy they handed in rejoiced exceedingly the hearts of their respective editors. But Mr Commissioner Furber and Mr Commissioner Gumpertz and one or two other Commissioners used violent language. "The scoundrel's impertinence must be stopped at once," they said; whilst, in the Walled City, the ex-generals and colonels and majors of the patriot forces gnashed their teeth with fury, and began to evolve new schemes against Felizardo.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW MR COMMISSIONER FURBER MET FELIZARDO

THE night after the hanging of Juan Vagas, the insurrecto, who had tried to raid Igut and carry off Mrs Bush, Basil Hayle dined at the Military Club, where they made much of him, although, as a rule, the Army regarded the Constabulary much as it regarded the Civil Service, as being beneath its notice, which was quite unjust—so far as the Constabulary was concerned.

It was well after midnight when Basil left the Club in the company of old Major John Flint of the Infantry. They were both staying at the same hotel, and their way back led through the narrow streets of the Walled City, and thence across the Bridge of Spain, into the newer part of Manila. They passed one or two native police slouching along, looking what they really were, more like thieves than thief-takers. With the exception of these, however, the streets seemed to be absolutely deserted; consequently, when, from out of a

dark gateway, a couple of natives, or rather mestizos, armed with knives, sprang at Basil and his companion, the white men were taken absolutely unawares.

Basil dodged to one side as his assailant struck, and the knife merely caught him a glancing blow on the ribs, doing little damage; then he himself got a grip on the mestizo's throat, lifted him bodily off the ground with the other hand, and flung him at the man who was attacking Major Flint. The second mestizo staggered, dropped his knife, then took to his heels and fled down the street, right into the arms of a gigantic Sikh watchman from a neighbouring Government building — you can make your Little Brown Brother into a judge of the High Court, but you cannot trust him to guard Government stores—who, hearing shouts, had hurried up. The Sikh did not waste either time or words. He took that mestizo by the collar of his coat with one hand, and by his belt with the other hand, and forthwith dashed his brains out on the pavement, then tossed the body into the middle of the street, and began to wonder how he should purify himself after having touched such an unclean thing.

Basil was binding his handkerchief round an ugly flesh wound in the major's forearm, and keeping his foot on the neck of the other mestizo, when the Sikh came up and saluted.

"I have killed the one, Sahib," the watchman

said. "Shall I——?" he nodded expressively towards the other would-be murderer, who, hearing the words, squirmed.

Basil smiled and shook his head. "I think not, serjeant. But I wish you would look after him whilst we go along the street and see if we can find some of the police. How about the other one?"

The Sikh saluted again. "I caught him trying to break into the Government store-house. He attacked me with a knife, and in the struggle I happened to kill him. So I shall report to-morrow, Sahib. It will save trouble," he added simply.

"Curious dearth of police," Basil remarked to the major as they walked up the street after leaving the Sikh in charge. "It rather looks as if they didn't want to be about. I shouldn't have had much of a show if I had been alone, as I suppose they expected me to be. Hullo! what's that building lighted up? The *Manila Star*, isn't it? We might go in and see Clancy, and get him to telephone for a carromato for you. That hand of yours ought to be seen to at once; and I expect he's got a drink there."

Clancy was just preparing to leave. He had just sent his paper to press—he was his own chief sub-editor—but he went back to his room when he saw his visitors.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, "what's this? You've

got it in the hand, major; and you seem to have got it in the ribs, Hayle," pointing to a wet, dull red patch on Basil's tunic.

Basil looked down in surprise. "I didn't even know the little beast had got through my clothes," he said. "It can only be a scratch. I wish you would telephone to the livery stable for a carromato, and then to the police."

Whilst they were waiting, Basil gave the editor an outline of what had occurred. Clancy groaned. "My luck. If it had been half an hour earlier, it would have been a fine scoop for the paper. 'Vengeance for Vagas'—there's a snorting good headline for you."

They saw the major off to the hospital in the carromato, and then Clancy walked down the street with Basil to the scene of the attack. The Sikh was still on guard, having secured the prisoner with his belt.

"Let's have a look at this chap," Clancy said, but when he had scrutinised the mestizo's features, he shook his head. "I don't know him at all;" then they went over to where the other lay, in the middle of the road, and Clancy gave a low whistle. "This one I do know, though. He is, or rather he was, in the Education Department, one of Dr Charburn's especial pets—in fact, I heard they were going to make him headmaster of some Government school. There'll be a vacancy now, I guess."

A few minutes later the police came along,

three natives, and took over the prisoner with an air of surly indifference to the whole matter. Even the sight of the Constabulary officer's uniform was insufficient to make them outwardly civil and respectful. As they were moving off, Basil caught the word "hangman," and flushed crimson. Then he called them back.

"When I come round to-morrow morning I shall report you for not saluting. Do you hear? I will take no insolence from you. Now get along quick, or there'll be more trouble for you."

Clancy smiled. "You needn't worry to go to the station in the morning. That prisoner will escape."

He proved to be a true prophet. When Basil was shown into the police captain's room, the latter gave him a queer look. "Want me on business, Captain Hayle?" he asked. "Or is this just a friendly social call?"

Basil understood. "Has he got away?"

The police captain nodded and pushed the box of cigars across to his guest. "It never happened. Major Flint had an accident to his hand, and you—well, your ribs don't show. The night captain called up Some One; and he said that, with the Vagas and Guiterrez business, they had had about enough to be going on with for some time; so your friend was let loose, and has probably bought a new knife by now."

"Who was he?" Basil asked.

The captain mentioned the name of a well-

known mestizo planter. "His youngest son, just back from London, where they seem to allow any fool-doctrine to be taught to coloured men. Pity the Sikh didn't finish him too whilst he was about it."

"I'll make sure myself next time," Basil said grimly; "one gets tired of this sort of business. What did they do with the other fellow?"

"That carrion?" The police captain was a man of plain speech. "The night captain proposed to tie a stone to it and drop it over the Bridge of Spain, into the Pasig; but he got orders to discover an accidental death, a fall from an upper window—you understand?—and they're going to have a big funeral to-day, all the Education Department, wreaths, speeches, flourishing career cut short, and so on. Makes you smile, doesn't it?"

Basil Hayle thought of the knife which had glanced along his ribs, and the big gash in the old major's hand, and the Sikh wondering how he could purify himself after having touched such vermin, but most of all he thought of the shame and the danger to his country, and therefore he did not smile.

As he got up to leave, a sudden thought struck him. "Clancy knows," he said. "Clancy was on the spot a few minutes afterwards."

The police captain nodded. "I've just seen him, and, as a favour to the force, he is going

to forget it. But he wouldn't have done so for Furber; no, sir. Awkward sort of an Irishman, unless you handle him right. They'd have deported him long ago, if he had been an American citizen. Well, so-long, Captain. I'd be careful, if I were you, at nights. You might have a worse accident next time."

"I'm leaving for Igut by the coastguard steamer this afternoon," Basil answered.

Commissioner Furber made no reference to the incident of the previous night when Basil called on him to see if there were any further orders, nor did the Captain himself allude to it.

"You will go back to your post at Silang," the Commissioner said, "and police that district, endeavouring to obtain as much information as possible concerning Felizardo. One thing more—remember you are posted on the northern side of the mountains, and there you are to remain. We want no more of these theatrical marches, ending in massacres of deluded peasants. I have had reports from the Presidente and other local officials, as well as from some friends in Manila, which go to prove that Igut was never in any real danger. I might add that the Governor-General is extremely annoyed at your conduct. You know his constant endeavour has been to gain the confidence and good-will of our Little Brown Brothers."

It was one of Mr Commissioner Furber's customs never to look a man in the face; con-

sequently, he missed Basil's expression, though, perhaps, the way in which Basil strode out of the room may have told him something.

Mr Furber sighed. "A most dangerous, insolent Southerner," he murmured. "And yet, whilst he is a hero in Manila it would be unsafe to dismiss him. I could almost wish that those men last night——" He broke off suddenly, conscious that he was lapsing from those strict Methodist principles in which he had been brought up.

Mr Commissioner Gumpertz, on the other hand, had fewer religious scruples, having been in politics much longer than his colleague. "I wish to blazes they had knifed the swine," he said. "He's put a stop to the sale of that hemp land. I can't get any one to go out and have a look at it now. They just shake their heads, and say, 'Head-hunters.'"

Mr William P. Hart, to whom he spoke, expectorated carefully at a lizard on the window-sill. "Furber will give him plenty of chances of getting his throat cut. Furber's a bit pious, but he don't forget all the same, nor does Sharler. This Vagas business has hit 'em hard; and Mrs Sharler, Vagas's sister you know, has a tongue. It's not nice for a Chief Collector of Customs to have his brother-in-law hanged publicly. Did you hear they burned the new gallows at Calocan last night?"

Basil heard the same news as he was going

aboard the coastguard steamer, and laughed grimly. "A bit futile, isn't it?" he remarked to his informant. "They had served their purpose already."

Basil only stayed a few hours at Igut, just long enough to see Mrs Bush, and tell her what had occurred in Manila. She shuddered a little when she heard how he had been ordered to superintend the executions. "How horrible!" she said; "and what an abominable insult to you. I wonder you did not refuse."

He shook his head. "It was meant as an insult, I know; but I was glad to do the job."

"Why?" She looked at him in amazement, and he thought a little coldly. "Why, Captain Hayle? You say you were glad to be a kind of hangman!"

"I did not mean Juan Vagas to escape," he answered. "I had sworn he should die, if I had to go into the prison and shoot him myself." And there was a look on his face which showed her he meant what he was saying.

"But I don't quite understand why you should have been so bitter against him personally. What was the reason?"

Basil was staring out of the window. "I can't explain now; perhaps I will, some day, later on." And with that she had to be content for the moment, though, by dint of questioning her maid, who in turn questioned others in the town, she got some clue to the truth a few

days later, and found much food for thought therein. She began to understand what had kept Basil going through that terrible march from Silang.

Captain Bush came in just before Basil left. The Scout officer was grateful for what the other had not said in his report, and expressed his thanks with what was for him almost heartiness.

"Going to stay to-night?" he added. "We can put you up."

"Sorry it can't be managed," Basil answered. "I brought my ten men back with me, and I want to get across to Silang as soon as I can. No, I must go." He stared out of the window again.

Mrs Bush, watching him, understood what an effort it was costing him to say those words, and honoured him in her heart accordingly.

"I am going to have a try at Felizardo. They are sending Vigne's company of Scouts round to co-operate with mine." Bush's voice recalled Basil suddenly. "We are going to try and show you Constabulary how to do things."

Basil gripped the arm of his chair at the thought which immediately flashed through his mind. "Bush is going up to Felizardo's mountains. Would Bush ever come back?" He, Basil Hayle, knew only too well what the dangers of the expedition would be.

For an instant Basil thought of saying nothing,

of letting the other go to his fate; then he remembered that, though Bush might be a man he loathed, Bush was also, and above all things, an officer in the service of the United States, so he spoke very gravely. "I have been up there, Bush, and I know what it means. Two companies of Scouts are utterly useless for the job. You will be able to do practically nothing, and you'll be lucky if you don't get cut to pieces as soon as you are well into the jungle. It is sheer lunacy sending you up."

Bush flushed crimson. "When I want your advice——" he began, then checked himself. "Thanks for the information," he went on more quietly; "but Scouts are not Constabulary."

Unconsciously, perhaps, Basil glanced towards Mrs Bush. She was leaning forward, with her chin resting on her hand, and he thought he read an appeal in the look she gave him. He got up at once. "No," he said, "Scouts are not Constabulary, so you may have different luck from what I had. I hope so." Bush, ashamed of his outburst, muttered some thanks, but Mrs Bush, pondering over it afterwards, was not quite sure whether he had understood the other man's meaning aright, for had not Basil been up the mountains, and come back, unharmed? . . .

Basil Hayle found the stockade at Silang in perfect order. The five sick men he had left in it when he made the forced march to Igut were all well again, and back at duty. No

one had interfered with them during the days when they had formed the sole garrison; rather otherwise, in fact, for a party of Felizardo's men had actually come down and made a camp a few hundred yards away, thus preventing any possibility of attack from a wandering band of ladrones, or from those abominable head-hunters. For the first few hours, the five had been distinctly alarmed, then some of the outlaws had come forward and explained matters. After that, everything had gone very smoothly. Felizardo's men had plenty of fresh meat, the Constabulary had some especially choice cigarettes; consequently, it was no difficult matter to do a deal. On the second morning, three of the soldiers were actually guests in the outlaws' camp, but a return invitation was declined. The chief had given definite orders on that point. Then, suddenly, there had come the news of the killing at Igut—wonderful, splendid news, which had made the five rejoice greatly one moment, and the next moment gnash their teeth with envy of their comrades who had been in the fight. The fact that they, themselves, must inevitably have fallen out long before the column had reached the head of the pass was entirely forgotten. Half an hour before the serjeant and the other men had returned, a boudjon had sounded a mile or so away, and when, a few minutes later, one of the five had glanced towards the outlaws' camp,

not a trace of Felizardo's men was to be seen. Their special mission was concluded.

From that time onwards, matters had gone very smoothly. Possibly, the serjeant's rule had been a little lax, but, none the less, it had been effective, and, even if the tao of Silang had seen a good deal of the Constabularios, more perhaps than they wanted, guards had been mounted regularly, and every man had slept within the stockade.

The little men were unaffectedly glad to see their officer back, and Basil, on his part, was by no means sorry to settle down again. So much had happened since he had left Silang that the prospect of a rest was not unwelcome, even though it entailed being practically cut off from the outer world, which, to his mind, now meant from Mrs Bush. Unfortunately, however, his contentment did not last very long. Before he had been at Silang a week, he had begun to hunger for news from the other side of the mountain range, especially for news of the Scout expedition against Felizardo, which was due to start about that time. Yet, though he sent messenger after messenger to his brother officer, Lieutenant Stott, at Catarman, he learned nothing definite.

"Vigne's Scouts haven't turned up yet at Igut," was all that Stott could report, whereat Basil had raged, knowing that every day of delay must make disaster more certain. Then

suddenly a messenger had come in from Catarman, bringing news, not only of the starting of the expedition, but also of its return. . . .

Mrs Bush had watched the Scouts march out dry-eyed. The parting between her husband and herself had been unmarked even by the formality of a hand-shake, for she had heard already of another parting which had taken place in the lower end of the town an hour previously, and he had divined that she knew. Still, there had been something almost wistful in the man's eyes, some hint of the lover which had been, and a word, the right word, would have changed everything. She had thought, too, that she was giving him a chance to say it when she pleaded: "Do be careful, John, won't you? Don't do anything rash. Remember how they cut Captain Hayle's force to pieces."

The mistake had lain in mentioning Basil, as she realised immediately. Bush's face had grown dark at once, and he had muttered a curse on the Constabulary in general, and Basil Hayle in particular; then with a curt "Good-bye" he had stalked out into the plaza, where Lieutenant Vigne was awaiting him. Mrs Bush had kept her tears back until they were out of sight, then she had hurried to her room, wondering why people were allowed to be so wretched.

It was a cargadore, one of Bush's carriers, who brought in the first news. He arrived about

noon on the following day, breathless, in rags, with a slight bolo-cut in his shoulder. He was the sole survivor, he declared to old Don Juan Ramirez, who cross-examined him. Was he quite sure of that? They gave him a much-needed glass of spirits and a cigarette, and then asked him again. Was he still sure there were none others? No, now he came to think of it there were some left, a little group, which, with Bush as its rear guard, was retreating down the hillside, fighting all the way, when he himself managed to dive into the jungle. There were many wounded too, very many, and the other officer was dead. He, Pedro, had actually seen his head cut off with a bolo. On that point he was certain.

Don Juan had heard enough. He sighed, put on the black silk jacket he kept for ceremonial occasions, and went to pay one of his rare visits to Mrs Bush, whom he admired as much as he loathed her husband. She came down to meet him, white-faced and trembling, having seen the cargadore arrive. "They are coming back," Don Juan said.

She drew a deep breath. "Ah! And Captain Bush?"

Don José prided himself on his knowledge of womankind, but he could not decide what her tone meant. "Captain Bush is bringing them back. I hear, though, that there are many wounded. I have told them to clear out my

big warehouse to serve as a hospital. Perhaps you would honour me by coming to see to the arrangements?"

She clutched eagerly at the chance of having something to do, and when, just before sundown, the remnant of the column crawled in, with half a dozen badly wounded on rough stretchers, and only fifteen unwounded out of the forty-eight survivors, it found everything ready. The surgeon, who had come up with Lieutenant Vigne, and had himself escaped untouched, forgot half his weariness when he glanced round. "Thank God!" he said. "I was afraid there might be nothing, not even hot water. Do you think you could help me, Mrs Bush? Can you stand the sight of it? Very well." Then he stripped off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and barely said a word till midnight, when he straightened himself up, and after that staggered a little. "That is all, Mrs Bush. Now, could you give me a drink?"

She brought him the bottle and a glass. He poured out nearly half a tumblerful of brandy, and drank it off like water. "You can do that when you've been through Hell, Mrs Bush," he said, noticing her look. "I think I'll have a sleep now," and he rolled his jacket up for a pillow, and put it in one of the corners.

She laid her hand on his sleeve. "But you can't do that, doctor. You must come to the house. I have a room ready for you."

He bent down and kissed her hand, being overwrought. "One of those men will certainly die before dawn, two others are just on the border line. If I am here, I may save them. The orderlies will call me when the crises come."

Mrs Bush went out, returning a couple of minutes later. The doctor was already asleep, so she took a blanket from a pile behind the door, and covered him over very gently; then she went back to the house to look for her husband, whom, so far, she had only seen for a moment—just long enough to make sure that he was unwounded. But Captain Bush was not to be found.

"He went out with the Treasurer and the Supervisor, Senora," a very sleepy muchacho informed her.

Like the doctor, Mrs Bush was deadly tired, and yet it was almost dawn before she went to sleep; this was the final, the most abominable insult of all. Next morning she took a definite step, writing a long letter to Captain Basil Hayle, giving him an account of the expedition as she had heard it from the doctor, in itself a perfectly harmless letter, and yet one the sending of which amounted to a repudiation of her husband's right to control her. He had his friends; she would have hers.

The story of the fight had been the story of Basil's defeat of two or three months previously over again; only, this time, no boudjons had

given warning; and the attack had begun with a volley poured in at twenty yards range by riflemen hidden amongst the undergrowth. The Scouts, winded by the long climb up the muddy hillside, had been able to put up no effective resistance against the bolomen, who came in under cover of the smoke. Those who did escape, leaving some seventy of their comrades, including Lieutenant Vigne, dead in the jungle, owed their safety to the fact that they had been able to keep together in a bunch; but, even then, it had been a running fight all the way back to the level ground, a fight in which Bush had showed a savage, dogged courage, being himself the last man the whole time.

The Philippine Scouts though often, as in this case, loaned to the Civil Government, form part of the United States Army; consequently, it was impossible for the Commission to do as it had done in the case of Basil Hayle's disaster, suppress news of the whole affair. The Army had the best of reasons for despising and detesting the politicians at the Palace, so it was not long before all Manila was in possession of the facts.

Mr Commissioner Furber waxed exceeding wroth, and proceeded to make matters much worse for his colleagues and himself by attempting to blame the Scouts.

"Felizardo has only some fifty followers in all," he declared to a representative of the

leading mestizo paper, which reproduced his remarks. "We have that on the best authority. It seems amazing that the Scouts should have retreated before such a small body, leaving so many dead behind them. The Governor-General is most perturbed about the affair, fearing that people at home may imagine that the culprits are some of our Little Brown Brothers, instead of being a gang of thieves and murderers."

During the following months, expedition after expedition was dispatched against Felizardo, each larger and more costly than the last; yet each came back with a story of hardship and disaster. If Felizardo did allow it to get above the jungle on to the open mountain-side, it was sniped at, every foot of the way, by unseen riflemen, until its nerve was gone, and it decided to return to the cover of the bush, where the bolomen speedily got to work on it. No trace of a permanent camp was ever found, the enemy was never seen, save when he himself had chosen the time and place. It was inglorious, nerve-shattering, futile; and when the last expedition, which had consisted of some four hundred Scouts and Constabulary, returned with twenty men short and nearly fifty wounded, there was a very general feeling that Felizardo should be left alone for the future.

"After all," as the General in command of Manila said to the Governor, "what harm

does the old man do to us? I understand that, from the first, he has only asked to be left alone. I know he hanged some of your Brown Brothers—a good thing too. I wish he had hanged every insurrecto. They all deserved it."

Whereupon, the Governor, who had never been in the war, and knew his Brown Brother only as a useful pawn in a certain political game in the United States, grew angry, and as soon as the plain-spoken General had gone, sent for Mr Commissioner Furber and one or two distinguished officials who had held great positions under the insurrecto Government, and with these he took counsel, and, after much discussion and deliberation, there was evolved a great scheme, which seemed certain to succeed.

"I will go out myself," Mr Furber said, "then I shall know that no chance of escape is being allowed to the old villain."

The scheme, like that of the late Juan Vagas, took a little time to prepare. "We must get some source of information from within," the Commissioner declared, and, with that end in view, he gave two of his mestizo assistants a free hand to buy the help of one, or, if possible, more of Felizardo's men. The first pair of mestizos drew five thousand pesos for a start, then, probably in a fit of mental aberration, wandered aboard the Hong Kong

steamer, and were seen no more in the Philippine Islands. The second pair were more successful; in fact, possibly because they were escorted as far as Igut, the men did their work extremely well. Mr Furber never enquired into the means employed, and no explanation was volunteered. Still, as the reports which came in showed, two of the band had unquestionably turned traitors. The Commissioner was well pleased; it was a good start.

Then, from all parts of the Islands, native troops, Scouts and Constabulary, every man who could be spared from his district, began to come in to Manila, until there were fully three thousand of them ready, if not exactly eager, to start on the great rounding up of the outlaws. Only Basil Hayle and his company seemed to have been left out.

"There is always trouble where that man goes," the Commissioner said to the Governor-General. "We had better let him stay at Silang. He must be pretty weary of the place by now, and he may resign. I hope so," a view with which the other, who had no fondness for soldiers and men of action, agreed.

They made a base camp at Igut, greatly to the astonishment and profit of the people of the place. Mr Commissioner Furber stayed with the Presidente, and was not introduced to Mrs Bush, although he had expressed a desire to meet her.

"Tell him," Mrs Bush said to a mutual acquaintance who mentioned the matter to her, "tell him that if he chooses to stay in a native's house, he can remain with the natives. I have a prejudice in favour of my own colour," words which, when repeated to Mr Furber, tended to confirm his prejudice against women from the South. He, in turn, repeated the words to the Presidente, who thereupon made a remark about Mrs Bush and Captain Hayle which would have caused most white men to throw him out of the window, and would inevitably have made Basil Hayle kill him. But Mr Commissioner Furber, being of the Brown Brother school, listened to it all, and congratulated himself on having got a new weapon against the Constabulary officer.

They distributed a thousand men along the northern side of the range, and a thousand along the southern side, whilst a thousand more went up on to the pass which you crossed going to Silang, and started to sweep the upper heights, whilst the others closed in gradually. They were going to drive the outlaws into that same patch of jungle where Basil had met with defeat, at the seaward end of the range, near Katubig.

Mr Furber himself took up his quarters near the site of the latter place, whither the Presidente of Igut accompanied him, rather reluctantly, feeling, perhaps, that he was going rather too

near to Felizardo's country, though he did not like to say so much to the Commissioner.

It is one thing to order troops to sweep the heights of a mountain range, and then yourself to go down to the coast and wait for results; it is quite another matter for the troops themselves, especially when none of the men happen to be mountaineers by birth. Still, the little fellows did their best, despite the constant loss from snipers, who never save a chance of a shot in reply; and the officers were satisfied that none of the outlaws had slipped through the line.

The men on the northern slope met with no resistance, although, when the roll was called, it was obvious that, somehow or other, the head-hunters had secured twenty-four fresh trophies from stragglers; whilst the party on the south side never even fired a shot.

On the fourth morning, they reported to Mr Furber that they must have driven the outlaws down on to the seaward slope, and that it was now only a case of closing in and capturing, or slaying, the whole band. The message had hardly been delivered when another came in, this time from one of those two traitors in Felizardo's own camp. The band had broken up suddenly the previous night. The outlaws, feeling the game was hopeless, had gone, each his own way, slipping through the cordon of troops in the darkness, singly, and leaving old

Felizardo alone with the two traitors. The three were now hiding in a small patch of jungle, almost on the same spot where Basil had his fight, and, if the troops closed in quickly, they would be certain to get the old chief.

Mr Furber's heart rejoiced, whilst a load of anxiety seemed to slip from the shoulders of the Presidente.

"Let them close in at once," Mr Furber said. "They must lose no time, and when they have him, let them bring him down here, to Katubig. I have had a set of irons brought. As for the two—the two men who have been aiding us"—traitor is an ugly word—"see that they are not injured in the excitement."

The troops moved quickly. They were utterly weary of their task, believing in their own minds that it must prove futile, but the unexpected news passed out by the traitors put fresh heart into them. They were going to capture the great Felizardo, after all; and each man would be able to declare to the girls in his village that it was he who had done the deed. They surrounded that stretch of jungle on every side, and they drew in the cordon until the men were almost touching one another, hand to hand; and yet there was never a sign of life from inside the ring.

A queer nervousness ran through them all, white officers and natives alike. Was he still there, the terrible little old man? Was he

really going to be captured at last, after nearly thirty-six years? What was he doing now? What would he do? What—— And then Felizardo himself answered all the questions.

A grey horse seemed to spring from nowhere, and the look on the face of his rider was like nothing else any of them had ever seen. It was before that look that they cowered, rather than before the revolver in the outstretched hand. The horse went through the line as if no one were there, though one of its hoofs cracked the skull of a serjeant of Constabulary, who was standing, open-mouthed, in its course.

From first to last, it was a matter of seconds, twenty yards of open jungle at the outside, and both the grey and its rider were out of sight before the belated volley rattled harmlessly after them. They passed the word round the cordon, and the white officers sat down and mopped their foreheads, and wondered what Commissioner Furber would say. Then a thought struck one of them. "Where are those two spies of Furber's? I wonder whether——" He did not finish the sentence, but took half a company and went to investigate for himself. After a while, he found them both, hanging from the branch of a tree, with the torn fragments of the banknotes which had been the price of their treason scattered over the ground beneath them.

The officer exchanged glances with his serjeant.

"He has done it, single-handed," he said in an awestruck voice.

The serjeant drew a deep breath. "It is ill work to betray Felizardo, Senor."

Mr Commissioner Furber and the Presidente of Igut were sitting in the cool, nipa-thatched shack which served them as headquarters, waiting for news of the capture of Felizardo, when one of the half-dozen members of the Igut police, who were serving as escort, suddenly tumbled up the little ladder into the shack, and tried to hide himself in a corner. "There are bolomen," he gasped. "They have taken the others prisoners."

The Presidente of Igut sat rigid, apparently glued to his chair, staring through the doorway at a little man on a grey horse, who had just ridden into the clearing, followed by a score of bolomen; but Commissioner Furber stood up to face the danger, like a white man should. It was, in a sense, the supreme moment of his life, and the good blood which was in him proved stronger than the effects of the evil training he had been given.

He had left his revolver hanging on one of the posts of the little veranda, which was fortunate for him; otherwise, he would have started to shoot, and they would have had to kill him.

Felizardo brought his horse right up to the foot of the little ladder, and then he spoke. "You are the Senor Furber? Good! I am Felizardo.

I was told you wished to see me, so I have come. What is it you would say, Senor?"

For the first time for many years, Commissioner Furber was at a loss for words. "I . . . you"—he stammered a little—"you are at war with the Government, and it is my duty to have you captured."

The old man smiled. "But no, Senor. The Americanos make war on me, which is very different. I am the Chief of these mountains. All I wish is to be left alone, as I have said many times."

Greatly to his own surprise, Mr Furber felt a keen desire to argue the point with this outlaw and Enemy of the Sovereign People. "It is impossible," he said. "The whole island must be under our law."

"There is only one law here," the other retorted, "the Law of the Bolo. Will you carry that word back to Manila?" Furber flushed slightly; so his life was to be spared. "You are in my power. Your troops cannot be here for at least an hour, time enough in which to kill many men; but I will let you go, because, after all, I want peace. Will you take my message to your people?" And Mr Furber promised.

Felizardo beckoned to a couple of his men, then turned to the Commissioner again. "There is justice to be done, though, on the Presidente of Igut. He was in league with the band of

Juan Vagas. Read that, Senor," and he handed a letter to the white man, who, after having read it, looked very sternly at the trembling magistrate of Igut. Somehow, Mr Furber's views had changed greatly during the last few minutes. He turned to Felizardo again. "I will deal with him, Senor, on my honour," he said, and for a moment there was a spark of hope in the Presidente's heart.

But Felizardo said: "He is my prisoner, Senor Furber. Besides, it will save time and trouble." Then he nodded to his two men, who dragged the Presidente out of the shack. The shivering wretch caught hold of Furber's leg as he was hauled past, but the Commissioner shook himself free, and went inside, so that he should not see what they were going to do.

It was, as Felizardo had predicted, an hour later when the first of the troops came back. Whilst the men were cutting down the body of the Presidente, the officer in command hurried to the shack, where he found the Commissioner sitting at the table with his head buried in his hands. He looked wearily up as the other came in.

"We have lost him, after all, sir," the officer reported.

He had expected an outburst of wrath, but instead of that the Commissioner said, very quietly: "I know. Felizardo himself has been here to tell me."

## CHAPTER IX

### HOW MR COMMISSIONER GUMPERTZ OFFERED A REWARD

In his stockade at Silang, Basil Hayle waited anxiously for news of the result of the great expedition against Felizardo. As an officer of the Philippines Constabulary, he felt he ought to hope that the band of outlaws would be broken up, and their chief either captured or killed. As a man, he could not disguise from himself the fact that he would be extremely sorry were any ill-luck to befall the old chief, who had proved his friend on so many occasions. The idea of Felizardo being taken and hanged, as Juan Vagas had deservedly been hanged, was absolutely repulsive to him; though on that point he had not much fear, feeling certain that they would never take the outlaw alive.

Basil knew perfectly well that he had been excluded from all participation in the movement purposely, with a view to hurting his pride, by forcing him to remain in a state of inglorious inaction, a few miles from the scene

of hostilities, whilst Constabulary from other parts of the Archipelago were brought in to do the work. But he took the slight philosophically, feeling that, as a matter of fact, he would much sooner not have anything to do with the hunting down of Felizardo, a view in which his men concurred heartily. He knew Bush and his company were going—Mrs Bush had told him so, in the latest of those letters which were now the great interest of his life—but the news did not move him, knowing, as he did, that the chances of any fighting were extremely small.

It was two days after the meeting between Felizardo and Commissioner Furber that Basil heard the result of the expedition. Even then, all he got was a brief note from Lieutenant Stott at Catarman :—

"Felizardo escaped after all, simply laughed at them, and rode down to Furber's camp, where he gave the Commissioner the fright of his life, and hanged your old friend, the Presidente of Igut. That is all I know yet. Will let you have details when they come in. They are sending all the troops back to Manila."

Basil laid the note down with a sigh of relief. He knew now which way his sympathies really lay. After all, life at Silang would have seemed very drab and dreary had the fierce, chivalrous little man up on the mountain-side been killed, or, worse still, captured.

It was from Mrs Bush that he received the

first detailed account of the great drive, and he smiled grimly to himself as he read of the dramatic ending of it all, the sudden dash on horseback through the cordon of troops, the equally sudden appearance at Commissioner Furber's camp, the execution of the Presidente of Igut.

"My husband and his men saw nothing and did nothing, save force their way through jungle and scramble over rocks. They all came back very tired and cross. In fact, every one is tired and cross, and in favour of leaving Felizardo alone for the future. Still, the man who must decide, the Commissioner, says nothing. Somehow, he seems to have changed, and every one is wondering what he said to Felizardo, or what Felizardo said to him; but the only witness, that hateful Presidente, cannot tell us now."

Basil read the letter several times; then sat down and cursed things in general, and Silang in particular, which was extremely illogical. If he had cursed anything, he should have cursed his own folly in falling in love with a married woman, who was far too proud ever to be more than a friend to him; but, as I said before, when men, and women too, live under the shadow of a place like Felizardo's mountain, and have the Law of the Bolo as the background of their lives, they are apt to become illogical, or even rash, and to do things which are never supposed to be done in civilised countries. Basil's conduct was the more foolish, and there-

fore the more indefensible, because he was convinced that, even if Bush were to be eliminated by means of the bolo, he himself would be no better off—worse even, for Mrs Bush would then go back to the States, and he would see her no more. All these things he would have seen and reasoned out, had he been amongst ordinary surroundings; or, at least, he ought to have done so, just as Mrs Bush would have seen the danger, and impropriety even, of writing to a man her husband loathed; but the fact remains that they did these unwise things, and were very miserable in consequence. They could not settle their love affairs as Felizardo had settled his, many years before, with a slash of the bolo. . . .

When Commissioner Furber got back to Manila he set his face hard, expecting to meet with veiled jeers and gibes; but, though men did rejoice over his failure, they did not do so in his presence, possibly because they saw that, for the time at least, he was a broken man. Even his colleagues showed considerable forbearance, saving only Commissioner Gumpertz, who, having discovered that the operations against Felizardo had already cost three million dollars, which might have gone to more deserving objects, such as himself, was mightily annoyed, and went to Mr Furber's office to tell him so.

However, he did not say it all; in fact, he had hardly got into his main argument before

he found it wiser to stop altogether, though, instead of taking his colleague's advice and finishing it outside the door, he hurried back to his own office and vented his spleen on his clerks. None the less, he scored off Commissioner Furber at the meeting of the Commission on the following day.

The Governor-General himself brought up the question of Felizardo. "What do you propose as your next move, Commissioner?" he said to Furber.

The latter did not hesitate. "I have no further move in contemplation," he replied.

Mr Gumpertz leaned forward. "May I ask why?" he enquired with dangerous politeness.

The Commissioner for Constabulary and Trade addressed his answer to the Governor, ignoring the other. "I see no use in further expeditions. They will do no good. We have done our best; but we have been mistaken all along. Felizardo would have done us no harm had we left him alone. He is an old man now, as I have seen for myself. He wishes for peace, and I should grant it to him." He spoke slowly, coldly, decisively, as a man whose mind was made up.

The other Commissioners exchanged glances, and the Governor spoke in an unusually severe tone. "It was your department, Commissioner, which started these expeditions."

Furber nodded. "Yes, my department. I myself take full responsibility for them, though

I have been misled all through by some of our native officials here in Manila. It is to them that I shall give my attention now. I learnt a good many things whilst I was out this time. We have carried our philanthropy too far."

Again the Commissioners exchanged glances. Could this be the same man who had been the one really sincere and pro-native amongst them, at whom they had always laughed amongst themselves, because he thought of his principles and not his pocket? But the Governor-General was growing angry. He, at least, had to stand or fall by the Little Brown Brother theory of Radical Equality.

"Supposing, Commissioner," he said, with a veiled insult in his voice, "supposing the Commission decides not to make peace with this old scoundrel, but to continue operations. It will still be the work of your department to carry those out."

The Commissioner laid his winning card on the table. "My department will carry out no more expeditions of the kind whilst I remain head of it. I should resign first." He spoke very quietly, knowing well that they dare not force his resignation, and so allow him to return to the United States, and tell many things to the President, whose personal friend he was, or, more terrible still, tell them to the Press.

But though he could refuse to send out further

expeditions—and he knew well that the Army authorities would refuse too—he could not open peace negotiations without the consent of the Commission, and that question was adjourned indefinitely.

Commissioner Gumpertz tried one parting shot. "What about the three million dollars your 'mistake' has cost?" he demanded.

His colleague's composure remained unruffled. "They are spent," he answered.

The Governor-General corrected him mildly. "Wasted, you mean, perhaps?"

Furber smiled. "I thank you, Governor. They have been wasted, I should have said; and also many good lives. But"—and for once he looked them all squarely in the face, with flashing eyes—"I am not the only man here who has made mistakes, and wasted money and lives. And"—his glance travelled from the Governor to Commissioner Gumpertz, and from Commissioner Gumpertz to Commissioner Johnson, and on to Commissioner George—"I have never been accused of graft;" then, regardless of etiquette, he got up abruptly and left the room.

"I am afraid his nerves have been a little tried by his recent experiences." The Governor-General sighed. "He must see a doctor. And now has any one a proposition to make regarding this Felizardo?"

Commissioner Gumpertz had been building

great hopes on the capture of Felizardo, arguing that, once the band of outlaws was destroyed, the destruction of the head-hunters, who had so nearly secured a trophy at the expense of Mr Joseph Gobbitt, would become a simple matter. Then, those hemp lands on the northern side of Felizardo's mountains would acquire a commercial value, which meant that he himself would rake in a very considerable sum over the selling of them. Consequently, he was very greatly opposed to the principle of leaving Felizardo alone. "There is a way," he said, in answer to the Governor-General's question. "We should offer a large reward for the old brigand's head, say five thousand dollars, gold. We know that Commissioner Furber's department managed to bribe two of the band to give information; and a big reward like this should soon bring in the scoundrel's head. It is far cheaper than expeditions."

They discussed the matter, not at very great length, and the result of their discussions was seen the following morning, when bills were posted in Manila itself offering five thousand dollars, United States currency, for the head of Felizardo, the outlaw of the mountains; and other copies of that proclamation were sent to Igut, and Catarman, and Silang, though at the latter place they went straight on to the fire.

The Army, seeing the bills, shook its head. "It's properly low down," it said—"a pitiful

confession of weakness. As if there wasn't enough treachery already, without making it into a profitable trade!"

Commissioner Furber, interviewed by the Press on the subject, declined to make any statement. "I have nothing to say," he answered to the enquiries. "The proclamation does not emanate from my department. . . . No, I have no opinion to offer."

The change in the Commissioner's views had, perhaps, been too sudden to last long. The shock of the meeting with Felizardo, the contact with a personality infinitely stronger than his own, the striking contrast between the old outlaw and the servile, lying mestizos of Manila, could not fail to leave some permanent result behind, some readjustment of his ideas on the native question; whilst the discovery of how he had been deceived and misled as to Felizardo's character and the strength of his band, with the consequent waste of money and lives, was always a very bitter memory to him, as the mestizos found to their cost. On the other hand, the public saw little outward signs of change; he was too deeply, and it must be said, sincerely, committed to the Party and its policy, to make any open renunciations, and it was only in the higher official circles, and in the councils of the insurrecto leaders, that they realised how great an effect the interview with Felizardo had produced on Commissioner Furber. Basil Hayle,

however, perceived it on the occasion of his next interview with his official chief, and wrote of it to Mrs Bush, who replied :—

"I knew when he came back from Katubig that time, after he had met the old chief, that he was a different man."

Weeks passed without any news of Felizardo ; and the Commission was beginning to fear that its offer for his head had been made in vain, when, in some mysterious way, rumours began to float round concerning the breaking-up of the band. The old man had grown so suspicious, it was said, that the others would stand him no longer, and now he was practically alone. The hopes of his enemies rose high at the news, which was confirmed a few days later by the announcement that overtures for pardon had actually been made by the mutineers.

"It is the beginning of the end," Commissioner Gumpertz said to his secretary, William P. Hart. "When Felizardo is finished with, we can get the head-hunters cleared out, and then sell that hemp land. It'll be easy as falling off a log then."

It was a week after these words were spoken that two natives, ordinary tao by their appearance, came in with a large native basket, made their way to the Police headquarters, and asked for the captain.

"Well, what is it?" the latter demanded.

The elder of the strangers pointed to the

basket. "We have brought the head, Senor, the head of Felizardo."

"Holy Moses!" The captain jumped out of his chair. "What do you bring the beastly thing in here for? Never mind, though. Wait a minute," and he went to the telephone-box, where he rang up Commissioner Furber.

The answer came back in a curt tone. "The matter is nothing to do with this department. I will not interfere, nor must you. Send them with a guide over to Commissioner Gumpertz' office. I believe he has the affair in hand."

The police captain whistled. "Phew! He's in a sweet temper. Glad I didn't go and see him myself;" then he called a native constable, and put the two tao and their ghastly burden in his charge.

Mr Gumpertz was pleased—in fact he was more than pleased, delighted; but, none the less, he did not care to inspect the trophy. Instead, he sent for his secretary.

"Who can identify this thing, Hart?" he asked.

Mr Hart scratched his head. "Well, there's Furber, of course, but I guess he wouldn't. He's mighty sore about it all. See here, I'll get De Vega to have a look round. There must be some one in the town who knew him by sight."

It was curious how many people there were who had actually seen, and even spoken to, Felizardo; some had been prisoners in his camp,

others had done business with him during the Spanish times. Senor de Vega picked six out of twenty or so, all men he knew personally, for whose honour he could vouch, and brought them back to the Palace. Then they took the basket into a small room, and set the head on a table, and all of those six reliable witnesses declared on their oath that it was the head of Felizardo. So there was great rejoicing, and the Press published obituary notices, and the two tao received much praise, and five thousand dollars in United States currency. Yet, curiously enough, those two tao did not go back to the unnamed village whence they had come; but instead made their way to a house in the suburbs, where, that same evening, they were joined by Senor de Vega and all the six witnesses, and the five thousand dollars were forthwith divided into nine parts. Then each man went on his way rejoicing, his pockets bulging with notes.

Up in the Palace, however, Commissioner Furber was almost unsafe to approach, though both the Governor-General and Commissioner Gumpertz were more than usually genial. A week later the position of affairs was somewhat different, for Basil Hayle had sent in a certain dispatch through Lieutenant Stott at Catarman. It ran:—

"The report of Felizardo's death as having occurred some ten days ago is untrue. I have the best of reasons

for knowing, as, only this morning, I received a communication from him, warning me that certain mestizos and natives of Manila had secured the head of a cousin of his own, who had recently died at Calocan, and that they were bringing this in with the idea of claiming the reward for his, Felizardo's, head. I am sending this by special runner to Catarman, and trust it will reach you in time."

When the secretary came in a few minutes later in answer to his chief's bell, he found the Commissioner actually smiling. "Make copies of this letter, Jones," he said—he had finished with mestizo secretaries—"and send one to each member of the Commission."

At the next meeting of the Commission, the Governor-General brought up the subject. "It was rather an unfortunate proposal of yours, Commissioner Gumpertz. It is a pity that when you made it, you did not think of a contingency like this. We left it to you, as you will remember. Most unfortunate, throwing good money after bad; and, though we know, or think we know, the culprits, we should all look foolish if we were to prosecute. It is obvious we can accomplish nothing in this way; and though I do not think we should go as far as Commissioner Furber suggests, and make peace with Felizardo, I think that, for the time being at least, it would be wiser to suspend all operations, and only attack him if he leaves the mountains."

And so, for a space, Felizardo was left alone.

## CHAPTER X

### HOW FELIZARDO WENT BACK TO SAN POLYCARPIO

One of the results of the new policy towards Felizardo was a decision to abandon the post at Silang, which, never of any great value, had now become quite useless.

"You will take over the command at Calocan," Commissioner Furber wrote to Captain Hayle. "The officer who is there now is going to the Island of Leyte, and you will replace him. There are good quarters in what used to be the barracks of the Guardia Civile. You had better march overland, as we cannot spare a coastguard steamer at the moment."

Basil received the news joyfully. He was utterly weary of doing nothing, and seeing nobody, at Silang; moreover, at Calocan he would at least be in touch with Igut, where Mrs Bush was; whilst, most important of all, the route overland to Calocan lay through Igut. His men also were pleased. There were stores and spirit shops at Calocan, institutions conspicuous by their absence at Silang, whilst some

of the company, at least, had already made an impression on the local inhabitants of the new station, when they had acted as guard during the hanging of Juan Vagas and his fellow-insurrectos, loading with ball cartridge to keep the swaying crowd in order. They would be able to swagger through the streets, and attract the attention of all the prettiest girls, especially if, as seemed likely, their captain succeeded in getting new uniforms issued to them.

"We had better burn the stockade, Senor," the old serjeant said, when he was told of the forthcoming move. "If we leave it, who knows but that some ladrone band may use it as head-quarters, and then it will be no easy task to retake it." So they collected brushwood and grass and piled it high against the walls, and when the last man had left, Basil himself set fire to it, greatly to the disgust of some of the young men of Silang village, who had already decided to make the place into a robbers' castle.

Up on Felizardo's mountains they saw the smoke, and reported the fact to the old chief, who nodded and said: "I am glad. Silang was no place for a brave man like that. Down at Calocan, which I know well, he may find work to do. There are insurrectos in the town itself, and ladrones in the bush, the two working hand in hand. Possibly, he may build up the gallows again, for the third time. Who knows? There are many in Calocan who need hanging, even

as it used to be thirty-six years ago, when I worked in the warehouse of Don José Ramirez. The old corporal of the Guardia Civile kept order well in those days, and I think this young captain of the Constabulario will keep order too. They need a strong man. There should always be a gallows at Calocan, as I, Felizardo, have reason to know."

Basil halted for the night at Igut, staying with Don Juan Ramirez, but he did not have a meal in Mrs Bush's house, nor did she ask him to stay for one, Captain Bush himself being away at San Francisco, higher up the valley. Still, they had a long talk, sitting out on the balcony, where all men might see them.

"I am glad you wrote," he said suddenly. "I wanted to do so myself often, but, somehow, I was afraid to begin. What made you do it?"

She looked away towards Felizardo's mountains. "I had news for you," she said in a low voice, "the news of what had happened up on the mountain-side, where my husband and Lieutenant Vigne went after the outlaws."

For a while neither of them spoke. Then "They are the only letters I get," he said abruptly. "There is no one else, there never was any one else, and there never will be."

Mrs Bush did not look round. It was the first time he had given any hint of his feelings, at least in words, and she dare not let him see her face, distrusting herself. When at last

she did speak it was of her husband. "I am sorry John is away," she said; "you might have liked to hear his account of the great and inglorious expedition against Felizardo. . . . And so you are going to Calocan. It will not be so dull there as at Silang. You will be much nearer Manila. Calocan—was not that where they executed those insurrectos who tried to burn this town? Yes, I thought so. You were going to tell me one day why you were so bitter against that man Vagas."

Basil muttered something inaudible, and got up suddenly, whereupon Mrs Bush, feeling she had already punished him sufficiently for his outburst, for which she was partially responsible, made him sit down again, and from that point onwards they avoided dangerous subjects. Only, when he got back to Don Juan's, the old Spaniard's quick eyes saw that there was something wrong, and knowing much concerning Captain Bush, was sorry for Mrs Bush and Basil Hayle. Still, as he said to himself, it was a good thing that the Constabulary officer was not quartered in Igut itself, for any man with eyes in his head could see that, perhaps unknown to himself, Basil Hayle had become a convert to the code of the Bolo, and that, sooner or later, he would kill Captain Bush. His very quietness was in itself a dangerous sign; or at least old Don Juan, who knew most things connected with such matters, looked on it in that light.

Basil saw Mrs Bush once more, early on the following morning. He had drawn his men up in the plaza, and was about to start, when he caught sight of her in the doorway of her house. He told the old serjeant to march the company off down the Calocan road, then himself went across the square to say farewell.

"Is it *au revoir* again?" he asked.

Mrs Bush nodded. "Of course. It is always *au revoir*—with you."

"Will you send to me if anything happens? I can get over in a few hours by boat," he said suddenly.

Mrs Bush tried to smile. "What should happen? And yet," her eyes grew suspiciously soft, "you came once before, when I had not sent, on the morning of the great fight in the plaza here, and saved us all."

Basil flushed. "So you will send?" he persisted.

She held out her hand. "Yes, I will send —if necessary."

Then he hurried after his men, and in due course marched them into Calocan, where he took possession of the old barracks of the Guardia Civile, in which the Spanish corporal had lived for many years. The people of Calocan had hewn down and burned the new gallows, which he had caused to be erected a few months before; and when he made his first tour of inspection round the town, the men

shambled away, cursing under their breath, whilst some of the women shouted "Hangman." But Basil did not trouble, remembering who it was he had hanged—Juan Vagas, whose share of the plunder of Igut was to have been Mrs Bush. His men, on the other hand, did not take matters so quietly, and there were many bruised heads and sore backs in Calocan before an understanding was reached.

Before Basil had been at Calocan a week, the old Spanish priest died, and there came to replace him a young American, Father Doyle. As the latter was the only other white man in the place—unless one included, as no sane man would do, Messrs Lippman & Klosky, who now occupied old Don José's premises, opposite the site of the gallows—there presently sprang up a great friendship between the Constabulary officer and the padre, and, although they were of different creeds, the priest soon learnt of the great secret, or rather the great sorrow, in the other's life, and, being broad-minded, sympathised with him deeply, which, possibly, like Basil's infatuation itself, was most wrong and improper.

Father Doyle had been in Calocan a couple of months when the chance of his lifetime came. Probably most men, nine out of ten perhaps, have one great chance, sooner or later; and yet it is doubtful whether one in ten realises when that chance has come, and whether one in a hundred profits by it to the full. Some are so

amazed that they rush off to discuss it with their friends, or stay at home and ponder over it, until the psychological moment has passed; others are too dull, or too heart-broken, to understand that it has come at all, having often got beyond the stage when hope is a living thing; whilst yet others are suddenly filled with a blind self-confidence which ruins everything.

Father Doyle's chance came in the form of a message from Felizardo, brought to Calocan by no less a person than old Don Juan Ramirez, the nephew of that Don José Ramirez whose junior clerk Felizardo had once been. Dolores Lasara was dying, and Felizardo wanted a priest —a white priest, not a mestizo like the padre at Igut, or like Father Pablo, whom Felizardo himself had slain in the house of the Teniente of San Polycarpio.

Don Juan found Father Doyle in the old barracks, dining with Basil Hayle, and delivered his message at once, adding: "I have a launch waiting to take you as far as Katubig. A Scotchman, John Mackay, a hemp-planter, will be waiting there to go up with us."

Father Doyle, who had risen from his seat, looked from Don Juan to Basil Hayle, a question in his eyes. "But this Felizardo——" he began.

"The old chief's word can be trusted. He will not harm you," Basil said, and then was sorry he had spoken, for that was not the question at all.

"I was not thinking of that. It never occurred to me," the priest answered simply. "I was thinking that this man had killed a priest, and was outside the Church."

Don Juan, understanding the momentary confusion in the other's mind, laid a hand on his arm. "Dolores Lasara never killed a priest, Father," he said, "and it is Dolores who is dying."

Ten minutes later the launch was on its way to Katubig. Basil went down to the beach to see them off. He was longing to ask Don Juan about Mrs Bush; but, somehow, he could not get the words out, and the old Spaniard, being fully occupied with the matter in hand, forgot to mention the Scout officer's wife; although he had intended to tell the Constabulary officer how, on hearing that Dolores Lasara was at the point of death, Mrs Bush had volunteered herself to go up to the mountains and nurse her, knowing, as she did, of the great love there had been between Felizardo and the daughter of the Teniente of San Polycarpio. But if Don Juan did not tell Basil Hayle then, he told Felizardo himself later, and the old chief did not forget, as he proved afterwards.

At Katubig, which was now being rebuilt, they found John Mackay, who had been Mr Joseph Gobbitt's companion in the adventure of the head-hunters. Also, they found half a dozen of Felizardo's men and three horses.

"It is not far," the leader of the outlaws said. "If the Reverend Father and the other Senors do not mind travelling in the dark, we shall be there in two hours. The road is easy enough for horses—when one knows it."

So they rode into the darkness, up the mountain-side by an easy trail, the existence of which no man would have suspected, and at last they came to Felizardo's own dwelling, a large cave with an entrance screened by great boulders. Inside, a number of rooms were partitioned off, and in the largest of these Dolores Lasara lay dying.

Felizardo himself met them outside, looking as an old man does look when the greatest sorrow of his life is coming upon him; but his eyes brightened when he saw the priest. "I thank you, my friends," he said to Don Juan and John Mackay. Then he saluted the priest. "You are an American, Father?" he asked.

Father Doyle nodded. "I am an American, yes; but first I am a priest of the Holy Church."

"I am glad"—the old man spoke almost dreamily—"I am glad, because the Americans are a strong people, who will rule these Islands well in the end, when they have learnt——" Then suddenly he pulled himself together. "I have sent for you to marry me, Father," he said.

Don Juan and John Mackay exchanged looks

of utter surprise; but the priest kept his composure.

"How can I?" he said. "You are at war with the Holy Church. How can I give you absolution after you have killed a priest?" His voice was very low, and full of pity and a bitter sorrow.

Felizardo's tone also was low when he answered: "I will confess, Father, and when you have heard all you will give me absolution. I swore, when I slew Father Pablo, that I would never have aught to do with priests again; but now it is for the sake of Dolores, and that alters everything." For the first time since he had taken to the hills, Felizardo's voice broke a little; then, after a pause, he went on proudly, almost defiantly: "But first I will ask some questions of these Senors, who, as you know, would not lie, even though I, Felizardo the outlaw, might do so."

Father Doyle sat down on one of the boulders, and rested his chin on his hand. He, at least, was amongst those who know when a great chance has come, and he listened with almost breathless anxiety for the questions and the answers. He was a judge of men, as a priest should be, and he realised that, as Felizardo had said, neither the Scotchman nor the Spaniard would lie. Curiously enough, the fact that they were in the outlaw's own camp, with probably hundreds of bolomen within call, struck none

of them. They never gave a thought to the idea of treachery on the part of Felizardo.

"What happened in Calocan, Señor, the night I left there? You were young then, very young, but perhaps you remember." Felizardo looked at Don Juan as he spoke, and the old Spaniard in turn looked towards the priest when he replied.

"You fought the ladrones, Cinicio Dagujob's band, fought them single-handed, and saved the life and the money of my uncle, Don José Ramirez."

"And when I slew Father Pablo, the priest of San Polycarpio, whom did I slay also?" There was a note of fierceness in the old man's voice now.

The answer came at once, spoken slowly and deliberately, so that each word should tell. "You slew a man who, besides being a priest, was also one of the leaders of the band of Cinicio Dagujob, the ladrone, who sought to put shame on Dolores Lasara."

"And since I have been on the hills have I ever harmed the tao? Even in the first years did I not only levy tribute on those who were oppressing the people?"

Don Juan nodded. "That is so;" and John Mackay nodded too.

Father Doyle rose. "It is enough," he said; and he went into the cave with Felizardo, and, having heard his confession, gave him absolution,

being a man who, having no other interest in life save the service of his Master, was not afraid of what other men might say concerning him. So, at last, after thirty-six years, Dolores Lasara was married to Felizardo by Father Doyle, the American priest, in the presence of old Don Juan Ramirez the Spaniard, and John Mackay the Scotchman. Then the two latter went outside, and sat by a fire in the open, and waited for dawn, when Father Doyle came out and told them that the gentle, faithful soul of the wife of Felizardo had gone to its own place.

Presently Felizardo came out also, looking a very old man for his years, and saw to their wants with a grave courtesy, making no mention of his loss until he had arranged everything for them; then, "I shall bury my wife at San Polycarpio, where she was born," he said very quietly.

Don Juan gave an exclamation of surprise, foreseeing the difficulties, but Father Doyle nodded sympathetically, whilst John Mackay rose from his seat at once. "Then I had better see Basil Hayle," he said. "Calocan is but a mile or two by water from San Polycarpio."

"And how about the Scouts at Igut?" Don Juan's voice was full of anxiety. "If they heard and made an attack, what would happen then? Why not tell Captain Bush also?"

Felizardo shook his head. "They will not hear. We shall pass Igut in the night; and

even if they did attack — well, there will be bolomen, though I want peace above all things, if only for this journey. You say, 'Tell Captain Bush,' Senor. No, he is not like the Captain of the Constabulary. He could not understand, treating his own wife as he does. I know, Senor, even about that."

So no word went down to Igut concerning the death of Dolores and Felizardo's intention of burying her in her own birthplace, San Polycarpio; but John Mackay hastened to Calocan, and saw Basil Hayle, to whom he told the whole matter.

Basil stroked his moustache thoughtfully. "I shall be there myself," he said at last, "and I will take those of my men who escaped from the fight on the hillside, when Felizardo cut my company to pieces. They will go, not as guard to me, but as a guard of honour to the body of Felizardo's wife."

John Mackay looked at him curiously. Somehow, he had never suspected Captain Hayle of being sentimental, but at that time he had heard nothing concerning the friendship between Mrs Bush and his host; otherwise, he would have known that any man who honoured his own wife was Basil Hayle's friend, just as Captain Bush was his enemy.

It was late in the afternoon when they started down the mountain-side with the body of Dolores, and it was already dark when they skirted round

Igut town. There were nearly a hundred bolomen in the procession when it left the mountains, and ten more joined it from Katubig, and twenty from Igut itself, greatly to the surprise of old Don Juan, who recognised two of his own warehousemen amongst them. The Spaniard was going through to San Polycarpio, because Felizardo was an old acquaintance, almost an old friend, because Felizardo and Dolores Lasara had, somehow, always been in the background of his life, and because now he felt that a definite factor had gone out of his life. He sighed heavily as he thought of it. Like Felizardo, he was growing old. It was time he went back to Spain. He had one advantage over the outlaw, he told himself, in that he had no wife whose death would make the rest of his existence a mere waiting for death, in the hope of reunion. Then suddenly it struck him that, after all, Felizardo was more fortunate, for he had a child, whilst Don Juan Ramirez of Igut was the last of the family. All those things the Spaniard thought of, as he rode by Father Doyle's side through the long night.

Father Doyle went with the procession because it was his duty. It was therefore a matter of total indifference to him whether or no the Government learnt of his action and showed its annoyance. He was not responsible to the Philippine Commission for what he did in his capacity as priest. He owed allegiance to a

very different Power. As for his actions of the previous night, his mind was at rest on that point. He had acted according to his own conscience, and he told himself with a sigh that if he could have given absolution to the Commissioners themselves with as little hesitation as he had given it to Felizardo the outlaw, it would have been a good augury for the future of the Islands.

It was three o'clock in the morning when they reached San Polycarpio. Felizardo drew a deep breath, possibly to choke back a sob, as he looked round in the moonlight. He had not been there for thirty-six years, not since he had fled to the bush, carrying Dolores Lasara in his arms, after having slain Father Pablo, the parish priest and ladrone. It still looked the same. It had been just such another moonlight night on that occasion. There seemed to be no new buildings; no more bush had been cleared. The village was sleeping as it had slept that night, whilst he was doing the deed which was to make him an outlaw. Nothing had changed in San Polycarpio—only he was an old man, and Dolores his wife was dead. That was all.

They had brought spades and pickaxes to dig a grave, but when they arrived at the burial-ground, lo, there was one ready, on a rise, under a big tree, with its foot towards Felizardo's own mountains, behind which the sun would rise.

A tall man and a short, stout priest were standing near the grave, whilst in the background were some fifteen native soldiers, who saluted as the body went by.

Felizardo dismounted and came forward. The priest began to tremble, having heard of what had happened to a certain predecessor of his when Felizardo was last in San Polycarpio; but Basil Hayle held out his hand, and he and the outlaw actually met at last, yet, even now, there was no word spoken, though they walked side by side to the church.

Then Basil fell behind and whispered to Father Doyle: "I made the parish priest come out—he was half-dead with fear—because I was not sure if you would be here."

Father Doyle nodded. "It was his duty in any case. This is his parish, not mine."

So they buried Dolores, the wife of Felizardo, in the graveyard of San Polycarpio, with her face towards the mountains where her womanhood had been passed. Dawn was just breaking when they had finished, and then they all drew back, and left the old chief kneeling beside the grave, where he remained until the first ray of sunlight came from behind the mountains and struck the newly-turned earth, when he got up and came towards them, and they saw that there was a look of peace on his face.

Then he shook hands with Father Doyle and

with Don Juan and with Basil Hayle, and disappeared with his men into the bush, taking a circuitous route back to the mountains, which was fortunate, for Captain Bush, having heard a rumour of his going to San Polycarpio, and being still sore over his own defeat, had arranged an ambush for him, of which Felizardo heard in due course, and did not forget.

## CHAPTER XI

### HOW THE BOLO OF FELIZARDO CUT A KNOT

MANY things which happen in the jungle can be kept secret; but a matter like the burying of Dolores in the graveyard of San Polycarpio must become known. They heard of it in Manila the following day, from native sources, and the Press made out of it a great story, which was also perfectly inaccurate, as is usually the case when the information comes through mestizos, people to whom truth is a thing either hateful or unknown.

Felizardo had descended on San Polycarpio with the whole of his band; he had slain the local police, and confined the inhabitants to their houses; had taken the parish priest from his bed, and compelled him, at the point of the bolo, to read the Burial Service; then he had hanged the Teniente of San Polycarpio over the grave, and after that had departed, swearing to return and burn the village itself, if any one dared to interfere with the body

of his wife — such was the gist of the first account circulated round Manila.

The insurrecto party, which had sorrowed greatly over the suspension of operations against Felizardo, and over Commissioner Furber's new attitude of suspicion, held a special meeting to discuss the situation, seeing a chance of forcing on a fresh campaign against the Chief of the Mountains, who was such a deadly enemy of the Sovereign People. It was even suggested that the Teniente of San Polycarpio should actually be hanged, in order to give an air of reality to the whole story. Unfortunately, however, the ex-general of the Army of Liberty, who made the proposal, forgot, or did not know, that the man sitting opposite to him happened to be a brother to that same Teniente. They got the knife away from the Teniente's brother before any serious harm was done; but, none the less, the meeting broke up in disorder, without having arrived at any definite decision.

The *Herald* and the *Record* seized on the story eagerly. Copy was short that day, and this news seemed to offer such splendid opportunities in the way of headlines; but Clancy of the *Star* was suspicious, and would not use it without confirmation. "Get a launch and go across to Calocan," he said to his most reliable reporter. "You may induce Basil Hayle to talk. He is sure to know all about it, in fact there's a rumour that he himself was at the

burial. If he won't tell you anything, which is very probable, go on to San Polycarpio itself, and see the priest. I would sooner have the right story to-morrow than use any of this rubbish to-day."

The news caused a good deal of commotion in official circles. The Governor-General looked worried, thinking of the hopeless state into which the finances had got—as was inevitable, considering the class of man which the Party was sending out — and wondering whether it would now be necessary to resume those ruinously expensive expeditions against the outlaws, in which case some of the officials would have to be content with their bare salaries, as there would be nothing else left to divide; and that, of course, would mean trouble, and complaints to the Party managers. Already, Commissioner Gumpertz was showing a nasty spirit, as was also Commissioner Johnson, and it had been necessary to give them, or rather their nominees, a contract for a long and utterly useless road to the hills, in order to keep them quiet. Moreover, as that road had to be paid for by loan, the Press had got early information of it, and had said some things concerning the contract which were very unpleasant, because perfectly true. Now, if, as was rumoured, Felizardo was actually out on the warpath himself, there would be fresh expenses, fresh anxieties about money matters.

Commissioner Gumpertz, on the other hand, having nothing to do with the finances, except as regarded the share of them which he himself got, was by no means displeased to hear of Felizardo's supposed raid. He had never given up hope of being able ultimately to sell that hemp land on the northern side of the outlaw's mountains; and if he could revive the campaign against the old chief, he felt certain in his own mind that this time it would be carried through to the end, even though the President had to order the Army to assist. Incidentally, too, the reopening of hostilities would be deadly to the prestige of Commissioner Furber, and might possibly lead to his resignation, in which case Mr Gumpertz was in hopes that the vacant post would be filled by a certain ex-partner of his own, a most admirable arrangement. As a result of these views, the Commissioner of Lands and Registration was very ready to be interviewed by the Press on the subject of Felizardo's latest exploit, and expressed his opinions most forcibly. He had always been opposed to the new policy of leaving this brigand alone, he said; and this outrage at San Polycarpio went to prove that he had been right. It would be necessary now to resume operations on a larger scale than ever. The Regular Army would have to be called upon to provide troops, its chiefs being shown plainly that they were, after all, merely the servants of the State, and that it

was not for them to say whether they would, or would not, assist the Civil Government. The Commission must be supreme. No individual member of it must be allowed to dictate to his colleagues, and no murderer and outlaw, like Felizardo, must be allowed to remain in a state of insolent independence. The present state of affairs was an insult to the Flag, a violation of all the great principles for which the Party stood.

True, the *Herald* headed its report of the interview, "Commissioner on the High Horse," "Gumpertz gets on the Great Gee-Gee," and thereby spoilt a good deal of the effect; but still the Commissioner for Lands and Registration had the satisfaction of knowing that he had got in the first blows both at his own colleague and at Felizardo. Lower down on the same page the *Herald* announced that Mr Furber declined to be interviewed. "The Commissioner looked cross," it stated, for once telling the crude truth; but it did not dare to reproduce the remarks which a certain highly-placed Army officer had made to its reporter concerning Mr Gumpertz and his views.

Still, enough was published that day to set all Manila talking, and when, on the following morning, a launch came in from Igut, bringing Captain Bush's report of the affair, the sensation was even greater; for Bush, having conveniently forgotten the good turn Basil Hayle had once

done him in suppressing all mention of his absence from the great fight in the plaza of Igut, now told the story of how the Constabulary officer had been present at the burial of Dolores, actually assisting Felizardo, instead of endeavouring to arrest him. It was a venomous, damning report, full of the jealousy which the man who had been a soldier felt of the man who would always be a soldier, and, more important than that, of the jealousy which the man who had made Mrs Bush's life utterly miserable felt of the man who could have made her happy. True, some of the details given in the first rumours, such as the hanging of the Teniente and the holding up of the village, were not mentioned in the Scout officer's version; but these omissions were hardly noticed in view of the intensely interesting character of the rest.

"They will certainly give Hayle the sack, even if they do not bring him to trial," was the general opinion of Manila men who, in most cases, added their conviction that Captain Bush was a low-down cur, for, despite Basil's reticence, it had long since leaked out unofficially that the Scout officer had been missing on the occasion of the insurrecto attack, and had only appeared after the killing was finished. Moreover, they knew his character pretty well in Manila, and did not admire it greatly.

Bush himself had acted deliberately in the matter. He intended to ruin Basil Hayle's

career if possible, and the report had been the result of the joint efforts of the Supervisor, the school teacher, and himself. Its compilation had entailed the consumption of a good deal of spirits, but when it had been finished, and sent down to the skipper of the waiting launch, they all felt pleased with themselves, for the Supervisor and the school teacher hated the man who had saved their lives from Juan Vagas and his band almost as bitterly as did the Scout officer, remembering what he had once said concerning white men and mestizos. And then the school teacher said, jerking his head in the direction of the lower end of the town: "Shall we go and tell them? They'll be mighty pleased to hear it."

But Bush got up, a little unsteadily, perhaps. "No; that'll do by and by. I'm going to tell my wife first;" which seemed to the others such a good idea that they laughed immoderately, and insisted that he should have another drink first.

"You'll need it, old man," the Supervisor said; and the Treasurer, who came in at that moment, and had the matter explained to him, agreed.

Mrs Bush listened to her husband in absolute silence, in fact so still did she sit that he finished lamely, almost apologetically: "It was my duty to report it," he said.

Then her anger blazed out, and he cowered before it. "Oh, you coward! Your duty!

Did he feel it his duty to report you when he saved the town you were supposed to be defending, when he saved your wife's honour at the hands of those brown fiends? Did he go into Manila and tell where you had been that night, and why you were the last man on the scene? To think I should have married you, when there are so many real men in the world! Oh, go away, and never dare to speak to me again. Go to the friends who are worthy of you—and to the woman you have put in my place, the coloured woman."

Possibly, for the first time, Bush realised something of the deadly insult he had put on his wife, for he tried to defend himself in a guilty man's way, with a counter-charge.

"You are in love with Hayle. That's what makes you so mad," he growled.

She turned on him in superb scorn. "And if I am, have you any right to complain? Have you any right to speak to a white woman—you cur!" And then, in his rage, he struck her twice on the mouth. She staggered back and sank into a chair, whilst he went out, with an attempt at a swagger, forgetting that the natives in the plaza — there were three sitting in the shade of the belfry — could have seen all that had occurred on the balcony.

When he rejoined his friends in the spirit shop, they noticed that he was flushed and his hand was a little shaky. "I told her, and she

didn't like it," he said briefly. The school teacher sniggered, whereupon Bush turned on him savagely. "Confound you, what are you laughing at?"

The others exchanged glances, and hastened to start some entirely fresh topic of conversation. Obviously, Bush had one of his bad fits coming on, and they knew by experience how nasty he could be. More than once, they had feared that he was going to quarrel with them finally, which might have resulted in his making peace with his wife, in which case many privileges they now enjoyed would have been curtailed, if not actually withdrawn. So they endeavoured to smooth him down, and after a while succeeded in their aim.

Mrs Bush did not cry, at least not at first. Instead, she went to her room, and, after dabbing a little blood off her mouth, examined her lip to see how badly it was cut, doing it all very quietly, as though she were dazed. Then she sat down to think it out, right from the beginning.

In a way, she blamed herself. She had known when she married John Bush that the curse of drink was in his family; but she had been very young then; she had believed she loved him; and believed, too, that she could keep him straight. But she had found out her mistake as soon as she rejoined him in Manila after the war. He was a marked man even then, in

the Service, as the old General had told her very gently; and, what was even worse, find-himself shunned by his brother-officers, he had got into the hands of the baser class of civil officials, who had not the slightest compunction about separating him from his wife when it suited their ends to do so.

Mrs Bush had always made excuses for him to herself, so long as it was only a case of that miserable hereditary tendency. She would get him back to the States before long, and then she would be able to reassert her influence over him; but when, through the introduction of the school teacher, the other woman came on the scene, there, in Igut itself, practically under her own eyes, she realised that any further efforts of hers would be useless; the end of their married life had come; although, until he came to boast to her that he had ruined Basil Hayle's career, no mention of that other woman had passed her lips. Even now, she was sorry she had demeaned herself by having spoken as she had done. Probably, he would glory in the knowledge of how sorely he had wounded her pride.

As for the blows on her mouth, they seemed, somehow, to be matters of secondary consideration; in fact, when she came to think of them, she was almost glad he had struck her. Relations between them were now on a definite basis, the most definite basis of all, for no

reconciliation was possible. There would be no more need to keep up appearances, to meet him, if not as a husband or lover, at least on terms of politeness. That stage had been passed, as she told herself with a sigh of relief.

But when she thought of her own future movements the prospect was far less satisfactory. She could see no way out of her difficulties. She had not even the money to take her back to the United States; and even if, as was probable, the General were to grant her free transportation, she had no relatives who would give her a home. Two aunts and half a dozen cousins were the only members of her family she knew, and with these she had never been on good terms. She had very few acquaintances in Manila, having been in the city but a few weeks; in fact, the only friend she had, the only real friend, was Basil Hayle, and to him she could not appeal, even though, in her own mind, she was certain that his chivalry would prevent him from thinking any evil. It was because she loved him, because she was not sure of herself, that she could not ask him for aid.

She had promised to write to him "if necessary," and now, when a crisis which neither of them had foreseen had come, she could not keep her promise.

There was one thing she could do, however, one thing she must do—write and warn him

concerning her husband's report. She glanced out towards the harbour. The launch had already gone, but the sea was like a mill-pond, and it would not take a canoe long to reach Calocan.

She sat down and wrote hurriedly, in a tone very different from that of her ordinary letters to Basil, for she was hot at the thought of how her husband was repaying the other man's services. The result was that, quite unconsciously, she betrayed her feelings to the man she loved, and showed him that the breach between her husband and herself was now wider than ever, so wide that it could never be crossed. But she did not say a word of his coming to Igut, nor hint at the terrible problem of her future which now had to be faced.

Still, none the less, Basil understood, and cursed the fate which made it impossible for him to offer assistance, at any rate at the moment. He was by no means a poor man, even though he might be serving as an officer in the Philippines Constabulary, and he had but scant regard for most conventions. On the other hand, he had the very greatest regard for Mrs Bush's feelings, and he realised, instinctively, that an offer from him might seem almost an insult, a suggestion that she should put herself under his protection. When he could see her it would be different, but that was also an impossibility for the time being,

especially as he felt certain he would be summoned to Manila to explain the part he had played in the cemetery at San Polycarpio.

For the greater part of the night, Basil sat, smoking innumerable cigarettes, and conceiving, and then rejecting, innumerable plans. In the end he wrote two letters, one to Mrs Bush and one to old Don Juan Ramirez. The former was the most difficult he had ever attempted; he wanted to say so much, and dared to say so little, the result being that, as in her case, he unconsciously told everything, which was, of course, extremely wrong, and must be attributed to the influence of the Law of the Bolo.

To Don Juan he also told a great deal, this time with intention, and, perhaps for that very reason, did not tell it well; although, as he had foreseen, the old Spaniard knew most of it already, and was deeply touched by the confidence. Basil wanted to learn exactly how matters stood, what had occurred recently, how Mrs Bush looked, where Bush spent his time and took his meals—a whole host of questions, which caused Don Juan to knit his brows, and to wonder how many he dare answer.

"If I tell him the whole truth, he will certainly come and kill the Scout officer, which would be very foolish." The Spaniard sighed —he had heard what those natives who were sitting in the shadow of the belfry had seen occur on the balcony — "So I will tell him

part, and leave the rest to fate. Who knows? Matters may adjust themselves."

So he wrote discreetly, making the best of things, and after he had sent the letter, called on Mrs Bush and tried to comfort her, speaking as one who was almost old enough to be her grandfather, and was also a gentleman of Spain, could speak; but when he came to mention Basil Hayle he realised that this was a matter in which words were not of much avail, for, possibly, again, because of that most demoralising Law of the Bolo, Mrs Bush was losing all sense of the sanctity of conventions. Still, the visit was not a waste of time, for, when he took his leave, she knew that she had yet another very sincere friend, one who was always close at hand.

Don Juan's letter followed Basil to Manila, whither he had been summoned to give an explanation of his doings on the night Felizardo buried his wife. Basil smiled grimly as he opened the envelope. He had been expecting something of the kind from the outset, and he was quite ready to face the trouble. When Father Doyle came in later that evening, Basil tossed the paper across to him. "What do you think of that, Father?" he asked.

The priest's face grew grave. "I am sorry. It may be unpleasant for you. And you need not have gone. I was there because it was my duty; but you——'

Basil cut him short. "It was my duty, too.

But for Felizardo, I do not suppose I should be here now. They would have killed me that day we hanged Juan Vagas, and — and there were other things as well."

"Perhaps you are right. It does not follow that because you seem indiscreet you are wrong," Father Doyle answered, speaking slowly. "They say, too, that I was indiscreet—and unpatriotic."

The other looked up quickly. "Who says so? The Church?"

Father Doyle shook his head. "No—the Church understands, of course. But Commissioner Gumpertz says I was wrong," and he smiled, possibly because he was thinking that the censure of the Head of the Department of Lands and Registration was but a small matter when one had the approval of the Church, as Mr Gumpertz himself presently found to his cost, when, on his own authority, he made a statement to the Press that the Commission would take steps against Father Doyle.

The following afternoon Basil called on Commissioner Furber, expecting a stormy interview, but found himself mistaken. The Commissioner was cold and severely official in manner, though, as the visitor was quick to note, there was none of that personal hostility which had marked their former meetings.

"I sent for you at the request of the Commission," Mr Furber said. "This is not a departmental matter, or, rather, they will not

have it treated as one. Therefore, I can say nothing about it yet. Possibly, they may call you before them, or they may communicate with you by letter at your hotel."

Basil got up to take his leave, but, as he reached the door, the Commissioner called him back. "Captain Hayle," he said a little haltingly. "We have not agreed too well in the past; and I will admit that in some things I have been wrong, or unjust. But this is not my doing. I, also, have met Felizardo, and —and I understand why you went to San Polycarpio that night."

In the end, they did not summon Basil before the Commission, for what seemed to them a good and sufficient reason. Clancy of the *Star* had cabled the story of the funeral at San Polycarpio to a certain great newspaper in New York, and the editor of that paper had decided forthwith to make Captain Hayle the hero of the hour. Consequently, as even Commissioner Gumpertz had to acknowledge, it would have been a most injudicious thing to take any steps against the Constabulary officer; in fact, before the matter had come up again for discussion, there had arrived peremptory cables from Washington ordering them to leave Basil Hayle alone, not because Washington admired the conduct of the latter, but because, as ever, Washington's main consideration was the question of the votes it might lose at the next election.

Still, Basil was not allowed to go scot-free. The Governor-General and Commissioner Gumpertz saw to that; the former because he was galled at the interference from Washington; the latter because it was Captain Hayle who had rescued Mr Joseph Gobbitt, and so allowed possible buyers to know that there were head-hunters living on that most desirable tract of hemp land to the north of Felizardo's mountains. Had Mr Gobbitt's head been permitted to hang from the ridge pole of a shack, beside that of Albert Dunk, no one in Manila would have known his fate, and the succession of would-be purchasers, willing to deposit five or six thousand dollars each, might have remained unbroken, greatly to the profit both of himself and of the head-hunters.

The result of the feeling against Basil was that he could not obtain permission to return to his post. Day after day went by, and still he was detained on futile excuses, until he began to realise that they did not intend him to go back to duty at Calocan. Moreover, there had been no further word out of Igut, either from Mrs Bush or from Don Juan, and the silence was driving him mad. At last, in sheer despair, he called on Commissioner Furber. That official looked at him curiously.

"You don't know why they dropped all idea of open proceedings against you?" he asked. "Well, it is because they have made a hero of

you in the States," and the flicker of a smile crossed his face. "It wouldn't have been wise, you see. As regards the future, I may as well tell you plainly. You are a marked man, and your chances in the Service are *nil*. I have done what I can for you, because I believe I owe you some reparation; but I must not strain things too far; in the end, that would benefit neither of us. I may tell you that if you remain in the Service you will be sent to one of the outlying islands, and that, I believe"—he spoke meaningly—"would not suit you. Moreover, one is apt to meet with accidents in those places, as perhaps one of my colleagues, Mr Gumpertz, could tell you. Speaking unofficially—in fact you must regard all this as unofficial—I should advise you to resign. It would be wiser—and safer."

Basil drummed on the table with his fingers. At last, "Yes," he said slowly, "I think you are right. Can I do it now? I suppose it will be to you that I hand my resignation?"

So Captain Hayle resigned, and his resignation was accepted immediately, and then he went back with his successor to hand over the Government property in his charge, and to bid farewell to his plucky little men, who had fought under him on Felizardo's mountain, followed him in the forced march over the pass, carried out the great killing in the plaza at Igut, and stood firm when the mob at Calocan threatened to

rescue Juan Vagas from the gallows. He had to do those two things, and after doing them he would be a free man again, free to go to Igut if he wished, or rather if he thought it wise so to do, for his wish was always to be there.

It was not an easy thing to say good-bye to his men, after all. Like so many of their kind, they had come to regard themselves as being in his personal service; the State was a thing of which they knew nothing, towards which they felt no kind of loyalty; consequently, his departure filled them with absolute consternation; and though his successor was as lax and easy-going as the most tired Filipino could wish an officer to be, half his company was missing before the end of a fortnight, greatly to his disgust. But when he reported the fact to Commissioner Furber, the latter took it very quietly. "They were Hayle's men," he said. "And, from the first, I was doubtful whether they would stay with any one else. He was a man of rather an uncommon type;" then, as if thinking he had said too much, he went on curtly. "Let them go. Don't worry to fetch them back, so long as they've taken no carbines. I will send you some recruits to take their places."

Basil Hayle did not actually break down after he had bidden farewell to his men, but he went so near to it that he would not trust

himself to accept his successor's offer, and stay the night in the barracks.

"No," he said. "I've got through with it now, and it will only reopen the sore if I stay here. I will go across to Father Doyle's."

The new officer, who had never got down to crude things, such as the fight on Felizardo's mountain, or the march over the pass, looked at him in astonishment.

"I should have thought you would have been glad enough to be clear of the outfit. I know if I could afford to resign I should go to-morrow. There's not much pleasure or glory in commanding a company of savages, who will probably bolt at the first shot and leave you to be boloed."

Basil shrugged his shoulders, and then crossed the plaza to Father Doyle's house, where he took off his uniform for the last time, presently coming down in civilian clothes.

"It's over now," he said briefly, as he selected a cigar from his host's box.

Father Doyle nodded. "When I first met you I knew it must come to this before long. There was never room for you in the Service. What are you going to do now?"

Basil stared out across the bay towards Felizardo's mountains. "I am not quite sure yet," he answered slowly. "But I think—I think I shall go to Igut first."

The priest had been expecting that answer,

and had given much thought to the question of how Basil's going was to be prevented. He had conceived several good schemes for delaying him; but now that it had come to the point, none of them seemed likely to be of the slightest avail. It was not an easy matter in which to interfere, especially as Basil, though perhaps his closest friend, was not one of his flock. So finally he said nothing about it, trusting that by the morning something might occur to make his intervention possible.

"I should like to see Felizardo again," Basil went on: "It is curious how he and I have come into one another's lives," and then, suddenly, he began to tell the other man the whole story, beginning with the fight on the slope of the volcano, when he surprised the outpost and captured Felizardo's daughter, and carrying it down to the time when Father Doyle himself came into it; only, he omitted all mention of Mrs Bush, though he did not gloss over the ways of Bush himself; and both what he left out, and what he said, made the priest more than ever anxious to stop him from going to Igut.

The sun was just setting when he finished, and a dozen or so tao passed the house on their way up from the beach; then, following them, came two strange natives, one of whom was carrying a heavy basket. A moment later, "They are coming here. They look

as if they wanted you, Hayle," the priest said.

They came on to the veranda of the house, took off their hats, then the elder of them presented a letter to Basil. "From the Senor Felizardo," he said.

Basil opened it, wondering; then, as he read, the wonder changed to utter astonishment, for it ran :—

"The Senor Felizardo sends his compliments to the Captain of the Constabulary, who, as he hears, will no longer be his foe in the field, but can now be his friend in all things. That is good. But he hears with grief that the Captain will be leaving the Islands; and that is bad. Therefore, Felizardo hastens to pay his debts. Once, many months ago, the Captain returned to him his daughter, whom, next to his wife, he loved best of all things in this world; and Felizardo promised then to repay the good deed. Now he sends, in this basket, the thing the Captain most desires to have."

Captain Hayle handed the note to the priest, then he turned to the messengers. "Open the basket," he said.

But they shook their heads. "Not here on the balcony, where the tao can see. It should be taken inside the house, Senor."

They set it on a table, and then they withdrew, whilst Basil was undoing the cords, which held down the lid. First he came on a layer of leaves, which he threw on the floor, then he raised a white linen cloth, and sprang back with a cry of horror; for there, livid and

ghastly, was the head of John Bush, late of the Philippine Scouts. A few minutes later, when he went to look for the messengers, they were gone, although he could see a canoe with two men in it being paddled in leisurely fashion across the bay.

Basil took the ghastly trophy to an outhouse, thinking as he went, "The head-hunters would treasure this," for there was not a spark of pity in his mind, even though he had yet to hear of those two blows which Mrs Bush had received on the mouth; then he went back to the veranda where Father Doyle was waiting.

"It served him right," he said curtly; and, after a pause, he added: "I was going to kill him myself. Felizardo says the only law that counts is the Law of the Bolo, and he is right."

Father Doyle did not reply, having no answer ready, and knowing, in his own heart, that what had happened was for the best.

"I must go to Igut," Basil spoke suddenly; and now the priest nodded in approval.

"Yes, you should go first thing in the morning. She will need you."

But that was not Basil's meaning. "I shall go to-night," he said. "And if the tao will not take me across in a canoe some of my men—some of my old company, I mean—will do it."

The tao refused, fearing the dark, and not

loving him on account of the hanging of Juan Vagas; but when, after obtaining the permission of his successor, he asked for four men to paddle and one to steer, every member of the company stepped forward to volunteer. He selected the old serjeant, and four of those who had been with him on the mountain-side when Felizardo's bolomen killed three quarters of his force; and they started out through the night to paddle to Igut.

After a while, he turned to the serjeant, who was steering. "The Captain of the Scouts at Igut has been killed," he said.

The serjeant nodded. "I know, Senor. I heard the news an hour ago. I was expecting it," he added calmly.

Basil looked at him in astonishment. "You were expecting it? Why?"

The little man smiled meaningly. "Just after they buried the wife of Felizardo, over there in San Polycarpio, Captain Bush struck his wife twice on the mouth. They were on the balcony, and down in the plaza, sitting in the shadow of the belfry, were three of Felizardo's men, who saw it all. Hearing that, and knowing how Felizardo had loved his own wife, Dolores—did he not take to the hills for her sake?—I knew that Captain Bush must die by the bolo."

Basil clenched his hands. So he had struck her, in the sight of natives, too! And she had

never given him a hint of it, nor had Don Juan Ramirez. Then, very reverently, he thanked God that he had not known; for, had he heard of it before, he would assuredly have shot Captain Bush like a dog; and that, as he realised now, would have made matters infinitely worse.

The night seemed very beautiful as they paddled across the bay. Just before they came to the entrance of Igut harbour, the moon rose from behind Felizardo's mountains, and Basil found himself wondering how he could ever have regarded the range as a place of horror and death, in which you set foot at the risk of your life. Surely all that must have been an evil dream.

Igut was asleep when he landed there, and no light was showing in Mrs Bush's house; but old Don Juan was still sitting up. "I thought you might come," the Spaniard said. "Two men, who landed a couple of hours ago, said they had seen you, and you had heard the news."

But Basil wanted to hear one thing first. "How is she?" he demanded.

"They say she is better now, although the shock was great. It was I who had to break the news to her. . . . They killed him down at the lower end of the town, outside the mestizo's house. We suppose it was the head-hunters, for we never found the head."

"I have the head, at Calocan," Basil said and told him of Felizardo's letter.

Before they went to bed that night, they had arranged the matter. Amongst white men, Basil and Father Doyle and Don Juan Ramirez alone knew the truth, and there was no reason why any one else, save perhaps Mrs Bush, need know. So, officially, Captain Bush met his end at the hands of a stray party of head-hunters whilst going his rounds; and they granted a pension to the widow, which, afterwards, she refused to take.

Mrs Bush rose with a cry of glad surprise when they told her Basil was downstairs; and she hurried into the room with hands outstretched. "Oh! I was praying you would come when you heard of it," she said. "I should have gone mad with no one to speak to."

He bent down and kissed her hands. "My Lady," he said.

And then they understood one another at last, because the bar to their understanding, that which would have made it a sin before, had been removed, in accordance with the Law of the Bolo.

## CHAPTER XII

### HOW FELIZARDO MADE PEACE

It was six months after Mrs Bush had become Mrs Basil Hayle that a new Governor-General arrived in Manila. Much had happened since the day when the High Gods at Washington had ordered the Commission not to prosecute Captain Hayle for the part he had taken in the funeral at San Polycarpio. There had been scandals and rumours of scandals, especially in connection with that contract for a road to the hills which had been granted to the nominees of Commissioners Gumpertz and Johnson; and though no less than three editors had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, apparently for having discovered the truth, the stories had quickly found their way to the United States, where it is not so easy to arrange for the sentence on a journalist before you even issue the warrant for his arrest. Moreover, not only was the annual deficit in the revenue increasing, but fresh insurrections had broken out in two of the

southern islands, whilst the sedition amongst the mestizos in Manila was now apparent to all men.

As a consequence, Washington came to the conclusion that a change was imperative, unless votes were to be lost in the States at the next election; so the old Governor-General went home, rich in dollars if not in honour; and a new Governor-General, who thought little of dollars and much of honour, came out to take his place, greatly to the satisfaction of the non-official white population, and greatly to the grief of Commissioner Gumpertz, who had not yet succeeded in selling that hemp land on the northern side of Felizardo's mountains. In fact, so deeply was he pained, so apprehensive of the way in which true patriots would be treated under the new *régime*, that he sent a very strong remonstrance to the Party managers, who, sympathising with him, found him a post as one of the auditors of the National Finance, an appointment for which his gifts and previous training rendered him admirably suited.

Chief Collector Sharler also left the Custom House at the same time, having come into a large property from his father. Incidentally, he obtained a divorce from his mestiza wife, not because he had changed his opinions on the subject of Racial Equality, but because he had changed his opinion concerning her, and did not want to take her and her relations back with

him to the United States. Mrs Sharler herself acquiesced in the arrangement readily, having another husband in view, so all was for the best. Unlike his predecessor, the new Chief-Collector had no theories or obsessions; only, he had a predilection in favour of men of his own colour; consequently, all the mestizo assistant collectors retired into private life and became converts to the insurrecto policy; whilst, as was but right, the spoils of office went to certain faithful, if somewhat obscure, persons, who had served the party well in the States. Yet, though such a great clearance was made, the importers remained dissatisfied, and that ugly word "graft" continued to be amongst those most frequently on their lips—which goes to show that some people are confirmed grumblers.

Commissioner Furber, on the other hand, retained his office rather to the regret of the new Governor-General, who did not like him personally; but, though the Commissioner was fully aware of this feeling, the fact did not weigh with him in the least degree. There were certain things he had determined to do before he quitted office; and, with the obstinacy of a narrow-minded man, he did not intend to be turned from his purpose.

One of these things was the settlement of the Felizardo question. If any one else had proved, or attempted to prove, to him that his first policy had been wrong, Mr Furber would

probably have set his face and continued on the same lines, or would have declined to have anything more to do with the matter. As it was, however, it was he himself who had made the discovery of his own mistakes, and he was sincerely anxious to set these right; consequently, as soon as the new Governor-General had settled down to his work, Commissioner Furber laid the whole question before him.

"We have had no fighting now for nearly a year," he said, "and I see no reason why there should be any more. We wasted a great deal of money and a good many lives over it, without injuring Felizardo in the least—in fact he gained both recruits and rifles—and I am anxious it should not happen again."

The Governor-General looked at him keenly. "I have been going into the matter, and I find that it was you yourself who advised these expeditions."

If he expected excuses from the Commissioner, he was mistaken in his man. "That is so," Mr Furber answered curtly. "It was my doing. I was entirely wrong in my policy."

The other man regarded him with a degree of respect he had never shown before. "I see. And what do you propose to do now? What do you wish me to do?"

"I want to make a formal peace with Felizardo. He is an old man, and he is averse to any

further trouble. If we arrange matters now, during his lifetime, the band will break up in the natural course of events, as soon as its military character has gone; but so long as we let the present state of affairs continue, keeping them always on the defensive, they must be a danger."

"Who would go out to the mountains and treat with these people?" the Governor-General asked.

The answer came promptly. "I would, if necessary."

The Governor shook his head. "It would be dangerous," he said.

The Commissioner flushed. "I am not afraid," he answered coldly.

The other hastened to explain. "I was thinking of the possibility of his holding you as a hostage, and demanding all sorts of concessions. No, Commissioner," he spoke decisively, "I will not consent to that, though I appreciate your offer. Is there any one else you can suggest?"

"There is Captain Hayle. He knows Felizardo well, and would go willingly. We can trust to his discretion." Mr Furber's opinion of Basil had changed considerably.

"Where is he?" the Governor asked. "In the States?" He looked dubious. "That means a great deal of expense. Would no one else do?"

"It would be cheaper than another expedition," the Commissioner retorted.

And so, that very day, the Philippine Commission sent a long cable to the ex-officer of Constabulary whom it had once forced to resign his commission because he had gone to the funeral of Dolores, the wife of Felizardo, asking him to return and arrange terms of peace with the outlaws in the mountains.

As soon as Basil had read the cable he went in search of his wife. "Shall I go, dearest?" he asked.

She smiled as she saw the eager look on his face. "'Shall we go?' you mean. Of course. I think we owe something to Felizardo."

The next mail steamer took them to Manila, where Basil had a long interview with the Governor-General and Commissioner Furber; and then he and his wife went by launch to Katubig, avoiding Igut because of its evil memories.

They found Katubig rebuilt, and found also the same old Teniente who had once sent the Constabulary off on a futile errand. Now, however, he received Basil as if no such event had ever occurred; and when he heard of what the business in hand was, he promised to send word to the old chief, with the result that, on the second morning, Felizardo himself came in.

"I am glad," the outlaw said. "There have been many letters between the Commissioner

and myself; but I said always that it must be you who came to arrange matters, because of the respect there is between us. So he promised," which was news to Basil, and would have been news to the Governor-General.

It did not take them long to come to terms, each side being ready for a lasting peace. Practically, it came to a general amnesty for the whole band, and an undertaking on both sides to cease from all acts of hostility, though, as Felizardo said concerning the latter clause, "I could fight no more now, because, once the whole country is open to them, all my young men will go. It is dull work on the mountains to-day, with no fighting, no outpost duty; and there are few young women amongst us. There will remain only the old men, who, like myself, are waiting for death."

They offered to give him the title of Governor of the mountains, but he shook his head. "What difference would it make? I shall be the Chief still until I die. Then they can make a Governor if they wish it."

On the question of laws, he would not give way, as Basil had foreseen. "No," he said. "The Law of the Bolo has served here for many years; and that, too, can remain in force till I die. After all, what do we, old men, want with laws?"

So they signed the treaty, which, unlike most of its kind, was destined to be kept; and then

it came to a question of bidding farewell, which, for Basil at least, was very hard—harder even than when he had parted from his men at Calocan, for he knew he would never see Felizardo again. They shook hands in silence, with the grip of strong men, and Felizardo kissed the hand of Mrs Hayle. Then he turned once again to Basil, saying:

"May she always be as dear to you, Senor, as Dolores Lasara, for whose sake I took to the hills, and whom I hope to rejoin very soon, was to me." And after that they saw Felizardo no more.

THE END.

PRINTED AT
THE EDINBURGH PRESS,
9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET.

# BOOKS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD

**The Modern Mother**

A Guide to Girlhood, Motherhood, and Infancy. By Dr H. Laing Gordon. Fully Illustrated. Demy 8vo. 6s. net.

**Woman: In Girlhood, Wifehood, Motherhood**

Her Responsibilities and her Duties at all periods of life. By Dr Solis Cohen. 10s. 6d. net.

**Modern Medicine for the Home**

By Ernest Walker, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (London). Cloth, 1s. 6d. net.

**The Complete Bridge Player**

By Edwyn Anthony ("Cut Cavendish"). 320 pages. With Chapter on Misery Bridge. 2s. 6d. net.

**My Motor Log Book**

A Handy Record for recording dates, runs, time, distances, weather, roads, entertaining, etc. Crown 8vo. Cloth, 2s. 6d.; velvet calf, 5s. net.

**Cookery Up-to-Date**

A Practical Handbook of what to eat and how to cook it. By May Little (First Class Diploma). 2s. 6d. net.

**Etiquette Up-to-Date**

By Lucy H. Armstrong. 2s. 6d. net.

**Gardens: Past and Present**

By K. L. Davidson. Fully Illustrated in colour and tone. 6s. net.

**Every Man His Own Financier**

A practical handbook on all matters concerning money. 6s. net.

---

WERNER LAURIE, CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

***NOTE.*—This is a New Story, not a reprint from a more expensive edition**

# THE DOUBLE LIFE

## By GASTON LEROUX

---

*Author of*

**"The Mystery of the Yellow Room**

**(23rd Edition)**

This novel, which is a new story and not a reprint from a more expensive edition, is even more thrilling than "The Mystery of the Yellow Room" (now in its 23rd edition). The author has great imagination and power of vivid expression. The chief character in the book is Cartouche, a murderer in the time of the French Revolution, reincarnated in a modern Frenchman, who, coming by chance upon the cell in which Cartouche had once been imprisoned, is suddenly filled with the same sanguinary impulses. His adventures and crimes are most vividly described.

***PRICE SIXPENCE***

---

WERNER LAURIE, CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

# THE ETERNAL FIRES

## By VICTORIA CROSS

### 6s.

VICTORIA CROSS has hit upon a very original idea for this book, and incidentally she shows in it to what heights a true and loving woman nowadays may rise. It is the story of a beautiful and entirely unsophisticated girl, who thrust forth from a very sheltered life, is forced, in her poverty, to earn her living as an artist's model. A certain event which had occurred while she was still at school occupies her thoughts and she is quite unconscious of the violent passions she is arousing by her frank intercourse with those she meets in the free and easy intimacy of studio life. Shocks naturally await her, and two of the men she had regarded as real friends prove utterly selfish, while a third attempts her life. Whether she can win through or not is the problem always facing the reader, for only the highest courage can avail in some of the situations into which her innocence leads her, particularly that with which the book ends.

This novel shows the author's talent in quite a new light, and from it those who have eyes to see may learn more than one lesson most essential in the present day.

---

WERNER LAURIE, CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

*FOURTH PRINTING*

## *LIFE'S SHOP WINDOW*

By VICTORIA CROSS. Author of "Six Women"

**Crown 8vo. Cloth 6s.**

The scene of this book is laid chiefly in England and the wild regions of America—the latter particularly giving wide scope for those magnificent descriptions of Nature in which Victoria Cross stands unrivalled.

The book is a vivid and brilliant presentment of the varying phases of a woman's life, and displays all that keen analysis of motive and character, that acute understanding of the emotions, that joy in life and vigorous vitality which make Victoria Cross so remarkable a writer, and secured for her last book, "Six Women," such a noteworthy success in all parts of the world.

---

*FOURTH PRINTING*

## *SIX WOMEN*

By VICTORIA CROSS.

"What is so marked in these stories is the beauty of the writing. Her atmosphere is delightful. The Eastern stories are full of the colour and the atmosphere of the East. No one can do anything but envy the Author's touch in the description of Eastern buildings and gardens."—*The Queen.*

---

WERNER LAURIE, CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON

# New 1s. Reprints in Picture Covers

**The Methods of Mr Ames**
By the author of "John Johns."

**Red Love**
By GERTRUDE S. WENTWORTH-JAMES.

**Modern Marriage and How to Bear It**
By MAUD CHURTON BRABY.

**Biography for Beginners**
With 48 Illustrations. By G. K. CHESTERTON.

**What Men Like in Women**
By the author of "How to be Happy though Married." New Edition.

**The Salving of a Derelict**
By MAURICE DRAKE.

**Lady Jim of Curzon Street**
By FERGUS HUME.

**2835 Mayfair**
By FRANK RICHARDSON.

**The Wild Widow**
By GERTIE DE S. WENTWORTH-JAMES.

**The Night-Side of London**
By ROBERT MACKRAY. With Sixty-five Pictures by TOM BROWNE.

**Letters to a Daughter**
By HUBERT BLAND.

**The Happy Moralist**
By HUBERT BLAND.

**The Game of Bridge**
By "CUT CAVENDISH." With the new Rules of Bridge and Auction Bridge.

---

WERNER LAURIE, CLIFFORD'S INN, LONDON