

THE BANANA-LEAF SELLER

By EMILIANO Y. FERNANDEZ

SUNDAYS and Wednesdays are market days in Kalibo. Those are red-colored days to Antonio, the banana-leaf seller. They mean a few more centavos for his school needs. Many people then go to town to buy and sell.

Tonying, as his mother calls him, is in the second grade and he goes to school everyday like all good boys and girls. But that does not stop him from selling his bundles of banana leaves.

Usually a bundle sells for a centavo, but on market days it sells for as high as three centavos. All the money Tonying earns goes to his mother.

Sometimes, when there is no rice in the house, Tonying asks for a peseta and runs to the Filipino store nearby to buy it. He never goes to a Chinese *tienda* if he can buy it from a Filipino store.

Very early every morning, Tonying wakes up, rolls his mat and blanket, and takes the scythe from the *tapalan*. After tying the handle of the scythe to the end of a long bamboo pole, he goes down to

the tall banana plants in their back yard. Old and unspoiled leaves fall as he swings his scythe. Very carefully he strips the leaves from the stems and binds them into bundles. Five or six leaves make a bundle. Tucking these bundles under his arm, he marches happily to market, which is half a kilometer away. There are ready buyers at the fish and meat section, and he goes home a few centavos richer. Then he has his breakfast and goes to school.

Tonying's mother often says, "Tonying is our man in the family." That makes him very happy. It makes her happy—and proud, too.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the market days in your town?
2. What are the market days in Kalibo?
3. What does Antonio do to earn money?

SOLOMON GRUNDY

SOLOMON Grundy
Born on a Monday,
Christened on Tuesday,
Married on Wednesday,
Took ill on Thursday,
Worse on Friday,
Died on Saturday,
Buried on Sunday.
This is the end of
Solomon Grundy.

