

LITTLE THINGS

By ALFREDO E. LITIATCO

(*Editor's Note:* We came across this item in the July 27, 1939, issue of the GRAPHIC by the well-known columnist of that publication. We believe that the reactions of a layman like Mr. Litiatco on the subject of the proposed prohibition to carry guns are so interesting that we are hereby reprinting them without further comment.)

SOME time ago, a planter shot a tenant. To ask a rhetorical question: Was there much of a fuss made about it? Apparently, no one even thought of disarming the gun-toting planter.

Subsequently, that same planter got involved in the shooting of two millionaires. This time, the authorities—that is, the official representatives of the law under which all men are theoretically equal—became so anxious to Do Something that, among other things, they decided to relieve all civilian (though licensed) gun-toters of their weapons. It seems you may not now carry a gun to places where, or on occasions when, you might possibly be tempted to use it.

Now, if they must resort to that, why didn't they think of doing so earlier? When, for example, that tenant got shot. Must a millionaire become a target before officials in a democracy awake to the value of human life and the menace of gun-toters?

Let us grant that those millionaires were, as some say, good men. All right: it's really too bad they were killed; the world has need of all its good men. But that's just the point, see? It should always be too bad that a good man should be killed—whether he has fifty millions or makes only fifty centavos a day.

A tenant, as much as a millionaire, has a stomach to fill, a family support, a heart that can yearn, hands that can work. So you may well ask: What has a millionaire got that a tenant hasn't?

Well, now. I'll tell you. A tenant, unlike a millionaire, hasn't the means to travel around the world in comfort and at will, to maintain a fleet of expensive cars, to make instant business successes of his sons and and social successes of his daughters, to buy anything from mistresses to high government positions, to consult a specialist in Vienna and patronize a dance master in New York, to be always sure of three square meals a day and six rounds of drinks each night—in short, to have the feeling, when he comes to die, that life hasn't been so bad.

. . . And anyway, why have a gun unless there is a possibility of using it? Are the authorities under the impression that one pays good

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Had the presidente used the ejector instead of merely knocking the cylinder, he would be alive today. And had the Spaniard inspected the gun before snapping the trigger, the tragedy would not have happened. As it was, a loaded shell got stuck in the cylinder and the presidente is now pushing lilies up underneath six feet of ground.

—X—

Americans are practical jokers, but sometimes foolish!

A shiftless middle age fellow, who was on government relief in the city, got tired of his environment and decided to visit his brother. His younger brother was a police officer in a small town. The shiftless one hitch-hiked. On the way he thought of pulling a neat joke on his kin.

Arriving at his destination late at night, he covered his face with a handkerchief and sneaked into the home of his brother. Unknown to him the small town copper was alert in his bed. He had heard a noise. The shiftless fellow entered his brother's room and ordered him to get up. A hand trust in his overcoat pocket gave the impression that a gun covered the man in the bed. There was a quick movement in the bed. Then a shot. When the police came the shiftless one was able to gasp, "It was all a joke" and then expired. The officer was exonerated.

A nifty joke, eh?

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money for a revolver merely to be another Carlos Quirino or Eva Estrada, or to satisfy an exhibitionistic urge? I, for one, would not procure a gun except to shoot all the pests I have long wanted to rid this world of.

There are many such pests, you know. There's the guy who sits in front of you in the theatre, callously smoking a gigantic cigar in spite of all the girls choking in his vicinity. And the fellow standing over you in the tram who proceeds to spray your new white woolen suit with vile-smelting ash. Not to mention the bully who flings loud, sarcastic, un-called-for remarks at waiters, conductors, and other wretches who are restrained by the idiotic doctrine that the customer is always right.

But I'd better cut short the enumeration. There isn't enough space—and I might end up by proposing my own suicide!