

Joe at the Magic Pool

By ANTONIO C. MUÑOZ

There are still many people in our country who are superstitious. When someone is sick, they don't go to a doctor until he is very serious. The doctor fails. Then they go to a quack doctor. These quack doctors pretend to cure diseases using superstition as their chief instrument. Sometimes through faith, a sick person is cured. It is then that a quack doctor becomes popular and more money comes to him from his victims. The following story describes the work of a certain quack doctor. Find out how Joe stopped his dirty work.

IN THE town where Joe lives, there is a place called Mahilan. It is about two kilometers from the center of the town. A river flows through this place. Across the river is an iron bridge. Near the bridge and overlooking the river is a big baleté tree. Under this baleté tree is a big rock so big that it covers a good portion of the east bank of the river. This rock is the foundation of the east end of the bridge.

Many strange stories have been told about the baleté tree and the rock beneath it. Some people said that many years ago the rock was the dwelling place of an unknown Spaniard. At night they could hear strange sounds. Sometimes light could be seen in the tree.

Under the bridge the river ripples but close to the rock, the water is still. This still water has the shape of a pool. The people in the neighborhood call it the Magic Pool because they believe that the

strange persons who live in the rock bathe there.

One Saturday, Joe and his friends had their bathing party near the bridge. At noon when his friends had gone home, Joe saw a group of people on the bank overlooking the Magic Pool. Curiosity caused him to join the group.

A man was standing at the edge of the bank and talking to someone in the rock. He was muttering something which Joe could not make out.

"This man is either crazy or playing a game to fool these people," Joe thought.

"The Great Spirit," said the man to the group, "has just told me that your sick relative will be well. He wants you to get five pesos in coins, wrap them in a piece of black cloth, and toss it into the Magic Pool. Your sick relative will be well on Tuesday at the time when the moon sets."

"I have only three pesos here," said an old woman in the group.

"It has got to be five pesos and in coins," the man insisted.

After a short consultation with her companions, the old woman was able to collect the amount needed.

"The money has got to be wrapped in black cloth," the man reminded the old woman.

There was no black cloth available. Joe ran to a house nearby and soon came back with a piece of black rag.

"Will this do?" he asked as he handed the soiled cloth to the man.

Without saying anything, the man

snatched the rag from Joe and tore it to pieces. He selected a piece about six inches square and threw the rest away.

"Give me the money," he said to the old woman.

The latter gave him a handful of coins most of which were one-centavo pieces. The man then wrapped the coins in the black cloth. With a piece of wire from his pocket, he tied it very well. Then he faced the rock.

"Oh, King of the Spirits," he said with his hands outstretched, "kindly receive this gift from the one who suffers and kindly put him back to health."

Then he tossed the ball-shaped package into the still water of the Magic

Pool. It disappeared as soon as it touched the water.

"You may now go home," the man said to the group. "Your sick relative will soon be well."

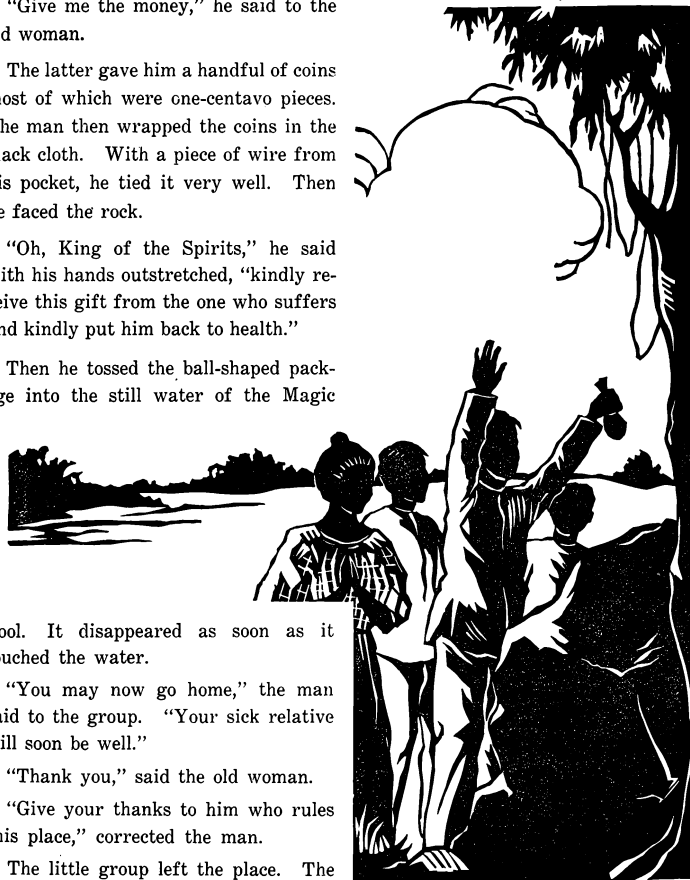
"Thank you," said the old woman.

"Give your thanks to him who rules this place," corrected the man.

The little group left the place. The

man took the opposite way. Joe was alone. He looked at the pool. Soon suspicion came to him.

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know what you are talking about, my child.

Though it breaks my heart to part with you, my beloved children, I am happy in the thought that you who are left behind will be able to help our people's cause in every way possible.

JUAN: That is true, mother. My late father Okong's wise counsels and your undying love for us are engraved in our souls, and I assure you, Inang, that, as your oldest son, I will take good care of my brothers and sisters during your absence.

SORA: Well spoken, my son. My parting advice to you, my children, is this: Fear not, work hard, be kind to your fellow-men, and continue my unfinished work. Remember that Bathala is an ever-watchful God. He is just and rewards good deeds and punishes bad deeds among men and nations. He is the strength of the weak. He blesses the just and chastises the wicked. Put your trust in Him. Our patriots have paved the way, and I see brighter days for our country and people.

Bitter it is to part, but in distant Marianas, in my prayers and in my dreams, I will always be with you, my beloved children.—The hour of parting has come: kiss me good-bye.

(SATURNINA kisses SORA'S face and hand, and JUAN kisses her hand only.)

SORA: God bless you, my children. Impart my love and blessings to your brothers and sister at home.

A TIMELY SOCK

(Continued from page 317)

The children lighted the candles and arranged the flowers on their teacher's grave. While they were happily exchanging news and jokes they were startled by a sudden cry of FIRE! HELP! FIRE! They looked around and saw a woman running here and there confusedly. Because of carelessness her skirt had caught fire. The fire was fast spreading over her. Nonong and Cornelio ran to the woman.

"Stop! Don't run! Lie down!" the boys shouted. The woman lost her presence of mind and would not listen. Nonong knew what would happen if the woman would not stop running. He ran after her and gave her a sock on the jaw which rendered her unconscious. He caught her head as she fell and quickly but gently laid her on the ground. Cornelio, who had followed Nonong, took off his coat and wrapped it over the burning portion of the woman's skirt and rolled her. The fire was soon extinguished. Nonong stopped a taxi that was then passing by and requested the chauffeur to take the old woman to the hospital for first aid.

JUAN: Mother, all your wishes will be carried out.

SAT.: Inang, my brothers, sister, and I will always pray for you, and God, the Merciful, will surely bring you back to us some day.

SORA: So may it be, my child! God be with you always, darling ones: farewell!

(JUAN and SATURNINA leave the scene, and the curtain goes down.)

JOE AT THE MAGIC POOL

(Continued from page 309)

"The man is playing a game and this should not go on," Joe said to himself as he left the place.

As soon as Joe reached home, he lost no time in meeting Rod. He described to the latter the scene he had just witnessed. Then together they went to the Chief of Police and told him all about it.

"The man," Joe told the Chief, "will get that money tonight when the neighborhood becomes quiet."

"That cannot be possible," the Chief argued. "The package although heavy, will have traveled far by that time."

"The package is still at the place where it first landed," Joe assured the Chief. "That there is a net at the bottom of the Pool, I have no doubt. The man is too clever to lose it."

"What do you want us to do then?" asked the Chief.

"This evening at dark," Joe said, "we shall go to the place. You and your policemen will wear ordinary clothes to avoid suspicion. When the man draws the net, you arrest him."

"We may try," was all that the Chief said.

That evening three men and two boys were walking towards the place. The men were carrying their hats and shirts. They looked like people from the corn harvest. Soon this lit-

(Please turn to the next page)

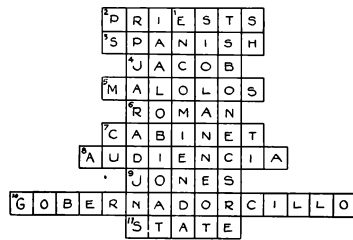
treatment.

Do you approve of what Nonong did? Some of you do, but some don't. You may hold a little debate on whether Nonong was right or wrong.

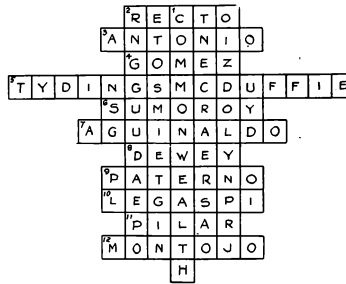
ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS ON PAGE 320

Check your answers with these:

VII-B



VII-A



JOE AT THE MAGIC POOL
(Continued from page 325)

the group disappeared among the trees nearby.

At about ten o'clock, a man in black clothes came to the bridge. He looked around. Satisfied perhaps that he was alone, he crawled under the bridge towards the Magic Pool. Once more he looked around. Then he dived into the water. When he came out, he had something in his hand. As soon as he was on the river side, the Chief and his companions jumped out of their hiding place and surrounded the man.

"Give me that package," the Chief commanded the man.

The man was caught in surprise. He handed the package to the Chief without saying anything. Joe and Rod jumped into the Pool and came out with a black net about two meters square.

"Take him to jail," the Chief ordered his policemen.

On the following day, the man made a confession. At the trial, the judge gave him a month's stay in jail.

In the afternoon of the next day which was Sunday, the Municipal President made a speech in the cockpit. He told the people about the arrest and confession of the man who had fooled so many people. He advised them to go to a physician in case of illness.

Thus ended the evil deeds of a wicked man.

(NEXT MONTH: JOE AND THE DISOBEDIENT BOY)

HELPS FOR STUDY AND ENJOYMENT

What is a pool? Why was the Magic Pool so called?

What made Joe suspicious?

Why did the man insist on having the money in coins and wrapped in black cloth?

Why did the man confess? How was he punished?

KEY TO CORRECTIONS
(Continued from pages 318 & 322)

I. Choosing the correct answer:

1. flies
2. Tubercular
3. Dr. Trepp
4. Tuberculosis
5. White Plague
6. Leprosy
7. flies
8. oxygen
9. constipation
10. Deficiency diseases

II. Yes or No

- | | |
|--------|---------|
| 1. Yes | 8. Yes |
| 2. No | 9. Yes |
| 3. Yes | 10. Yes |
| 4. No | 11. Yes |
| 5. No | 12. No |
| 6. No | 13. Yes |
| 7. No | 14. No |
| | 15. Yes |