



Chapter Twelve

RURAL EXPERIENCES

MONTHS followed one another in quick succession. When Tonio first went to live in the Del Valle mansion, the rice seedlings were still in the seedbeds. From day to day, Tonio watched with anticipation the gradual lengthening of the light green stalks which later changed into a darker hue. He noted when the heads began to bend with the increasing weight of tilling grains. He watched with amazement the green heads turning to golden. To him it was a miracle, a convincing evidence of the love of God for His children.

Before he realized it, the harvesting season had come. The once standing yellow stalks were bundled and piled up in tall stalks. In a few months Tonio learned a

THE
ADVENTURES
OF A
BEGGAR BOY

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by Julio Cesar Peña
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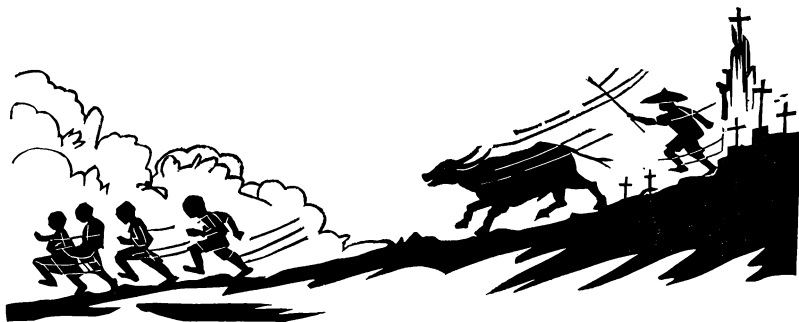
great deal about the world around him. What he saw in the fields from the windows of the speeding car were to him more interesting than all the wonderful man-made things in the City.

One Saturday, Tonio went with his friends to a farm. The farmers were celebrating their thanksgiving season in the native way. Scores of guests from the barrios and towns were served "*suman*" and *guinatan*. The "*guinatan pinipig*" with rich coconut milk, was so delicious that Tonio could not help whispering to one of his companions.

"Andres, what makes this so delicious? I have eaten *guinatan* many times but nothing tasted so good as this."

"You must have used old *pinipig* that had been softened only with water and green coloring."

Chewing a mouthful of the soaked *pinipig* slowly, Tonio remarked, "Yes, that must



be the reason. This *pinipig* really tastes different. How is it made?"

"It is newly ripened rice, the kind that is called *malagkit*. The grains are roasted just long enough to make the hull crisp. They are pounded in a mortar with the old-fashioned pestle, the workers keeping double time to prevent the grains from cooking. They are winnowed in big shallow baskets to remove the hull. They are pounded again until all the grains are flattened into *pinipig*. The *pinipig* is sprinkled with the juice of banana or areca nut leaves to give it this green color which makes it the more tempting."

It was long after dark when the boys left the cemetery. At first they whistled and crooned in high spirits. As they approached a long narrow path completely shaded by the thick branches of mangoes and the bent heads of bamboos, they gradually fell into an oppressive silence. For sometime, nothing was heard but the heavy thump of the boys' feet broken by the cracking of breaking sticks. The boys, without knowing why, fell into a running pace. They had a vague feeling that they were being followed, but nobody would dare look back. Tonio, his teeth chattering, be-



There was merry-making all about them. Some young people danced the "fandango" to the strumming of a single guitar. The older men cracked jokes and teased the younger ones. Everybody was happy and thankful for the plentiful harvest.

On their way home late in the afternoon, the boys passed the small cemetery in the outskirts of the town. Men were already decorating the graves as it was the eve of All-Saints' Day. They strolled about and vied with one another in telling the most gruesome ghost stories.

gan to say a prayer, which the others caught and joined. The biggest boy whispered, "As we say Amen we shall all turn about face." They did so and confronted the thing that had been following them. It was a herdsman driving home a carabao that had gone astray.

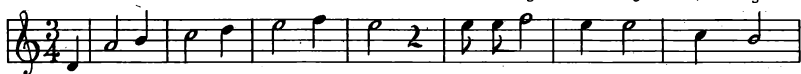
As they struck the main road to the town they heard the distant strains of some bamboo instruments.

"That reminds me," one of the boys said, "we must prepare our midnight lunch.

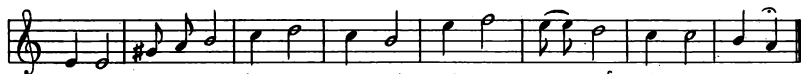
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A Faithful Dog

Words and Music by Grade VI-A Pupils
Nasugbu Elementary School, Batangas



A faith-ful dog an old man had. Friends were they for man---y years.
He was so sad he could not eat. Nei-ther could he drink nor sleep.



But one cold dark day the old man died, And Bur-ter was left a-lone to grieve
He on-ly could watch his mor-ter's grave, Until-til at last he died of grief.

THE RUINS OF GUADALUPE

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olutionists were repulsed. On February 19, 1899, General King ordered the church and convent set on fire together with all the houses in the village. Some Americans justified the burning as a military necessity and to punish the barrio for its obstinate resistance. Many thinking people, however, Americans and Filipinos alike, believe that at least the beautiful church as a place of Christian worship, should have been spared.

In the fire, the magnificent altar, priceless images, among which was that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, valuable paraphernalia, and silver utensils for church service were totally destroyed. Only the hardwood image of San Nicolas was salvaged by one of General Paciano's men who were reconnoitering the place after the Americans had retreated to Makati. The image was in the stone-vaulted mortuary chamber behind the sacristy and it was not touched by the fire. That same image is now housed in the small chapel of the town. Lucky, Saint Nicholas!

After the fire, marauders and souvenir hunters had a free hand. Chinese junkmen from Manila got every iron scrap they could lay their hands on. They pried up from the church floors glazed and marble tiles, and from the stairway, huge Chinese granite slabs. They suc-

PEN AND PENCIL

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ground is surrounded by a gumamela hedge which supply us with plenty of red flowers everyday. Outside the fence are open fields and green trees.

Next time, I will try to send you a picture of our school.

Sincerely yours,

Julia San Jose
Grade IV-A

Dear Julia,

You have described your school so well that a picture is almost unnecessary. I believe other children in other schools will have a very clear idea of the kind of school building you study in. Not all of them are as lucky as you are. From your description, I gathered that you love your school and will do much to keep it beautiful. I will appreciate any picture you may send us.

Aunt Alma

ceeded in taking to the City some of Guadalupe's sonorous bells where they must have been melted for their valuable copper. Of the several church bells only two have been saved and are in active use—one at the Makati church, and the other, at the Guadalupe chapel. As the village was practically deserted at that time, the junkmen and other marauders did their plundering business unmolested. A villager, however, returning to town met a

THE ADVENTURES OF

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Anyway we shall not be able to sleep tonight with the wandering souls chanting their way through the town."

"I can get for you my grandfather's fighting cock," another offered. "It is tied in a corner of the kitchen behind a low table."

"Oh, No, No." Tonio cut in. "I have some savings. My Lolo said I could spend it for anything. It will be enough for a big hen and some loaves of bread."

With the help of their Ka José's father, the boys succeeded in preparing a decent midnight lunch. Meanwhile the other boys lurked in the deep shadows of the trees and glided stealthily from backyard to backyard in the hope of finding chickens in their ordinary roosts. In spite of the precautions the owners had taken in locking up their chickens, there were some wayward ones that rewarded the vigilance of the night prowlers.

(To be continued)

Chinese junkman carting two bells to Manila, and recognizing the bells as those from the ruins, he ordered the Celestial to return the stolen bells. The junkman refused, and to scare him away, the man drew his bolo. The rascal, fearing for his life, lost no time in running to the city without even looking back, leaving bells and all.

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