

SAFETY SECTION**Tandang Pedro's Story**

By QUIRICO A. CRUZ *

Kaingin is a quiet little barrio in the town of Santa Rosa, Laguna. As it is located on the shores of Laguna de Bay, the people living in it engage themselves in fishing and duck raising. In this peaceful little barrio lives an old man known to every barrio folk as TANDANG PEDRONG BULAG. Aside from being blind in one eye, he has a big scar on his right cheek which makes him look very ugly although not frightful. Added to this already great misfortune Tandang Pedro has but one arm. He lost his left arm when he was but fourteen years old. However, in spite of all these handicaps, Tandang Pedro is considered one of the best fishermen in his barrio. He is kind, industrious, and peaceful. He is loved by the children because he tells them interesting stories.

One Friday afternoon, while Tandang Pedro was sitting under a *Camachili* tree and busy mending his fishing nets, a group of school boys gathered around him and requested him to tell

them a story.

"What story do you want now?" asked the old man.

"Please tell us the story of Mariang Maki-ling," requested little Peping.

"We have heard that story many times. Kindly tell us a new one," suggested Berong. "Do you know any detective stories?"

"Suppose you tell us a ghost story," said Andoy, pretending to be brave and serious with his suggestion.

"A ghost story!" exclaimed Andres. "I wonder if you really want to hear one."

"Whose suggestion shall I take?" broke the old man.

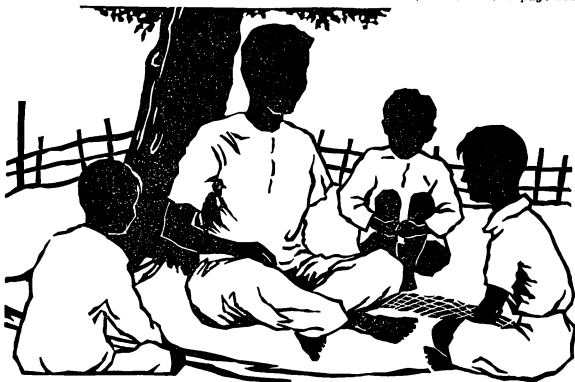
"Mine! Mine!" from the boys.

"Well, to be fair with all of you, I'll not take any of your suggestions. What do you say if I tell you a story about myself?"

"All right. Anything you think worth telling us will be appreciated," replied the children in a chorus. They gathered closer to the old man. In their faces could be seen an expression

(Please turn to page 292)

* Gregorio del Pilar Elementary School, Manila.



TANDANG PEDRO'S

(Continued from page 285)

of eagerness and a feeling of delight.

"Look at this picture," the old man began,—showing a picture of three boys. "Which of the three do you like best?"

"The one at the middle," replied Pepe.

"Yes, the one at the middle," agreed the others.

"He looks smart and handsome," commented Cornelio.

"That is true. He was the handsomest among the brothers," sighed the old man. But, now . . . he is the ugliest and the most unfortunate among them."

"What do you mean?" asked the children.

"That one at the right is my youngest brother; the one at the left is my eldest brother . . . and, who do you think that fellow in the middle is?" asked Tandang Pedro.

"You mean . . . ?" Momoy was about to ask something but, before he could finish his question, the old man, who readily guessed what was to be asked, replied.

"Yes, yes, that is my picture. I was the handsomest among my brothers. I lost the sight of my left eye and my left arm two years after this picture was taken. If you will listen carefully I will tell you how I lost my arm and got this ugly scar on my face.

"One rainy day in the month of August, I was with a group of friends bathing under the heavy rain. We were very happy. We chased one another. . . . threw mud at each other, and did all the foolish things that

boys do when they become wild in their play.

'INDO!' called Akong, my best pal. 'Uncle Timo's guava trees are laden with fruits. Let us buy *alamang* and with those half-ripe guavas . . . O boy! what a swell time we shall have.'

"I called all the boys and told them of our plan to which they readily agreed.

"'Where are you going?' my father asked when he saw us going away.

"'We shall pick guavas, sir,' I replied hurriedly.

"'If you will pick guavas don't climb the trees. The branches are very slippery.'

"My friends and I went to Uncle Timo's guava trees. I forgot the warning given by my father and climbed the tallest tree which was heavily laden with fruits. I was considered the best in everything by my playmates and was always ready to prove that I really was the best among them. . . . even in climbing trees. I climbed higher and higher until I reached the topmost branch. There were many fruits at its end. With all my strength I shook the branch. The ripe guavas gave way and dropped to the ground. My friends busied themselves picking up the fallen guavas.

"'We have enough,' shouted my companions. 'You better come down now.'

"'Yes. Just one more SHAKE!' I shouted back, and shook the branch with all my might. More guavas fell. Because the branch was too slippery, my feet slipped. I lost my hold and fell to the ground with the guavas. My face struck

THINGS TO DO

(Continued from page 279)

ber to another Roman Number.)

How far does the minute hand move in one hour? (All the way around the face of the clock.)

Now, which hand travels the faster? (The minute hand.)

Why? (Because there are sixty minutes in one hour.)

You are now ready to start using the picture of the clock. Paste the picture of the clock on a cardboard. An old tablet back is good for this purpose. When the paste is dry cut out the face and the hands. Stick a common pin through the center of the x on the minute hand

against some bamboo stumps. Something pointed pierced my left eye and I saw stars, . . . then, the stars disappeared and everything was darkness. I lost consciousness and when I came to life again I found myself in bed. My head, face, and left eye were heavily bandaged. I tried to feel my face with both hands and to my surprise I saw only the right hand. I tried to lift my left hand again and again . . . and only then did I realize what happened to me. I felt my left hand with my right. It was not there. I cried. I cried bitterly with the thought that when I get well I would be forever blind and a helpless cripple." Tandang Pedro sighed a deep sigh. "That is all boys. I hope you will benefit from my experience," he concluded. The boys thanked the old man and went home with a feeling of sympathy toward poor, one-eyed, one-armed, and scar-faced, TANDANG PEDRO.