



Chapter five

A NARROW ESCAPE

THE more Tonio thought about the strangers' offer, the more he was tempted to accept it. But when he remembered that he had been enjoined not to let his Lolo know about it, he became suspicious and decided to tell the old man what the strangers had offered to do for him.

When the old man learned that the two men had mentioned something about an easy but gainful occupation he was alarmed and exclaimed,

"O my boy, avoid such men. I don't believe they are honest. They may be pick-pockets or shoplifters. Be patient, my boy, God will provide. To whom he gives life, he will also give means of livelihood. Go to bed. You need plenty of rest after a hard day."

Tonio, then and there, decided not to see the men.

The week that followed was not a profitable one for Tonio and his Lolo. Their alms consisted mostly of rice and they had to draw upon their saving. The old man decided to confine his begging activities in the market and in front of churches.

Saturday morning found the pair soliciting alms from the shoppers and vendors. They were about to station themselves at the entrance to a big bazaar facing the market when they heard the shouts of "Thief! Thief!" and people threw themselves upon

THE ADVENTURES OF A BEGGAR BOY

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by Julio Cesar Peña
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two men and a boy. When the men were searched, undershirts and socks were found concealed in their wastes. The boy had a pocketbook in his shirt. The salesmen held the men by the collar while a shopper caught the boy by the breast. When the policeman arrived, the boy, who was trembling all over, cried aloud and said,

"They made me do it, Sir, those two. They would beat me if I did not obey them."

Tonio recognized in the two shoplifters the men who offered to train him in an easy but gainful occupation. Horrified he clutched at the old man's trousers.

"Lolo," he whispered, "those are the men I told you about."

"Susmariosepl!" the old man murmured crossing himself. "Thank God you did not fall into their hands."

On their way home, the old man impressed upon the boy's mind the danger of going with unknown people.

"Poverty is nothing to be ashamed of, but dishonesty brings disgrace that will follow you all your life. You are growing fast. Still I hope you will always confide in me."

"I will, Lolo," Tonio promised.

After a long silence, the old man resumed,

"You must go to school in June. It is not enough that a person be good. He must be informed. I cannot see how I can send you to school, but I will."

"I am old enough to work, Lolo. I can shine shoes. Smaller boys than I do."

"Yes, child, you can. But I am afraid you might fall into bad company."

"I will take care not to, Lolo. Let us make use of our saving. I shall sell newspapers in the morning, peddle ice drops in.

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the early afternoon, and shine shoes later in the afternoon. We don't have to beg anymore. We shall need money for rice only. I can catch small crabs and dig for clams and mussels." Tonio said with the seriousness of a man.

The old man realized that Tonio was no longer a small boy. He was beginning to think for himself and to demand his own share of responsibilities.

"Sooner or later he will have to take care



of himself. He should learn early what it is to struggle. He must know the pitfalls of life and learn to avoid them. I shall not live forever to watch over him," the old man mused.

Aloud he said,

"Yes, my boy, we may have to try your plans."

(Read about Tonio's interesting experiences with street boys in September number of *The Young Citizen*.)

CASSIOPEIA

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the sea were offended and complained to Neptune, the god of the sea. As a punishment for her insolence, Neptune sent a frightful monster to ravage her coast and

THE CAVE IN TALBAK

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tiful domes overhead with sparkling spikes drooping downward. Closer observation will reveal numerous names and dates inscribed on the smooth and conspicuous parts. Some names are of those who had played important parts in the Philippine history. Dates as early as the eighteenth hundreds abound. Once inside, you will feel a very peculiar sensation. In spite of the water oozing between the cracks and the moisture dripping from above, you will feel very warm. However death larks behind this magnificence. Treacherous pits are scattered here and there not very deep though, but enough to break one's neck.

To avoid any mishap should you explore this cave, extreme care must be taken.

to devour Cassiopeia's daughter, Andromeda. Cassiopeia appealed to Jupiter, who placed her in the heaven out of reach of Neptune.

**SWEETSTAKE
BUBBLE GUM**



**SENSATION
of the
SEASON**

O'RACCA CONFECTIONERY
67 BARRACA
MANILA, P. I.