



## How Vito Spent His Vacation

A Story

By Antonio C. Muñoz



W HAT shall we do with Vito, Juana, when school opens in June?" asked Amboy, the father of the little boy. "I don't know," his wife replied. "Unless we mortgage our little cornfield, Vito will have to stay out of school for a year at least."

It was the night of the first day of vacation. While the father and mother were talking outside, Vito was already in bed. But he was awake. He heard what his parents talked about. He knew then that it would be very hard for him to continue his studies the following year. His father could not send him to school again with the little means they had. Just before school closed, the principal teacher announced that all fourth grade pupils should provide themselves with the text books required, either by buying or renting them from the school. Then there were the matriculation fee, the Junior Red Cross contribution, the school supplies, and other things an intermediate pupil must have. It was a problem which was hard to solve, too hard for a little boy like Vito who was only twelve years old. However, Vito was a good boy. His teacher had taught him useful lessons in their class in character education. It was then that two character traits came to his mind—industry and thrift.

"Why should I not work during vacation?" Vito asked himself. "I may earn enough for all the things that I shall need when school opens."

"Let me see," he tried to think hard. "If I make it a point to earn and save ten centavos a day, I shall have enough, at least,

to start the school year."

Before he slept that night, he had decided to work hard during vacation.

It was Saturday evening, the tenth of June, when father and mother talked again about Vito.

"Vito must stay out of school. We don't have any money. Next year, perhaps, we shall be able to send him to school," Amboy told his wife.

"Oh, I am sorry! I am very sorry for him!" Juana replied with a sigh. "He is very much interested in his studies and it's a pity that he must quit."

"Poor boy!" was all that the father could say.

Just then they heard Vito's voice. He was on the street singing, "HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN!"

"Good evening, father. Good evening, mother," was Vito's greeting to his parents as he took their hands and kissed them.

He then put his hand in his pocket and drew out a one-peso and a two-peso bill and placed them on the table. He ran to the kitchen and came back with a *boló*. From his other pocket, he took out a milk can which was covered with earth and rust. He opened the can and poured its contents on the table. One-centavo, five-centavo, and ten-centavo pieces rolled on the table.

The father and mother stared in dumb astonishment at the money on the table which Vito was counting.

"Three pesos and seventy-five centavos or P6.75 including the paper bills," Vito muttered when he had counted all the pieces.

"Now let me see if my record is correct," he said as he opened his little note book.

"Okay!" he exclaimed with a chuckle.

Then he went to where his parents were sitting and said, "Father and mother, about two months ago, I heard you talk about not sending me to school for lack of funds. That same night, I decided to work hard during vacation in order to earn something to start the school year and now I have it," he concluded as he pointed to the money on the table.

"Where did you get that?" the astonished father asked.

Vito read the record to them. It had the following:

Received for polishing shoes . . . . .	₱3.55
Received for watering Mr. Calumpang's plants, morning and afternoon, for 60 days at 5 centavos a day . . . . .	3.00
Received for sweeping Mr. Oracion's yard (8 Saturdays at 10 centavos each) . . . . .	.80

Received for carrying stones to the home of Mr. Alcantara . . . . . 50

Total . . . . . ₱7.85  
 Paid for polishing materials and equipment . . . . . 1.10

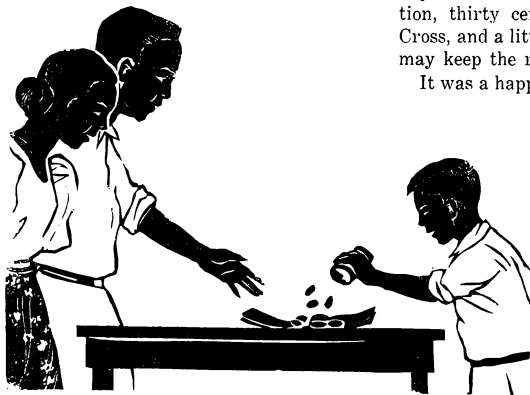
Balance . . . . . ₱6.75

"I was not idle during vacation," Vito explained. "Perhaps you thought that I spent my time playing with other boys. I did not tell you about it as I wanted to give you a surprise. Have I surprised you, Father and Mother, and are you happy that your little boy has done something useful?"

With tears of joy in their eyes, the poor father and mother ran to their son and held him tightly in their arms, the father shouting like a madman, the mother sobbing like a child.

At last Vito tore away from his parents and said, "Mr. Alcantara has kindly lent me his son's books so I do not need to rent any. I need only two pesos for matriculation, thirty centavos for the Junior Red Cross, and a little for school supplies. You may keep the rest, mother."

It was a happy night for the poor family.



"Where did you get that?"  
 the astonished father asked.

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