

CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP SECTION

THE STORY OF A FAILURE

ADAPTED BY JOSE SUGUI

THIS is the story of a young man who was never considered a "success," but whose friends and neighbors respected him because he did his best and never committed any wrong knowingly. "And," said they, "that is all that can be expected of any man."

This young man was a schoolteacher and a lawyer. He suffered physical pain, but he accepted with resignation whatever came to him. All his life he spoke little and thought much.

He was of medium height and slight physique. He had a sensitive face and a high forehead. His eyes were penetrating but not lively. He carried his head a little to one side.

When he walked, he either looked straight ahead or gazed at the sky.

It was the conviction of this man that first of all one must be good, and to be good, one must have knowledge. So he tried hard to secure an education. He left his home to study in the elementary school of another town. He earned his board and lodging by working as a *muchacho* in the household of a tailor. In

his third year of what was then called the secondary course, he won a scholarship offered by a well-known college in the capital city. In Manila, he supported himself by teaching. He was then seventeen years old.

During his second year in the city on account of a cholera epidemic all schools closed and he had to return home. In a nearby town he was offered another teaching position, which he accepted. After two years of teaching, when he was twenty years old, he was able to return to the city to finish his secondary education. He obtained his former position, but during the year the founder and director of the school



He tried hard to secure an education.

died and he had to leave the city again. He then taught in another town in his home province, staying for a period of two years.

As a teacher, he was exacting, but encouraging. He spoke slowly and distinctly, and only when necessary, striving to make the recitation the work of the pupil.

He never gave up the idea of contin-

uing his education. Accordingly, he obtained a short leave of absence from his school and went to the city to take an examination for a degree, which he passed *meritissimus*—most deserving.

He could now study law. During his last two years as a teacher he had managed by strict economy to save a small sum. A part of this he gave to his parents to spend on the improvement of their home and farm. The remainder he found was not enough to pay his first year's expenses at the law school.

His life at school was one long struggle against poverty and pride. He was too proud to accept help from anyone, for he felt that every man should be "sufficient unto himself."

He deprived himself of everything except the bare necessities of life, employing various means in order to make his way alone. He gave private lessons, assisted in preparing documents in law cases, and worked as a copyist in court. Having only one black coat, he was always shabbily dressed.

Later he was an assistant to a clerk of the court, who befriended him. When his friend left this position, the new clerk of the court, unfavorably impressed by his silent assistant's shabby black coat, turned him out into the street.

It was a happy day for him when he graduated and was admitted to the bar. But fortune was still against him. He contracted a severe fever and became paralyzed—first in the right leg and then in the left. He bore his infirmity with calmness: he had learned to accept life.

Later his disability saved him from being shot, when he was arrested, together with some of his friends, on suspicion of inciting a revolt. Because of

his paralysis he was detained in the hospital and later set free.

The Filipinos were struggling to secure their independence. When this man was thirty-four years old he planned a revolutionary government. He organized and directed this government, and drafted a proposed constitution. He did this while he was in his invalid's chair, or was being carried from place to place in a hammock. It is little wonder that those of his countrymen who know the details of his life hold him in high esteem.

A year later he was captured, again released, and then exiled. A year or so after that he was informed that he would be permitted to return to the Philippines if he would take the oath of allegiance to the sovereign nation "without mental reservations." Having become convinced that his dream of a Filipino nation could become a reality only through the help of that sovereign nation, he took the oath of allegiance.

On his return he was offered a government position which he refused, fearing that his infirmity had unfitted him for efficient work. Perhaps his real reason was that he wanted to "hide" his shame and anguish, "not for having committed an unworthy act, but for not having been able to do better service." He was consoled, however, in knowing that he had done his best, and that he had not committed any wrong consciously.

Soon afterwards, in his thirty-ninth year, cholera again broke out in the city, and he was stricken. Did he still have regrets as he lay on his death bed? Did he look back on his life and still consider it a failure? Or did he finally realize the sublimity in the knowledge of

(Please turn to page 259-)

THE OLDEST CHURCH

(Continued from page 242)

brought from China leads one to the second floor. The stair-case is worth seeing, as are also some of the numerous paintings which hang in the church and convent.

In the upper part of the convent is a library. The British, during the invasion of 1762, are charged with having carried away a number of the rarest books and the most important documents and manuscripts, so that at present only a few valuable books and manuscripts remain in the library.

There are numerous other rooms and corridors in the church and convent, such as the recreation hall, cloisters, a private chapel, the dining room, etc. One may descend by a curious circular stairway to the former dispensary and storehouse and the old dining room with its unique decorations on the ceiling.

The convent was designed by the same great architect, Herrera, who designed the church, but his plans were not entirely followed, and many minor changes and additions have been made during the intervening centuries.

COFFEE

(Continued from page 257)

shrubs are raised from seed sown in nurseries, and afterwards planted in moist and shady places on sloping ground. Care is taken to plant the shrubs so that at certain seasons the roots will be constantly surrounded with moisture.

When the fruit is ripe a cloth is placed under the tree and the fruits are shaken down. Then the berries are placed on mats and dried in the sun. The husk is later removed by heavy rollers.

The best coffee comes from Mocha, but Java and Central America also produce large quantities of excellent coffee. Brazil in South America grows abundant crops — more than any other country. Coffee is also grown in the Philippines to some extent.

It has been estimated that the world's supply of coffee is more than two billion pounds a year. The

Anyone who will take the time to be shown through this noble edifice by one of the accommodating fathers in charge will find a visit to the Church of Saint Augustine, oldest church in the Philippines, to be most interesting.

greatest coffee-consuming countries are the United States and the countries of northern Europe.

The refreshing action of coffee is produced by a drug called caffeine (pronounced caf-een). The pleasant smell is produced by an oil which is largely developed by the roasting process.

Coffee is an important article of commerce. The coffee exported each year from Brazil alone is valued at more than 500 million pesos.—*Adapted from the Concise and the Compton Encyclopedia.*

STORY OF A FAILURE

(Continued from page 250)

having always followed the dictates of his conscience and of having always done his best?

Thus lived and died Apolinario Mabini, a man who considered himself a failure. Whether or not Mabini was a failure, you, reader, will decide for yourself.—*Adapted from Philippine Prose and Poetry.*

WEATHER QUESTIONS

(Answers from page 233)

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| 1. Yes | 5. Yes |
| 2. Yes | 6. Yes |
| 3. No | 7. Yes |
| 4. No | 8. No |