

THE GREAT BELL OF PEKING

(Retold by Elisabeth Latsch)

(Continued from the October issue)

NOW Kuan-yu called upon the Emperor to receive the command to cast the Great Bell of Peking. But he felt all the more distressed after the audience with his Celestial August. He must make the bell: there was no longer any way out. Kuan-yu began to labor day and night. From the wise men who were able to read the great and wonderful books, Kuan-yu learned about the art of casting bells. He traveled far and near to the craftsmen in the art: he must see and hear more about engraving, about embossing and about inlaying the metals to be used for the bell. But such a large bell had never yet been cast in all China. And to Kuan-yu's dismay he realized that he could never become a master in such a great task.

An immense factory was built where hundreds of workmen were busied with precious metals. There were silver and gold in abundance: yellow brass, red copper and bright tin were piled up everywhere. Kuan-yu, too, was everywhere. He watched here and he directed there. He gave the orders for making the mold: the mixing of the metals; and the drawing of the pattern. But the more work his men turned out, the heavier grew Kuan-yu's heart. "How could he know the little and important thing; about casting bells? He a cannon molder! Min Ling, had done him no friendly turn, to recommend Kuan-yu, the cannon molder as the most skillful master in the art of bell making." Gradually, Kuan-yu lost hope altogether. He could not sleep. He could not eat. He worried and worried throughout his work, day and night. Even the fragrant tea of China no longer brought a look of cheer to his face. "If only my bell were finished and as well rounded as this small cup here before me!"

EMILIO JACINTO

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As we all know Jacinto was the brain of the Kapitunan. He was the son of Mariano Jacinto, a bookkeeper by profession, and Josefa Dizon, an intelligent midwife, residents of the barrio of Trozo. He was baptized at the age of three days at the Biondo church on December 18, 1875. He breathed his last on April 16, 1899, at Majajjay, Laguna.

In the meantime, Ko-ai, the daughter of Kuan-yu sat in the garden embroidering her wedding gown. She was to be married to the son of Min Ling. The design on her gown was the peach blossom, from the tree which brings long life and good fortune to young brides. Ko-ai was very, very happy and sensed nothing of her father's great sorrow. Softly, very softly she sang to herself an old, old song:

"Peach blossom after rain
Is deeper red;
The willow fresher green:
Twittering overhead:
And fallen petals lie wind-blown,
Unswept upon the courtyard stone."

As she went on embroidering the branches of pine trees took shape upon the cloth: for the pine tree was the sign of happy marriage. And remembering that the perfume of the plum blossom was the nightingale's voice turned to music, Ko-ai carefully selected and stitched its design and colors on her robe. Last of all, she added the King of Flowers, the royal peony. As she shaded its hues of white, cream and crimson, a smile spread over her face and softly she spoke aloud, "Is he whom I am to wed, not more to me than a king? It is for him I place the petals of the peony upon the hem of the gown." And once more her voice drifted into a song from "The Book of Jade":

"The earth has drunk the snow,
and now the plum trees are blossoming once more.
"The willow leaves are like new gold:
the lake is molten silver.
"It is the hour
when sulphur laden butterflies
rest their velvet heads upon the flowers."

as a result of the bullet wound in his thigh which he received while in command of the Northern army. Thus passed the man the keystone of whose doctrine was to work and to labor, giving the noblest and best that was in him for the revolution, or for a change for a better government in order to give the common man—the average Filipino—a chance to rise without interruption, through his labor and industry.