

She has no contracts, Miss Elder said, and has made no plans for the future except that she is sure she is going to continue to fly.

"I don't know whether I will go into the movies or not. I really don't think I have any talent for motion pictures," she said.

Miss Elder was dressed in a Paris gown and she laughingly complied with the request of a reporter "to describe it for him."

"What do you want to know?" she asked, smiling up at him.

"What's it all about?" he replied. "Did it come from Paris, and what is it made of?"

"It's jersey," she exclaimed patiently. "And I got it in Paris. It's black and it's called an ensemble."

Capt. Haldeman sat beside her during the interview, content to allow her to do most of the talking, but chiming in now and then when a technical explanation was required which she was unable to give. Mrs. Haldeman also was on the *Macom* to greet her husband. They are to celebrate their eighth wedding anniversary Sunday, Haldeman said.

Outside of the city hall reception, the flyers will have the day to themselves. Tonight they are to be the guests of Flo Ziegfeld attending the Ziegfeld follies. Sunday night Miss Elder is to be the guest of honor at a dinner of the National Woman's party and Monday she and Capt. Haldeman are to have luncheon in Washington with President and Mrs. Coolidge.

New York, Nov. 11.—(A. P.)—The only cloud in the sky of Lyle Womack, husband of Ruth Elder, was that Mrs. Susan Odom, his wife's aunt, refused to speak to him, he told *The Associated Press* while on the way down New York harbor to welcome his flying wife back home.

It was reported several days ago that Womack and his aunt were not as friendly as aunt and nephew might be, but Womack today said that he thought it would all blow over soon.

"I guess it's the old, old trouble—too much in-law," he said.



The Price of a Hat



By PERCY A. HILL

Manila in the year 1726 was not a prosperous place, in fact it was the reverse. Of course the regular revenues were collected and disbursed by a favoured few who were quite willing to divide if pressure was skillfully used, for stealing the King's pesos was both a delightful and profitable occupation. Only a few years before a gang of thieves in high places had succeeded in removing a governor by assassination who had indicated that they should put back in the Treasury at least nine-tenths of what they had thoughtlessly taken. Furthermore they were never punished for either one or the other dereliction, for the old gray city and its society was—in one word—corrupt.

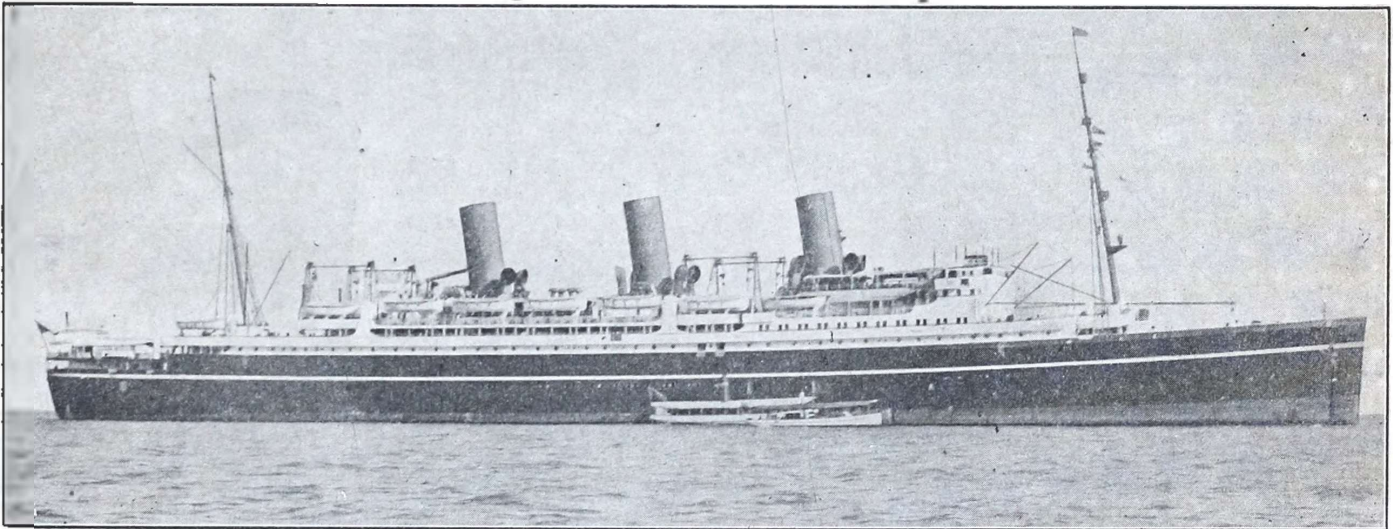
As Manila was the centre of the Isles of Philip so the Plaza Mayor was the centre of Manila. In the cathedral the Church was represented, in the Governor's palace the civil, and in the citadel the military. The commercial was relegated to the Consulado and the Plaza de Almacenes and jealously guarded by a close corporation of the three factors named above. Those in office enjoyed a salary and those in favour, a fortune, but the major portion of the citizens had sunk into an apathy that meant mere existence. As a result there was a plethora of restless spirits and parasites whose exploits kept the city from utter stagnation. These lived by their wits and did fairly well at their trade, for people who have neither wits nor means do not prosper in this world no matter where they dwell.

The social elements of Manila at that time were complex, that is, the ones who are concerned in this story. If the upper-world were haughty and officious, the middle-world dull and stodgy, the under-world combined all the

traits of the century just passed and the one to come. They were crusaders of a moribund society. They had to live if others had to die for it; for the sleepy provost guards were not in the habit of challenging them unnecessarily—their pay of two pesos a month and a uniform being insufficient to take any pride of place. Iron chains linked up at the end of certain streets at sunset were a custom which was not discontinued till a much later date, in spite of the gates being closed at the sound of the evening gun. This was done to prevent armed disturbances and the escape of thieves. The population of the walled city has always been constant for some three hundred years. Its complexion has changed, it is true, but not its building area.

Officials, citizens and ne'er-do-wells were all clad in all the sumptuousness of the period that not even the gloomy monarchs of semi-monastic Spain could banish by decree. The long embroidered coats, with huge pockets and collars the small clothes, great funnel-boots, the rapier and sword and the hat of *tres-picos*, or three cornered head-piece, were then the fashion, aped by those who could steal it. Manila was nothing if not religious but this did not prevent young sparks and even older ones from playing the gallant, for life was not all composed of prayer and penance under the priests. They might even pursue the female in her disguising mantilla with protestations and promises, that is if she was not accompanied by a servant or *duenna*. Even they were not safe after dark an hour when all respectable citizens and their families were safe behind their grilled window and bolted doors, for the provost guard, as we have explained, rarely troubled to investigate an uproar, wisely waiting till it had died down

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Like all cities, Manila had its beggars, but not of the pernicious variety report to the contrary notwithstanding. During those times they were looked after by the Church and even to this day a vast number of the genteel poor, sick and afflicted live on the alms of the convents and *curas* of Manila. Many were kept by a dole from the Archbishop himself, and on more than one occasion it is recorded that the prelates died with just enough for a decent burial, the balance having been given to the poor. It must not be thought that just because charity is now an organized social entity with periodical drives that it did not exist through the centuries, nor does it mean that the subjects were less deserving than now.

The inns were ostensibly under the saintly protection of San Mateo, St. Mathew, the publican and sinner, and liquid refreshment was available at all hours. They were the haunt of the libertine, the battered wreck and the youth just embarking on life's voyage; the underpaid soldier, the visiting mariner and those of the black robe of the Law whose ways were crooked. In these halting places gathered the sons of loot and *compradores de mala-fe* who disposed of their goods—at a price. Then there were the goldsmiths' shops, not that the walled city possessed any of these cunning workers in gold and silver, but it was a good name for a shop where loans could be gotten on heirlooms or jewels at a proportionate gain to the owner.

In that part of the walled city lying near the Royal Foundry and near the walls lived most of the native and mixed population, much more thickly populated than it is today, and domiciled in warrens of houses that have long since gone the way of earthquakes. Here dwelt the furtive ones who lived by their cunning; the captain without either finances or soldiers, with no hope except war and no revenue except rapine.

The cut-purse who cleverly snipped off the pocketbooks of the day, separating the stolid citizen or the marketing housewife from their wealth by a swift cut of the *cuchillo*; the underpaid *escribientes* and runners for the

courts. And here dwelt their women-folk, those who had run away from a husband, or with one. The married ladies, unshod, ungirt and ample, their daughters slim and supple, with mysterious eyes, who shrank from the gaze of a stranger, but who, like fascinated birds, were nevertheless drawn more quickly to them than to those of their own race, which is the way of the world and the law of contraries.

Here also stalked death and mutilation following the swift urge of jealousy or revenge. And the native women do sometimes fight for love or its twin sister jealousy. They can be swift as the snake and as merciless as the hawk. Sighting the object of their ire, hands are raised instinctively to their ears to pluck out their earrings deliberately before sternly engaging with the rival who has stolen the affections of lover or husband. Just as there is no treasure without seekers, no creed without its followers, so there is no beauty without admirers. In the district alluded to there was a tavern or *posada*, the rendezvous of the restless and needy characters produced by the period. At all hours of the night and sometimes in the day they could be seen entering its low portals, swaggering if the affair had been fortunate, and listless if it had been otherwise. Several gangs, or as they were called *tropas*, used it as their special headquarters, and access was to be had at all hours after dark by four knocks in sequence known only to the initiated. It bore no name except that of its owner, but it was a well-known and popular resort in spite of its lack of a title.

The *posada* was kept by the widow Medana, a stout lady with a roguish eye—a purveyor of rest, refreshment and wines, and a personage of the vicinity. Indeed it was hinted that she was nobody's widow and as for that she had never been anybody's wife. But her stew, her roast capon, her wines and *aguardiente* were above reproach and too much virtue cannot be expected under one roof. The inside of the *posada* was given over to rough benches, a long table and stools. A few hogsheads that had made the Pacific traverse destined for other

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hands stood in a row near the wall and made convenient eating tables, over which hung a heavy vinous odor. Behind these was a shelf upon which were ranged pewter pots, coarse glasses and drinking utensils, while from above a highly glazed image of San Roque, the saint whose powers cure sickness, gazed benignly on the scene below.

Below the holy image was a scroll upon which was laboriously inscribed in Latin the following appeal: "Holy San Roque, give us thy aid against the shaking fever."

"First Day, Tremble, shiver and burn,
"Second Day, Shiver and quake in turn,
"Third Day, Go, and never return.
"Ora pro nobis."

San Roque is a popular saint to this day all over the archipelago. Doubtless cures were effected owing to the sincere faith of the believers just as the science called Christian cures those

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of will-power and determination. The back part of the hostelry was given over to a smoky *cocina* over whose fire swung an immense pot, which was always slowly simmering with a stew amongst whose mixture could be recognized fish, pork, vegetables, garlic and rice, for the cauldrons of that day were made as large as possible so as to cook enough at one heat. This *cocina* was presided over by a pig-tailed Chinaman from Macao who was skilled in the culinary art desired by its varied patrons. The stew itself was portioned into rough plates called *cagayanes*, the ladle itself being so heavy that it could easily stun a bull or a bully if properly wielded. It was served to the guests who had the required number of *tomines* and *granos*, with three pieces of coarse bread, one for a sop, one to eat and the other to wipe the spoon with.

Needless to say there were few scraps. The service of the tavern was performed by a stocky, perspiring Tagalog, who gave the plates the required polish with a napkin and very often

mopped his beaded brow with the same useful cloth. However, the patrons of the *posada* were not very exacting and thoroughly familiar with the customs of the country. Most of them being hollow to the knees, as the saying is, had come to eat and not to criticize and we must admit that of the three functions necessary to life that of eating is the most important. At the moment of which we write the *posada* was full of patrons and chief amongst the wine samplers was Captain Pelagio de Oviedo.

Captain Pelagio had left Spain, a land of high plateaus and arid wind-swept vineyards, while still young. In the course of a few years he had acquired a hardy frame, a command of the sword, a varied experience, a suit of finery and its concomitant—an empty pocket. Captain Pelagio (shortened in Castilian to Pelayo, the national hero) wore a military coat ornamented with a shoulder-knot that had once been crimson, but wind and weather had faded this to a dull orange. A long sword hung to a cross-belt banged ceaselessly about the calves of his legs and a pair of spurs adorned his funnel boots although it had been many a day since he owned a horse. His swagger and curling mustaches bespoke the soldier of fortune who sold his skill and blood, to whom glory was nothing and whose pay was small but provided him with a precarious living. We have his type with us today who do not carry sword or dagger but manage to wrest a living from their fellows. Thus, we see, human nature does not change much.

His hat was a barometer of his finances. If it was set well back and was well brushed and the plume curling, they were opulent; if he wore it with a straight brim, funds were about to end, but if he drew it down over the eyes and the plume looked ruffled or bedraggled it might be confidently known that the knight of chance had not a *tomine* in his pocket. He had his customs and foibles, and was worthy of trust only when he swore by the finger-bones of Saint Peter. "By all other swearing he did deceive freely." His chief lieutenant was Cristomo, a well-known character, three-quarters Spanish and noted for his Caruso qualities.

This rogue had a good voice and an ear for church music, for he had been a *monaguilla* in his youth. This music he practised with great vociferation. He would begin by chanting the prayers, the canons sung at matins, then the Credo as in High Mass, and passing on to vespers sang them through, not forgetting the Magnificat. While others indulged in ribald songs or crooned the interminable Moorish romances to which others might beat time with a convenient wine-pot, Cristomo, under the influence of Bacchus, would burst into an anthem, effectively putting a damper on all competing noise. From him, Captain Pelayo drew his knowledge of church ritual and custom, although he in the parlance of the day "hated the Mass like the Devil hates holy water", which after all did not prevent him from fearing the spiritual powers, as he himself carried a charm of *dapdap* seeds concealed in a scapular and warranted to protect the wearer from both provosts and poisons.

Another of the brotherhood whose greatest concern was the worship of Ceres and Bacchus, or as we should say, Bread and Wine, always threw his empty wine-bottles at the servants, aptly remarking that a body without a soul was only fit for perdition, thus showing he also had served in a convent in his youth. This member was called La Trinidad. He had not received this name at the baptismal font but had acquired it vicariously. He had been a sergeant in the Regiment of the King, but finding the pay insufficient to quench a thirst, absented himself so long that his true name had been erased from the roster long before. Furthermore he had had a quarrel with the paymaster. Out of the five pesos a month allowed him, some three had been withheld by the custodian of the funds, telling the *sarjento* of the honour he must feel in loaning money to his Majesty the King of Spain. La Trinidad disagreed with him and left the service. He attached himself to Pelayo, who was a much better if not as steady a paymaster.

La Trinidad was given to an inordinate worship of wine and was prone to religious argument

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as well which at times bordered on the skeptic. His confessor, the blue-jowled Fray Bruno, had striven in vain to check this tendency. One day when La Trinidad was in funds he met the worthy friar who himself was not averse to a glass of wine but who was more bent on saving this lamb who promised to become a lost sheep. Invited into the unsavoury *posada* they continued an argument as to how one person could be three. The patrons were silent but interested and listened in, in the hopes of acquiring holiness from the proximity of Fray Bruno. The honest monk struggled to elucidate the idea of the Trinity to the irreligious toper but the latter shook his head at each futile attempt to instruct him. On the table was a jar of water, some sour claret, and a half emptied bottle of Jerez. Fray Bruno took a decanter and poured in all contents of the three. Throwing out his arm in a gesture of triumph he said "Here is the proof before your eyes, *tres en uno*, three in one." The argument was irresistible. From that day on the worshipper of wine became an even more fervent worshipper of the Trinity proved with such mathematical exactness. Hence his name La Trinidad bestowed upon him by his companions.

Another and a recent addition to the *tropa* of Captain Pelayo was Don Gabriel, not that he was entitled to the don, which had been bestowed upon him by the frequenters of the *posada*. His history was short and to the point. He had been a member of the city guard, the officer of which had sent him to play the spy, owing to his knowledge of Castilian and various dialects. This detail was not to his relish, and in addition as a suspicious character, a spy, he did not look the part. He was both slender and sober and even Caesar a thousand years before distrusted thin people who did not drink. Most certainly to play the part amongst rustlers, soldiers and adventurers he was handicapped from the start, and he was, quite naturally, unable to discover anything of value to the police. In addition he was extremely touchy and a slight quarrel with his superior who held his cane point upward instead of point downward in giving him an order, resulted in a duel in which his superior was killed, a military crime.

The consequences being serious, Gabriel had deserted, another serious military crime. Confessing all to Captain Pelayo, who was however aware of it, he was allowed to join the *tropa* of the *caballeros* of fortune.

Such were a few of the characters of the hostelry of the widow Medana. Nor was the conversation less edifying round the battered tables. Some discussed the stratagems of depriving others of their wealth, others the games of hazard then in vogue, and still others devoted their talk to the interesting subject of women.

In the far corner of the *posada*, however, on a certain day, were two worthies whom we may introduce as a *tropa* in themselves, a close corporation cemented for the moment by poverty. One was a tall lanky man of forbidding aspect, one of those who coveted yet shrank from gratification if it were to cost him a pang.

He was named Gaspar and known as an expert cloak-snatcher, a trade that has not yet fallen into disrepute regarding the loss of umbrellas and hats. This peculiar class of thieves flourished in Manila during the eighteenth century and were men who pilfered or stole outright the costly habiliments of the period.

And some of these were not to be despised. They might well represent the value of the wearer's estate. The snatchers were in collusion with the tailors who turned, dyed and re-made the garments and were not unbenefited thereby, and who were not uncommon in the walled city, then the mirror of fashion for the islands. Anyway Gaspar made money at his trade.

The other member, who gazed hungrily at a patron devouring a *cagayan* of stew with violent smackings, was of a different type; his name was Juan, corrupted into Juancho, and in common with many he had come from the provinces to seek his fortune in the metropolis. In these days perhaps he would have been a politician, but at that period there were no vacancies in that profession. There is an old saying that "the chicken bred in the provinces comes to Manila

to be eaten." He was new to the game of living by his wits, and had no flair for the cloak-snatching activities of Gaspar, but had a most decided one for wearing the finery that his companion lived upon. Another passion possessed in common was that of gaming, inherited from a long line of ancestors who believed a man was justified in borrowing a peso in hopes of recovering the one lost over the dice. Juancho had borrowed this sum of Gaspar, won a handful of money, paid his debt back, and lost all he had to the cloak-snatcher. He was cleaned out completely and felt for the moment both hungry and desolate.

However, there was another feeling that quite occupied him. He was in debt to Gaspar for a hat, and he had been nagged for an hour to pay up. This hat was the crown of his finery, and was of *fres-picos* with a red rosette, the edges trimmed with silver braid long tarnished. Gaspar had come by it very expeditiously. Walking over the Bridge of Spain, he had accidentally knocked it from the wearer's head into the

waters of the muddy Pasig, and later recovered it as his legitimate property and sold it to Juancho for three *tomines*. The last was a perfectly honest deal, but no money had passed into the hand of the greedy Gaspar, who proceeded to collect it by the native expedient of constant nagging, or have Juancho return his head-gear. There was then a deadlock, for Juancho became sullen and stubborn as the other increased his impotunity. It was a case as the Spaniard says of "Pedro dances as well as Juan, and Juan dances as well as Pedro" (being six of one and half-a-dozen of the other).

The coins of the colony had varied from the *roston* of 1580 to the *doblo* of a century later. The *reals* and *ducats* of Spain had been current for a while but currency at that time was divided into *pesos*, *tomines* and *granos*. The *tomine* was worth about twelve cents, a sum not to be despised when a *peso* was a more important coin than today. (Few people know that the dollar sign is of Spanish origin, representing the pillars of Hercules.) Anyway Gaspar was of

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Malolos.....	11:59	Aringay.....	9:33
San Fernando..	12:46	Agoo.....	9:48
Dau.....	1:23	DAMORTIS..	10:30
Tarlac.....	2:30	San Fabian..	11:02
Paniqui.....	3:14	Dagupan.....	11:24
Dagupan.....	4:48	Paniqui.....	1:06
San Fabian...	5:18	Tarlac.....	1:44
DAMORTIS..	6:05	Dau.....	2:47
Agoo.....	6:23	San Fernando.	3:34
Aringay.....	6:47	Malolos.....	4:13
B A U A N G		Bigaa.....	4:30
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the disposition that refused to be cheated and intended to get back either his hat or the three *tomines*; Juancho on the other hand resented the doubting of his honour or ability to pay. As a consequence there was bad blood between the two citizens, about the price of a hat.

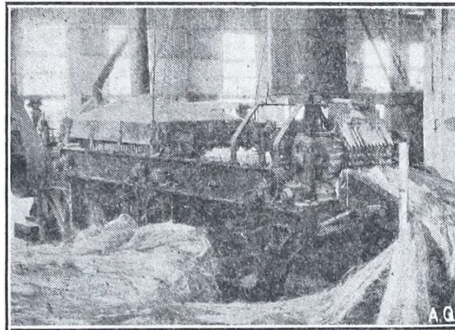
The next day Juancho had to tighten his *faja* in lieu of a meal, but he set out to meet one. Cocking his three-cornered hat over one eye, brushing off his tattered finery he swaggered past the lanky Gaspar regaling himself with a pair of eggs, and took the road out of the city towards the suburbs of Malate, literally seeking what he might devour. At a discreet distance followed Gaspar, one eye on his hat and his thoughts on the recovery of his *tomines*. Juancho, finding the inner man loudly calling for *almuerzo*, was fortunate in getting a meal on credit of a buxom *tiendera*, but this incident only proved to the cloak-snatcher that he had plenty of money but refused to pay. His evening meal was simple, for with the ready hospitality of the Malay, a householder invited him and he lost no time accepting. He had just finished and was about to light the post-prandial cigarette when Gaspar appeared and demanded his hat or his pay. A few bitter words and a struggle ensued for the three-cornered hat, to the great consternation of the host and his family.

Juancho, who did not desire to lose his head-piece on account of the protection it afforded and the pomp it conferred, took to his heels, followed by the pounding Gaspar. At that time there was, at a short distance from Malate and attached to the parish, a *visita*, or stone chapel, in which the people of the *barrio* heard an occasional mass and used as a temporary place of worship. It lay in a clump of bamboo and camachile trees, the door of course always open, and it contained an elaborate but flimsy altar, upon which stood the image of San Isidro Labrador, the patron of all good agriculturists, who by the way, we understand, is the patron saint of Madrid. At all events he is represented in the Philippines with his plow and oxen, and other farmers' implements, and after a good crop numerous candles are burned in his honour. Approaching the *visita*, Juancho, who was not as good a runner as his lanky creditor, left the dusty road and sought sanctuary in the hope that Gaspar would continue his flight and miss him. However, although the night was dark, his ears were good, and he also turned into the chapel.

Juancho passed rapidly up the flagged aisle and hid himself in the draperies behind the good saint, from which place of vantage he piously hoped he was safe till a later hour. Gaspar tiptoed into the *visita*, and assured that his hat was inside, crept cautiously into the carved confessional to await the emergence of his debtor, inwardly fuming at this escaping of what was to him a perfectly legal and collectible debt; and here we will leave them watchfully waiting to see what has become of Captain Pelayo, and his *tropa*.

Pelayo, La Trinidad, Cristomo and four other companions were in the possession of the information that about dark a coach was expected from Cavite province with a heavy consignment of tax-money en route to the King's Treasury. La Trinidad solemnly assured them that as the King was his debtor for all the money he had loaned during his period of service, he intended to collect the sum with the regular interest prevalent in the Philippines. Armed with a couple of *trabucos*, a pair of horse pistols and their regular meat-spitters the *tropa* awaited the event. In time the creaking coach appeared coming up the road, its lights dimmed by the dust, and the two armed guards tired by their long ride and thinking of the flesh-pots of the city and little of any such rude interruption as awaited them.

The troop dashed into action, the riders were pulled from their horses, without a chance to use their ponderous firearms, the *cochero* turned loose with a swift kick, the fat tax-official roped securely and laid with the guards in the dry ditch. The horses of both the escort and coach were started towards Manila with a series of whacks, and the *tropa* of Captain Pelayo were in high glee.



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The loot was considerable, being in four leather sacks, the joyous jingle of which told of the King's tribute. Crossing the fields a short distance to a tavern they knew of, they proceeded first to enjoy a meal which had been put off by their long wait, eating as if they possessed double stomachs and no consciences whatsoever. The only liquid refreshment obtainable was the fiery liquor known as *anisado*, with which they proceeded to top off their meal, all except Gabriel the neophyte. Fortified with a number of bottles they emerged and set off up the road in the direction of Malibay, at that time the Thieves' Roost of the suburbs. Of course their success led them from one drink to another until the rascals carrying the loads of silver stopped

and demanded a division be made so that each might bear his own loot. The argument became noisy and vinous, and being close to the *visita* in which Juancho had sought sanctuary Captain Pelayo acceded to their desire. La Trinidad and four of the *tropa*, although they wished to share the pesos, wanted it done in another place than the chapel as they were superstitious in spite of the cargo of *anisado* they carried.

After considerable commotion they entered and lighting a piece of candle sat down in a circle amid husky breathings and greedy eyes. They found that the haul exceeded their expectations. Then began the division, scrupulously counting into eight piles, two for the captain and one each for the *tropa*. It amounted to two thousand four hundred and thirty-two pesos and three *tomines*. When they had finished of course there were three *tomines* left over, a sum difficult to divide into eight equal parts. Cristomo suggested drawing lots, Gabriel the cruz and cara method and the difference of opinion threatened to develop into a tipsy quarrel.

The Captain, in order to settle the dispute, advised that it should be a matter of skill as they were all equally brave. The one who could throw the knife nearest to the ox of San Isidro should have the three *tomines*, a proposal received with general applause. La Trinidad and the others objected to using the holy saint as a mark, but were argued down.

Although San Isidro might be speechless at the indignity, Juancho, who had heard all that had passed, violently objected to being made a target or to dying a martyr's death. The voluble *tropa* lined up unsteadily due to the amount of *anisado* they had imbibed, and Cristomo made ready for the first cast. At this moment Juancho, reverting to his native dialect, yelled "*Panginoon Dios. Ma-awa-saquin*" (Almighty Lord, have pity on me). In trying to extricate himself from the draperies, having vainly implored Divine aid, the entire altar with the saint itself gave way and fell with a magnificent clattering towards the circle of knife-throwers. This was too much even for the captain and he and La Trinidad were first at the door which proved itself too narrow for the hasty egress desired by the *tropa*, who precipitately fled, leaving San Isidro to the undisputed possession of the King's pesos.

Juancho extricated himself from the hangings and coming out gloated over the opulence of the piles of silver. He had never seen so much wealth at one time in his period of existence, but he lost no time in availing himself of this opportunity. Dragging off a piece of the drapery he had hastily put the money inside and was stooping to tie the improvised sack into a knot, when he was aware of a pair of ragged hose and dusty shoes at his side, and looked up into the leering face of Gaspar, who had emerged in turn from the confessional.



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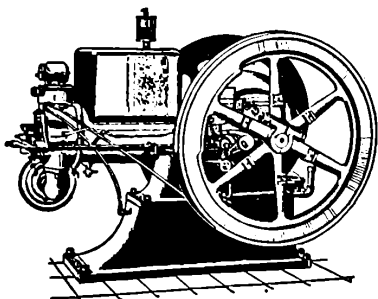
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Without losing his presence of mind he held out the three *tomines* to his pursuer as the price of his hat. Scornfully drawing himself up Gaspar refused the sum he would have gladly accepted a few minutes before. "Halves or the police," he said, at the same time laying hold of the drapery with a cloak-snatcher clutch. Seeing he was in a tight place Juancho consented and they sat down and made the division this time into two equal parts. Again the accursed *tomines* were left over.

Juancho calmly proceeded to pocket these as an offset to the gift of some one thousand odd pesos he had made Gaspar, but the latter did not see the transaction in the same light at all. He desired the *tomines* for his hat in spite of all his sudden wealth. They were of course animated not by *anísado* but the one by avaricious greed, the other by righteous stubbornness. Words came and fearful of losing his dues the cloak-snatcher grasped Juancho by the arm, and he took hold of Gaspar by the hair. A vicious yank of the latter and the fight was on. In a twinkling they were a gyrating, cursing, fighting pair, yelling above the *me/é* that each would take the three *tomines* in spite of the other, followed by the most bloodcurdling oaths. Punches, jabs and kicks, wrestlings and the crash of church ornaments and the scattering of pesos under their feet filled the echoing chapel as if there were twenty people engaged instead of two.

Meanwhile Captain Pelayo and his *tropa*, tired of running, stopped to take breath. A discussion of the mysterious affair, the speedy exit and the loss of the loot turned to dull rage at being cheated by a saint. In spite of the warnings and entreaties they returned towards the chapel. As they approached their steps became slower and their courage less. At a safe distance they stopped and vainly tried to calm their wildly beating hearts. Nobody spoke, as they all appeared to be filled with a sudden respect for the miraculous, the superstitious complex in an age of miracles. La Trinidad, whose vinous breath and familiarity with holy places gave him a false courage, offered to reconnoitre the *visita*. Nobody disputed him or desired to take his place and with a bold resolution he disappeared in the direction of the chapel while the rest crouched in anxious silence.

In a few minutes he came galloping wildly towards them. Some prepared for flight but seeing none pursued him they awaited his report. Pale and breathless, he was interrogated by the *tropa*. His story was to the point.

The *visita* was full of men or spirits engaged in a terrible struggle to divide the spoils. He was unable to get close but heard them yelling and fighting, and the clink of the money was plainly distinguished. Each was demanding

his three *tomines* with oaths and groanings. It was enough for La Trinidad.

He did not care to interfere. Pelayo desired to know how many there were inside, but La Trinidad answered breathlessly, "How many? You can guess how many when out of two thousand, four hundred and thirty-two pesos they are only getting three *tomines* apiece." The appalling news was too much for the superstitious troop, and the loud hoot of a *lechusa* in the bamboo was sign enough. They did not stand on the order of their going, but the clanking sword and flying points of the captain were in the lead. There is no use struggling with the saints.

While the two worthies were shouting and pummeling each other, they were too busy to see that the chapel was full and they were completely surrounded by some forty *cuadrilleros* led by the two guards the troop of Pelayo had laid by the heels. Stung by the robbery the latter after loosening their bonds had retraced their steps with reinforcements, and were just about to return when the noise and yelling from the chapel announced that something unusual was going on. The grizzled officer in command ordered them separated and secured with ropes, gathered up all the money, including the despised *tomines*, and set out to deliver the sum safe into the hands of the Treasurer.

Behind in the dust plodded the two culprits, unaware of the enormity of their crime. Every time they stopped to curse each other a prod behind from a rusty bayonet informed them they were no longer free of action. In this wise they arrived at the gates of the prison and were afforded the luxury of separate cells, and minus both the hat and its value.

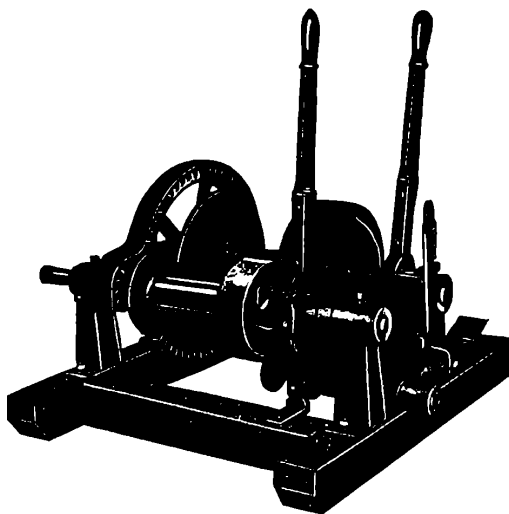
It was a most important capture and Manila was soon advised of it. Now the government of the Philippines even more than the governments of other places has a strong objection to seeing the taxpayers' money diverted from its proper destination, which meant and still means that the proper persons shall spend it on properly approved vouchers. The consequence was that Juancho and Gaspar, caught *in flagrante delicto*, were left to moulder in the cell of the *corregidor* for some time. Came the day of the trial. In vain they tried to convince the judge that they had merely stumbled on the foot. The fight for the three *tomines* settled that. The ruffled tax official solemnly recognized them, or said he did, as the very highwaymen who had attacked the coach, and another witness swore on the Holy Evangels that they were cloak-snatchers. They argued with their spiritual confessor that Providence helps those who help themselves but the friar was not at all impressed with this quotation from Holy Writ.

Captain Pelagio and the *tropa* kept a discreet silence. Any raids they might engage in later were going to be far from saints and chapels. The sentence given was that each should be deprived of the means of committing further crime and to lose the thumbs of their right hands, these to be stricken off by a blow from a mallet and chisel. This, of course, happened long before the thirteen colonies revolted against "cruel and unusual" punishments. The unlucky individuals were finally released, each minus a thumb, and with a great bitterness in their hearts. Not only were they handicapped in appropriating the property of others but each blamed the other for the loss of over a thousand pesos. Besides, Juancho still owed Gaspar the price of a hat.

—"Inter-Ocean", Java.

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