

Stratemeyer Edward

**The Campaign of the Jungle: or,
Under Lawton through Luzon**



Edward Stratemeyer

**The Campaign of the Jungle: or,
Under Lawton through Luzon**

«Public Domain»

Stratemeyer E.

The Campaign of the Jungle: or, Under Lawton through Luzon /
E. Stratemeyer — «Public Domain»,

Содержание

PREFACE	5
CHAPTER I	6
CHAPTER II	9
CHAPTER III	12
CHAPTER IV	15
CHAPTER V	18
CHAPTER VI	21
CHAPTER VII	24
CHAPTER VIII	27
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	29

Stratemeyer Edward

The Campaign of the Jungle Or Under Lawton through Luzon

PREFACE

“The Campaign of the Jungle” is a complete story in itself, but forms the fifth volume of the “Old Glory Series,” a line of tales depicting life and adventure in our army and navy of to-day.

The heroes of these various stories are the three Russell brothers, Larry, Walter, and Ben. In the first volume we told of Larry’s adventures while “Under Dewey at Manila,” in the second and fourth we followed Ben as “A Young Volunteer in Cuba” and during the opening campaign “Under Otis in the Philippines,” while in the third tale we saw what Walter could do “Fighting in Cuban Waters.”

In the present volume the reader is asked to follow the fortunes of both Larry and Ben in two important expeditions of that gallant soldier, General Henry W. Lawton, the first directed against Santa Cruz on the Laguna de Bay, where the insurgents were left badly scattered, and the second from Manila to San Isidro, a winding advance of about one hundred and fifty miles through the jungle, which took twenty days to complete, and during which time twenty-two battles were fought and twenty-eight towns were captured, along with large quantities of army stores and the like. This latter expedition was one of the most daring of its kind, and could not have been pushed to success had not the man at its head been what he was, a trained Indian fighter of our own West, and one whose nerve and courage were almost beyond comprehension. Small wonder it was that when, later on, General Lawton was killed on the firing line, General Otis cabled, “Great loss to us and to his country.”

As in the previous volumes of this series, the author has endeavored to be as accurate, historically, as possible, and for this reason has examined the reports of the officers high in command, as well as listened to many tales related by the returning soldiers themselves. It is therefore hoped that if any errors have crept in they may not be of sufficient magnitude to hurt the general usefulness of the work from an historical standpoint. As a story of adventure, the writer trusts it will find equal favor with those that have preceded it in the series.

EDWARD STRATEMEYER.

Newark, N. J.,
March 1, 1900.

CHAPTER I

DISMAYING NEWS

“How are you feeling to-day, Ben?”

“Fairly good, Larry. If it wasn’t for this awfully hot weather, the wound wouldn’t bother me at all. The doctor says that if I continue to improve as I have, I can rejoin my company by the middle of next week.”

“You mustn’t hurry matters. You did enough fighting at Caloocan, Malabon, Polo, and here, to last you for some time. Let the other fellows have a share of it.” And Larry Russell smiled grimly as he bent over his elder brother and grasped the hand that was thrust forward.

“I am willing the other fellows should have their share of the fighting, Larry. But you must remember that now Captain Larchmore is dead, and Lieutenant Ross is down with the fever, there is nobody to command our company but me – unless, of course, Sergeant Gilmore takes charge.”

“Then let Gilmore play captain for a while, while you take the rest you have so well earned. Why, you’ve been working like a steam-engine ever since you landed in Luzon. Gilbert Pennington says he never dreamed there was so much fight in you, and predicts that you’ll come out a brigadier general by the time Aguinaldo and his army are defeated.”

“Well, I believe in pushing things,” responded Ben Russell, smiling more broadly than ever, as his mind wandered back to that fierce attack on Malolos, where he had received the bullet wound in the side. “If we can only keep the insurgents on the run, we’ll soon make them throw down their arms. But tell me about yourself, Larry. What have you been doing since you were up here last?”

“Oh, I’ve been putting in most of my time on board the *Olympia*, as usual,” replied the young tar. “About all we are doing is to nose around any strange vessels that come into the harbor. Since the outbreak in Manila last February, the navy has had next to nothing to do, and I’m thinking strongly of asking to be transferred to the marines at Cavite, or elsewhere.”

“I don’t blame you.” Ben Russell paused. “Have you heard anything more about Braxton Bogg and that hundred and forty thousand dollars he said he had left hidden in Benedicto Lupez’s house in Manila?”

A shade of anxiety crossed Larry Russell’s face. “Yes, I’ve heard a good deal – more than I wanted to, Ben. But I wasn’t going to speak of it, for fear of adding to your worry and making you feel worse.”

“Why, Larry, you don’t mean – Has Braxton Bogg escaped from jail and got hold of the money again?”

“No, Braxton Bogg is still in prison at Manila, although the Buffalo bank officials are about to have him returned to the United States for trial. But the money has disappeared. The police authorities at Manila went to Benedicto Lupez’s house, to find it locked up and deserted. They broke in and made a search, but they couldn’t find a dollar, either in Spanish or American money, although they did find Braxton Bogg’s valise and a dozen or more printed bands of the Hearthstone Saving Institution – the kind of bands they put around five-hundred-dollar and one-thousand-dollar packages of bills.”

“Then this Spaniard found where Bogg had hidden the money and made off with it?”

“That is the supposition; and I reckon it’s about right, too. Of course, it may be possible that Braxton Bogg never left the stolen money in Lupez’s house, although he swears he did. He says Lupez was an old friend of his and was going to have the bills changed into Spanish money for him, so that Bogg could use the cash without being suspected of any wrong-doing.”

“It’s too bad; and just as we thought our fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars of the amount was safe. I wonder what the bank people at home will say now.”

“Of course, they won’t like it. They would rather have the money than their missing cashier; and I would rather have the money, too – not but that Braxton Bogg ought to be punished for his crimes.”

“Yes, Larry, Braxton Bogg deserves all the law can give him, for the depositors in the Hearthstone Saving Institution were mostly poor, hard-working persons, and the wrecking of the bank meant untold hardships for them.” The wounded brother sighed deeply. “If that money isn’t recovered, we’ll be as badly off as we were when we first came to Manila,” he concluded.

Ben Russell was the eldest of three brothers, Walter coming next, and Larry being the youngest. They were orphans, and at the death of their widowed mother had been left in the care of their uncle, Job Dowling, a miserly man whose chief aim in life had been to hoard money, no matter at what cost, so long as his method was within the limit of the law.

The boys were all sturdy and had been used to a good home, and Job Cowling’s harsh and dictatorial manner cut them to the quick. A clash between guardian and wards had resulted in the running away of the three youths, and the guardian had tried in vain to bring them back. Larry had drifted to San Francisco and shipped on a merchantman bound for China. He had become a castaway and been picked up by the Asiatic Squadron of the United States Navy. This was just at the time of the outbreak of the war with Spain, and how gallantly the young tar served his country has already been told in detail in “Under Dewey at Manila.”

Ben had found his way to New York, and Walter had drifted to Boston. After several adventures, the war fever had caught both, and Ben had joined the army to become “A Young Volunteer in Cuba,” as already related in the volume of that name, while Walter had joined the armored cruiser *Brooklyn* and participated in the destruction of the Spanish fleet in Santiago Bay, as told in “Fighting in Cuban Waters.”

While the three boys were away from home, Job Dowling had overreached himself by trying to sell some of the Russell heirlooms which it had been willed the lads should keep. The heirlooms had been stolen by a sharper, and it had cost the old man a neat sum of money to get them back. The experience made him both a sadder and a wiser man, and from that time on his manner changed, and when the boys returned from the war they found that he had turned over a new leaf. In the future he was perfectly willing that they should “do fer themselves,” as he expressed it.

After a brief stay in Buffalo, Walter had left, to rejoin the *Brooklyn*, which was bound for a cruise to Jamaica and elsewhere. At this time trouble began to break out between the United States troops in the Philippines and the insurgents who had been fighting the now-conquered Spaniards, and it looked as if another fair-sized war was at hand. This being so, Ben lost no time in reënlisting in the army, while Larry hastened to join Admiral Dewey’s flagship *Olympia* once more. “If there’s to be any more fighting, I want to be right in it,” was what the young tar said, and Ben agreed with him. How they journeyed to Manila by way of the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Indian Ocean, has already been related in “Under Otis in the Philippines.” Ben was at this time second lieutenant of Company D of his regiment. With the two boys went Gilbert Pennington, Ben’s old friend of the Rough Riders, who was now first sergeant of Company B of the same regiment, and half a dozen others who had fought with the young volunteer in Cuba. On arriving at Manila Larry found matters, so far as it concerned his ship, very quiet, but Ben was at once sent to the front, and participated with much honor to himself in the campaign which led to the fall of Malolos, a city that was at that time the rebel capital. As Company D, with Ben at its head as acting captain, had rushed down the main street of the place, an insurgent sharpshooter had hit the young commander in the side, and he had fallen, to be picked up later and placed in the temporary hospital which was opened up in Malolos as soon as it was made certain that the rebels had been thoroughly cleaned out. Fortunately for the young volunteer the wound, though painful, was not serious.

Of the fifteen thousand to twenty thousand dollars coming to the Russell brothers, more than three-quarters had been invested by Job Dowling in the Heathstone Saving Institution, a Buffalo bank that had promised the close-minded man a large rate of interest. The cashier of this bank, Braxton

Bogg, had absconded, taking with him all the available cash which the institution possessed. Bogg had come to Manila, and there Ben had fallen in with him several times and finally accomplished his arrest. It was found that Braxton Bogg had very little money on his person, and the guilty cashier finally admitted that he had left his booty at the house of one Benedicto Lupez, a Spaniard with whom he had boarded. As all the Spaniards in Manila were being closely watched by the soldiers doing police duty in the disturbed city, both Ben and Larry had supposed that there would be no further trouble in getting possession of the missing money. But Benedicto Lupez had slipped away unperceived, taking the stolen money with him, and the Russell inheritance – or at least the larger portion of it – was as far out of the reach of the boys as ever.

CHAPTER II

SOMETHING ABOUT THE SITUATION AT MALOLOS

“Do you know if the Manila authorities have any idea where this Benedicto Lupez has gone to?” asked Ben, after partaking of some delicacies which Larry had managed to obtain for him.

“They think he got on a small boat and went up the Pasig River. He is supposed to have a brother living in Santa Cruz on the Laguna de Bay. This brother is said to be in thorough sympathy with the insurgents.”

“In that case he is out of our reach for the present, as the rebels, so I understand, have a pretty good force in and around Santa Cruz. But if this Lupez has the money, I can’t understand how he would join the rebels. They’ll try to get the cash from him, if they need it.”

“Perhaps he is foolish enough to think that they will win out in this fight, Ben. You know how hot-headed some of these people are. They haven’t any idea of the real power of Uncle Sam. I believe if they did know, they would submit without another encounter.”

“It would be best if they did, Larry, for now that we are in this fight we are bound to make them yield. Once they throw down their arms, I feel certain our country will do what is fair and honest by them.”

“It’s the leaders who are urging the ignorant common people on – I’ve heard more than one of the officers say so. The leaders are well educated and crafty, and they can make the masses believe almost anything. Why, just before I came away from Manila I saw a dozen or more Igorottes brought in – tall, strapping fellows, but as ignorant as so many children. They seemed to be dazed when their wounds were cared for and they were offered food. The interpreter said they thought they would be massacred on the spot by the bloodthirsty *Americanos*, and they had a lurking suspicion that they were being cared for just so they could be sold into slavery.”

At this juncture a tall, thoroughly browned soldier came in, wearing the uniform of a first lieutenant.

“Well, Ben, how is it to-day,” he said cheerily, as he extended his hand. “And how are you, Larry?” And he likewise shook hands with the young tar.

“I’m hoping to get out soon, Gilbert,” answered Ben. “But what’s this – a lieutenant’s uniform?”

“Yes, I’ve been promoted to first lieutenant of Company B,” returned Gilbert Pennington. “I tell you, we are all climbing up the ladder, and Larry must look to his laurels. I understand you are to be made permanent captain of Company D.”

“But where is First Lieutenant Crunger of your company?”

“Disappeared,” and the young Southerner’s face took on a sober look. “That’s the only thing that mars my happiness over my promotion. After the taking of Malolos, Jack Crunger disappeared utterly, and we haven’t been able to find hide nor hair of him, although half a dozen scouting parties have been sent out and the stream has been dragged in several places.”

“Perhaps he was taken prisoner,” suggested Larry. “I heard some of the Kansas and Utah men were missing, too.”

“We are afraid he is a prisoner, and if that is so, Aguinaldo’s men have probably taken him up to San Fernando, where the insurgents are setting up their new capital.”

“And what is going on at the firing line?” asked Ben, eagerly. “Are they following up the rebels’ retreat?”

“I’m sorry to say no. General MacArthur made a reconnaissance in the direction of Calumpit, but it amounted to little.”

“I understand that the *Charleston* has sailed up the coast and is going to shell Dagupan,” put in Larry. “Dagupan, you know, is the terminus of the railroad line.”

“That’s good,” came from the sick brother. “If we can get a footing in Dagupan, we can work the railroad territory from both ends.” But this was not to be, as coming events speedily proved, for the shelling of the city by the warship amounted to but little.

Gilbert Pennington knew all about the Braxton Bogg affair and listened with interest to what Larry had to relate.

“It’s too bad,” he declared. “I’d like to give you some hope, boys, but I’m afraid you’ll have to whistle for your fortune. That Spaniard will keep out of the reach of the Americans, and if the worst comes to the worst, he’ll slip off to Spain or South America; you mark my words.”

Larry’s leave of absence was for forty-eight hours only, and soon he was forced to bid his brother and his friend good-by. “Now take good care of yourself, Ben,” he said, on parting. “And do stay here until you are stronger. Remember that a wounded man can’t stand this broiling sun half as well as one who isn’t wounded, and even the strongest of them are suffering awfully from the heat.”

“I’ll make him stay,” put in Gilbert, with mock severity. “Surgeon Fallox won’t give him clearance papers until I tell him, for he’s a great friend of mine.”

“I’m going to have a word with Stummer before I go,” added Larry, and hurried to the ward in which the sturdy German volunteer had been placed. He found the member of Ben’s company propped up on some grass pillows, smoking his favorite brier-root pipe.

“Sure, an’ I vos glad to see you, Larry,” cried Carl, his round face broadening into a smile on beholding his visitor. “Yah, I vos doin’ putty goot, und I peen out on der firin’ line next veek maype. But say, I vos sorry I peen shot town pefore we got to Malolos. I vos dink sure I help clean dose repels out.”

“Never mind, you did your duty, Carl. I’ve heard they are going to make you a corporal for your bravery.”

“Sure, an’ that’s right,” came in an Irish voice behind the pair, and Dan Casey, another volunteer of Ben’s company, appeared. “It’s meself as has the honor av saying it first, too, Carl. You are to be first corporal, Carl, wid meself doin’ juty as second corporal.”

The German volunteer’s face lit up for a second, then fell suspiciously. “Say, Dan, vos dis a choke maype?” he said slowly.

“A joke, is it?” burst out Casey. “Sure, an’ do ye think I’d be afther playin’ a joke on a wounded man, Carl? No, it’s no joke. We’re raised to the dignity av officers be the forchunes av war an’ the recommendations av our superior, Actin’ Captain Russell, which same will soon be our captain be commission, Providence an’ the President willin’.”

“Good for Ben!” exclaimed Larry. “You both deserve it.” And after a few words more he hurried off, leaving the two old soldiers to congratulate themselves on their advancement and speculate upon how high they might rise in the service before the rebellion should close. Casey had his eye set on a captaincy, but Stummer said he would be quite content if any commissioned office came his way, even if it was but a second-lieutenancy.

Malolos had been captured on Friday, March 31, 1899, at a little after ten o’clock in the morning, although the fighting kept up until nearly nightfall. As soon as the rebels were thoroughly cleaned out, many of the soldiers were called upon to do duty as firemen, for a large portion of the town was in flames. While the fire was being put out, other soldiers went about stopping the Chinese from looting the deserted mansions. The coolies were at first made prisoners and put under guard in the public park, but later on they were released and set to work to clean the streets.

As Gilbert had said, the days immediately following the fall of Malolos were not of special activity. The hard, running fight along the railroad through Caloocan, Polo, and other places, had all but exhausted the army under General MacArthur, and when the insurgents’ capital was taken, it was felt that the soldiers had earned a well-needed rest. Moreover, many had been wounded and many more were down, suffering from the heat and tropical fever, and these had to be cared for in the temporary hospitals established at various points in the neighborhood. In the meantime the railroad

was repaired and Malolos was made a new base for supplies. There were several skirmishes in the neighborhood north and northeast of Malolos, and in these the rebels were compelled to fall back still further, yet the outbreaks amounted to but little.

In the meantime, the Philippine Commission of the United States issued a proclamation, translated into the Spanish and Tagalog languages, calling upon the insurgents to throw down their arms and promising them good local government, the immediate opening of schools and courts of law, the building of railroads, and a civil service administration in which the native should participate. This proclamation was widely distributed, yet it did little good; for the common people of the islands were given to understand by their leaders that the Americans did not mean what they said, but had come to their country only to plunder them, and would in the end treat them even worse than had the Spaniards.

It was no easy work to repair the railroad running from Manila to Malolos Station, which was some distance from the town proper. All tools and equipments had to be brought up from Manila and from Cavite, and soon the engineering corps found themselves harassed by some rebels in the vicinity of Marilao and Guiguinto. At once General MacArthur sent out a force to clear the ground, and several sharp attacks ensued, which resulted in the loss of twenty-three killed and wounded on the American side, and double that number to the enemy. In the end the rebels fled to the mountains to the eastward and to Calumpit on the north.

“We are going out to-morrow,” said Gilbert, as he came to see Ben on the day following the engagements just mentioned. “General Wheaton says he is going to drive the rebels straight into the mountains – and I reckon he’ll keep his word.”

Ben was at once anxious to go along, but this was not yet to be, and he was forced to sit at a window of the hospital and see his regiment march by with colors flying gayly and all “the boys” eager for another contest. The members of his own company gave him a cheer as they passed. “You’ll soon be with us again, captain,” cried one. “We won’t forget you! Hurrah!” and on they marched, with a lieutenant from Company A leading them, and with Gilbert and Major Morris and many old friends with the regiment. Ben watched them out of sight, and heaved a long sigh over the fact that he was not of their number. But there was still plenty of fighting in store for the young captain, and many thrilling and bitter experiences in the bargain.

CHAPTER III

AN ADVENTURE ON THE PASIG RIVER

“Hurrah, Luke! I reckon I am going to see a bit of fighting at last.”

It was Larry who spoke, as he rushed up to his old friend, Luke Striker, now one of the gun captains on board the *Olympia*. It was the day after the young tar had paid the visit to Ben.

“Fighting? where?” demanded the Yankee gunner. “Do you mean to say as how the *Olympia* is goin’ to do some scoutin’ alongshore, lad?”

“No, the ship is going to remain right where she is. But General Lawton is going to take an expedition up the Pasig River from San Pedro Macati to the Laguna de Bay, and some of the sailors are going along to help manage the cascos and other boats. I just applied for a place, along with Jack Biddle, and we both got in.”

“And why can’t I get in?” returned Luke, eagerly. “This here everlastin’ sitting still, doin’ nuthin’, is jest a-killin’ of me.”

“You might apply, although there are already more volunteers than they want,” answered Larry. He told his old friend how to make the necessary application, and soon Luke had joined the expedition; and the three friends hastened ashore and on board a shallow river transport, which was to take them and a number of others up to San Pedro Macati.

The brief journey to the latter-named village was without incident. Here Larry found assembled a body of about thirteen hundred soldiers, infantry and cavalry, and with them two hundred picked sharpshooters, and two guns manned by members of the regular artillery. Owing to the sickness of the commanding general, General Lawton took personal charge of the expedition.

No man was better fitted for fighting in the Philippines than Major General Henry W. Lawton, who had but lately arrived in the islands, and who was destined to die the death of a hero upon the firing line. Of commanding appearance, being six feet three inches in height and weighing over two hundred pounds, he was a soldier by nature and a natural leader among leaders. He had fought all through the great Civil War with much credit to himself, and it was he who, during the great Apache Indian uprising, followed the crafty Geronimo through mountain and over desert for a distance of nearly fourteen hundred miles, and at last caused him to surrender. For this, it is said, the Indians called him “Man-who-gets-up-in-the-night-to-fight,” and they respected him as they respected few others.

With the outbreak of the war with Spain General Lawton was in his element, and when the army of occupation sailed for Santiago he was with them; and it was this same Lawton who stormed El Caney and captured it, as related in “A Young Volunteer in Cuba.” When General Shafter wanted to call Lawton away from El Caney, after the troops had been fighting many hours, Lawton sent him word, “I can’t stop – I’ve got to fight,” and went forward again; and in less than an hour the Spanish flag at the top of the hill was down, and Old Glory had taken its place.

General Lawton was addressing several members of his staff when Larry first saw him at San Pedro Macati. He stood, war map in hand, in front of the river landing, a conspicuous figure among the half-dozen that surrounded him.

“He’s a fighter – you can see that,” whispered Larry to Luke, who stood beside him. “Just look at that square-set jaw. He won’t let up on the rebels an inch.”

“Jest the kind we’re a-wantin’ out here,” responded the Yankee gunner. “The more they force the fightin’ the sooner the war will come to an end. He’s coming toward us,” he added, as General Lawton stepped from out of the circle around him.

“You are from the *Olympia*, I believe?” he said, addressing Luke.

“Yes, general,” replied the old gunner, touching his forelock, while Larry also saluted. “We volunteered for this expedition.”

“You look all right, but – ” General Lawton turned to Larry. “I’m afraid you are rather young for this sort of thing, my lad,” he went on.

“I hope not, sir,” cried Larry, quickly. “I’ve seen fighting before.”

“He was in the thickest of it when we knocked out Admiral Montojo, general,” interposed Luke. “You can trust him to do his full share, come what may.”

“Oh, if he was in that fight I guess he’ll be all right,” responded General Lawton, with a grim sort of a smile. And he turned away to overlook the shipping of some ammunition on one of the tinclad gunboats which was to form part of the expedition.

The troops were speedily on the cascos, which were to be towed by several steam launches and escorted by three tinclads. Although Larry and his friends did not know it till several hours later, the destination was Santa Cruz, a pretty town, situated on a slight hill overlooking the placid waters of the Laguna de Bay. The general’s plan was to reach the lake by nightfall, and steal over the silent waters in the dark until the vicinity of Santa Cruz was gained, in hopes that the garrison might be caught “napping,” as it is called.

For the time being the sailors were separated one from another, each being put in charge of a casco, the shallow rowboats being joined together in strings of four to six each, and pulled along with many a jerk and twist by the puffing little launches, which at times came almost to a standstill.

“We won’t reach the lake by sunrise, and I know it,” remarked one of the soldiers to Larry, who stood in the bow of the casco with an oar, ready to do whatever seemed best for the craft. “We’ve a good many miles to go yet.”

At that instant the casco ahead ran aground in the shallow river, and Larry had all he could do to keep his craft from running into it. As the two boats came stem to stern one of the soldiers in the craft ahead called out to those behind: —

“Say, Idaho, do you know where we are bound?”

“Bound for Santa Cruz, so I heard our captain remark,” answered one of the soldiers in Larry’s boat. “Got any tobacco, North Dakota?”

“Nary a pipeful, wuss luck,” was the response; and then the line straightened out as the casco ahead cleared herself from the mud, and the two boats moved apart once more.

“Are we really going to Santa Cruz?” questioned Larry, as soon as he got the chance. “I thought we were bound for the north shore of the lake.”

“I can only tell you what I heard the captain say,” answered the soldier, with a shrug of his shoulder. “General Lawton ain’t blowing his plans through a trumpet, you know.”

“I hope we do go to Santa Cruz,” mused Larry, as he thought of what had been said of Benedicto Lupez. “And if we take the town I hope we take that rascal, too.”

The best laid plans are often upset by incidents trifling in themselves. It was the dry season of the year, and the Pasig River, usually broad and turbulent, was now nothing better than a muddy, shallow creek, winding and treacherous to the last degree. As night came on the expedition found itself still in the stream and many miles from the lake, and here cascos and launches ran aground and a general mix-up ensued.

“Hullo, what have we run up against now?” growled the lieutenant in charge of the soldiers in Larry’s boat. “Can’t you keep out of the mud, Jackie?”

“I’m doing my best,” panted the youth, as he shoved off for at least the fourth time. “With the lines forward and aft pulling one way and another it’s rather difficult to keep to the channel, especially in the dark.”

“Oh, you’re only a boy and don’t understand the trick,” growled the lieutenant, who was in a bad humor generally. “I don’t see why they let you come along.”

“Our boat is doing about as well as any of them,” answered Larry, bound to defend himself. “Two boats are aground to our left and three behind us.”

“See here, don’t talk back to me! You tend to business and keep us out of the mud,” roared the lieutenant, in worse humor than before.

An angry retort arose to Larry’s lips, but he checked it. “A quarrel won’t do any good,” he thought. “But what a bulldog that fellow is – as bad as Quartermaster Yarrow, who caused me so much trouble on the trip out here.”

On went the cascos once more, around a tortuous bend and past a bank fringed with bushes and reeds. The mosquitoes were numerous, likewise the flies, and everybody began to wish the journey at an end.

“We’d better make a charge on the insects,” growled one old soldier. “They are worse nor the rebels ten times over,” and, just then, many were inclined to agree with him. Tobacco was scarce or smoking would have been far more plentiful than it was.

Midnight came and went, and found the expedition still some distance from the lake. A few of the soldiers were sleeping, but the majority remained wide awake, fighting off the marshland pests, and aiding in keeping the cascos and launches from running high and dry in the mud. Had it not been for the tinclads it is doubtful if the Laguna de Bay would have been gained at all by more than half of the craft composing the turnout. But they came to the rescue time and again, and so the expedition crawled along, until, at four o’clock, the clear sheet of water beyond was sighted.

They were making the last turn before the lake was gained when the casco ahead of that steered by Larry went aground once more, dragging Larry’s craft behind it. The youth did all he could to back water, but in vain, and once more they heard the unwelcome slish of mud under their bottom.

“Now you’ve done it again!” howled the lieutenant, leaping up from his seat. “You numskull! give me that oar.” And he tried to wrench the blade from Larry’s hand.

“It was not my fault,” began the youth, when the officer forced the blade from him and hurled him back on one of the soldiers. Then the lieutenant tried to do some poling for himself, and got the oar stuck so tightly in the mud that he could not loosen it.

Burning with indignation, Larry felt himself go down in a heap, and at once tried to get up again. At the same time the soldier beneath him gave him a shove which pitched him several feet forward. He landed up against the lieutenant with considerable force, and in a twinkling the officer went overboard, head first, into the water and mud where the casco had stuck fast.

CHAPTER IV

THE GAP IN THE FIRING LINE

“Hullo, Lieutenant Horitz has fallen overboard!”

“Pull him out of the mud, before he smothers or drowns!”

Such were some of the cries which arose among the soldiers that filled the casco. Then Larry was shoved back, and two of them caught hold of the legs of the man who had disappeared, as for an instant they showed themselves. There was a “long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether,” and up came the lieutenant, minus his hat and with his face and neck well plastered with the black ooze of the river bottom.

For a moment after he sank on the seat that was vacated to receive him, he could not speak. One of the soldiers handed him a handkerchief, and with this he proceeded to clear his eyes and ears, at the same time puffing vainly to get back his breath. At last he cleared his throat and glared angrily at Larry.

“You – you young whelp!” he fumed. “You – you knocked me over on purpose!”

“No, sir, I did not,” answered the young tar, promptly. “One of the soldiers shoved me up against you.”

“I don’t believe you,” roared the unreasonable one, as he continued to clean himself off. “You shall pay dearly for this assault, mark me!”

“Didn’t you shove me?” asked Larry, appealing to one of the soldiers.

“I shoved you off of my neck, yes,” answered the enlisted man. “But I didn’t throw you into Lieutenant Horitz. You did that yourself.”

“Of course he did it himself,” said another soldier, who did not wish to see his tent-mate get into trouble. “You had it in for the lieutenant ever since he first spoke to you.”

“I shall report you the first chance I get,” growled Lieutenant Horitz. “I reckon you’ll find that General Lawton won’t allow any such disgraceful conduct while he is in command.”

“What’s the row back there?” came out of the darkness. “Hurry up and get afloat, or we’ll cut the rope and leave you to shift for yourselves.”

“Our officer was just shoved overboard,” answered Snapper, the soldier who had given Larry the unlucky push. “And we’ve lost our oar.”

“No, I have the oar,” put in Larry, making a clutch into the water for the article just as it was about to float out of reach. He leaped into the bow once more, and began to work vigorously, and in a few seconds they were again afloat.

Fortunately for the lieutenant the night was warm, so he suffered no inconvenience so far as his wet clothing was concerned. But it was no mean task to clean both himself and his uniform, and what to do for another hat he did not know. He would have taken Larry’s headgear had that article been anyway suitable, but it was not.

It must be confessed that Larry felt thoroughly ill at ease. That there was trouble ahead went without saying, and he half wished himself safe back on the *Olympia*. “He’ll make out the worst case he can against me,” he thought. “And his men will back him up in all he says.” Yet he felt that he was guilty of no intentional wrong-doing, and resolved to stand up for himself to the best of his ability.

The lieutenant had learned one lesson – that he knew no more about handling the casco than did Larry, if as much, and, consequently, he offered no more suggestions as to how to run the craft. But he kept muttering under his breath at the youth, and Larry felt that he was aching to “get square.”

It was early dawn when the casco turned into the lake proper. As the sun came up it shed its light on one of the prettiest sheets of water Larry had ever beheld. The lake was as smooth as a millpond, and surrounded with long stretches of marshland and heavy thickets of tropical growth. Fish were

plentiful, as could be seen by gazing into the clear depths below, and overhead circled innumerable birds. Villages dotted the lake shore at various points, but these the expedition gave a wide berth, setting out directly for Santa Cruz, still several miles distant, behind the hill previously mentioned.

If it had been General Lawton's intention to attack the town from in front in the dark, that plan had now to be changed, and the expedition turned toward shore at a point at least three miles from the town proper.

But even here the rebels could be seen to be on the alert, and a rapid-firing gun was put into action and directed along the lake front. The gun was manned by some men from the *Napadan*, and did such wonderful execution that soon the insurgent sentries were seen to be fleeing toward the town at utmost speed. Then a small detachment from some brush also retreated, and the coast was clear.

It was no easy matter to land, as the water here was shallow and the cascos had to be poled along over the soft mud. The sharpshooters were the first ashore, and they soon cleared a spot for the others. But a few of the rebels were "game," and as a result one man was wounded, although not seriously. The cavalry remained on the boats, to land closer to the hill later on.

The landing had consumed much valuable time, and it was now after noon. A hasty meal was had, and then the column moved off, spreading out in fan shape as it advanced, the sharpshooters to the front and the rear, and a number of special scouts on the alert to give the first warning of danger. Soon the scouts in front came back with the news that the insurgents were forming in front of our troops and that Santa Cruz and its garrison seemed thoroughly aroused to the danger which threatened.

"Forward, boys!" was the cry. "The more time we give them, the better they will be prepared to meet us. Forward without delay!" And the "boys" went forward with a wild hurrah, for everything promised well, and they were much pleased to have General Lawton lead them, even though they had no fault to find with their other commanders.

The first skirmish began on the extreme right. Some rebels had found their way to a hill behind the town, and they began the attack from a patch of wild plantains, thickly interlaced with tropical vines. Up the hill after them dashed the right wing, and the sharp rattle of musketry resounded upon both sides for the best part of half an hour. Then the rebels broke and ran, and in their eagerness our troops followed them until a point less than two miles from Santa Cruz was gained. Here the insurgents scattered, and could not be rounded up, and the right wing fell back, to unite with the main body of the expedition. But the woods were thick, the ground new to the Americans, and in the gathering darkness it was several hours before the firing line was compact once more. Then the expedition rested for the night.

Larry had landed with the soldiers, and, as the other cascos came up, he was speedily joined by Luke Striker and Jack Biddle.

"I wonder what part we air to take in this comin' mix-up?" queried Luke.

"Like as not they will leave us here to mind the boats," replied Larry. "I can tell you that I am rather sorry I came along," he added soberly.

"Sorry!" ejaculated Jack Biddle. "Surely, Larry, ye ain't afraid – "

"No, I'm not afraid," interrupted the youth. And then he told of the scene in the casco, and of what Lieutenant Horitz had said. When he had finished, Jack cut a wry face and Luke uttered a low whistle.

"You've run up agin a rock fer sartin, Larry," remarked Luke. "I reckon he can make things look putty bad for ye if he's of a mind to do it."

"Keep quiet an' say nuthin', an' he may forgit all about it," was Jack Biddle's advice.

The boats having been cared for, the sailors followed the soldiers through the field and into the woods. All told there were twenty-five jackies, and by common consent they formed themselves into a company of their own, with a petty officer named Gordell at their head. Gordell went to General

Lawton for directions, and was told to follow the volunteers until given further orders. Each sailor was armed with a pistol and a ship's cutlass.

The march was a hot one, but Larry was now getting accustomed to the tropics and hardly minded this. The little company advanced with caution, nobody desiring to run into an ambush. Soon the firing on the right reached their ears, and they knew that some sort of an engagement was on. Then came a halt, and presently the darkness of night fell over them; and they went into camp beside a tiny watercourse flowing into a good-sized stream which separated the expedition from the outskirts of Santa Cruz.

Supper disposed of, Larry and Luke Striker took a stroll forward, to find out what the firing line was really doing and if the insurgents were in front in force. "We may have a bigger fight on hand nor any of us expect," suggested the old Yankee gunner.

"You can trust General Lawton not to run his head into the lion's mouth," returned Larry. "A soldier who has whipped the Apache Indians isn't going to suffer any surprise at the hands of these Tagals, no matter how wily they are."

"Don't be too sure o' that, Larry. The best on us make mistakes sometimes," answered the Yankee, with a grave shake of his head. But General Lawton made no mistake, as we shall speedily see.

As has been said, the right wing had become detached from the main body of the expedition during the fight on the hill back of Santa Cruz. The firing line of this wing had not yet united with the centre, consequently there was a gap of over a quarter of a mile in the front. Had the Tagalogs known of this they might have divided the expedition and surrounded the right wing completely, but they did not know, so the temporary separation did no damage to the soldiers. But that gap brought a good bit of trouble to Larry and his friend.

On and on went the pair, down a narrow road lined on either side with palms and plantains and sweet-smelling shrubs. From the hollows the frogs croaked dismally, and here and there a night bird uttered its lonely cry, but otherwise all was silent.

"Humph, they've pushed the firing line ahead further than I thought," remarked Luke, after half a mile had been covered. "Here's a small river. Do ye reckon as how they went over that, lad?"

"It must be so," answered the boy. "Certainly, we haven't been challenged."

Crossing the rude bridge, they found that the road made a sharp turn to the southward. Beyond was a nipa hut, back of which burnt a small camp-fire. Both hut and fire seemed deserted.

"They have cleaned the rebels out from there," said Larry. "Come ahead," and they continued on their way, little dreaming of the trap into which they were walking.

The nipa hut passed, they came to a tall fence built of bamboo stalks, sharpened at the tops and bound with native rope-vine. Farther on still were a dozen shelters, and here could be seen several women and children sitting in the doorways.

"Perhaps they can give us some information," said Larry, as they approached the natives. As soon as they saw the Americans the children shrieked dismally and rushed out of sight. But the women held their ground, feeling that they would not be molested.

"See anything of our soldiers?" demanded Luke of the women, but one and all shook their heads. "No Englees talk," mumbled one, meaning they did not understand or speak our tongue.

The natives' manner made Larry suspicious, and he glanced around hurriedly. As he did so there was a click of a trigger from behind the bamboo fence.

"*Americanos* surrender," came in bad English from back of the fence. "Surrender quick, or we shoot both dead on the spot!"

CHAPTER V

AN ENCOUNTER AT THE RIVER

To say that both Larry and his old friend were surprised at the sudden demand which had been made upon them would be to put the truth very mildly. They had been of the firm belief that the insurgents had retreated, and to find themselves in a “reg’lar hornet’s nest,” as Luke afterward expressed it, dumfounded them.

“Do you surrender, or not?” came the words, after an awkward pause.

It was dark about the huts, yet not so dim but that they could see the barrels of several Mauser rifles thrust toward them. The sight made Larry shiver, for he had never before met the rebel soldiers at such close quarters.

“We’re in a box,” muttered Luke. “Somethin’ wrong somewhar – our soldiers didn’t come this way, ye kin reckon on thet.”

“I move we run for it,” whispered Larry. “If they take us prisoners – ” He did not finish, but his silence was more impressive than mere words would have been. He had heard many stories of terrible cruelty practised by the insurgents on their prisoners, and whether these tales were true or not, they had had their full effect on both him and his shipmates.

“Where are ye goin’ to run to, lad? We don’t want to run an’ be shot down in cold blood.”

“Get in front of me and take to the woods opposite, Luke,” was the hurried reply. “Here goes! I don’t think they’ll fire now!”

As Larry concluded, he sprang to the side of one of the native women standing nearest to him. Before the woman could resist, he had her in his arms behind him and was running off as speedily as the weight of his living load permitted. Seeing this, Luke scuttled off before, and away they went for the woods, not twenty yards distant.

A howl arose on the night air, and one gun went off, but the bullet did no damage. Then the leader of the rebels was heard, calling to his men not to fire, for fear of killing the woman, who chanced, by good luck, to be a close relative; for the soldiers behind the bamboo fence were part of a home guard brought out that very afternoon to defend the road and Santa Cruz.

The woman on Larry’s back shrieked in terror and clawed at his neck and hair, causing him considerable pain. But he held his burden tight until the shelter of the trees was gained, when he let her slip to the ground and darted after Luke, who was running with all the speed of his lanky limbs.

It was pitch dark in the jungle, and the pair had not advanced more than a hundred yards when they found themselves going down into a hollow which both felt must lead to a dangerous swamp, or morass, for the island of Luzon is full of such fever-breeding places.

“Go slow, lad,” whispered Luke, as he caught Larry by the hand. “We don’t want to land out o’ the fryin’-pan into the fire.”

They both became silent and listened attentively. At a distance they heard the insurgents coming on slowly and cautiously, spreading out as they advanced. Probably they knew the topography of the country and meant to surround the hollow completely.

“They are coming, that’s sure,” whispered Larry, and clutched his pistol. “I wonder if we can’t get away from them by climbing a tree.”

“We can – if they ain’t a-followin’ the trail putty close,” answered his companion.

They began to search around for a tree, and in doing so came to several large rocks, much overgrown with trailing vines. There was an opening between two of the rocks, and Luke slipped into this, hauling Larry after him.

“Jest as good as a tree, an’ mebbe better,” he whispered, as he rearranged the vines over the opening.

The hiding-place was not a large one, and Larry felt very much like a sardine in a box as he crouched close to his Yankee friend. The vines covered the opening completely, yet they remained on guard, each with his finger on the trigger of his weapon, resolved, if the worst came to the worst, to fight the best they knew how before surrendering.

The Filipinos were evidently puzzled, for they had come to a halt and made not the slightest noise. Possibly they were listening for some sound from those they were pursuing, but if so, none came, for Luke clapped his hand warningly over Larry's mouth, and the youth understood and remained as motionless as a statue.

Five minutes went by – to the boy they seemed an age – and then the rebels came on again, halting every few steps to make sure of their ground. Three passed close to the rocks, so close in fact that Larry and Luke could have shot them down without trouble. But this would have given the alarm to the entire party, and neither the boy nor the man wanted to shed blood unless it became absolutely necessary.

At last the Filipinos had left the rocks behind and were circling around the swamp at the bottom of the hollow. “Now is the time to give 'em the slip,” whispered Luke, and crawled once more into the open. Larry followed, and both hurried away from the vicinity with all possible speed. It was the last seen or heard of the party who had so unexpectedly blockaded their progress on the highway.

The jungle at the top of the hill was as dense as that below, and the pair had not proceeded far before they found themselves in a veritable tangle of bushes and vines. The bushes were of the thorny kind peculiar to this locality, and more than once Larry found himself caught and held as if in a vice.

“My clothing will be in tatters if this keeps on,” he panted, as he cut himself loose with difficulty. “Did you ever see such a thicket!”

“We missed it when we started out to-night,” returned Luke, gravely. “We've gone astray o' the firm' line and everything else, to my way o' lookin' at it.”

Bad as was their situation, they felt it would be worse with the coming of daylight. “We must get out of the enemy's territory before the sun rises,” said Larry. “If we don't, we'll have no show at all.”

But getting out was not easy; indeed, the farther they advanced, the more difficult did it seem to become, until both came to the conclusion that they had missed their bearings entirely, and were lost. “And can't even see the stars to read 'em,” groaned Luke. “Larry, we might as well make the best of it, and wait for daylight.”

But the youth demurred and insisted on going ahead. “We're bound to strike something soon,” he said, and did, immediately afterward. It was a log lying on the edge of an incline, and down he pitched, and log and lad rolled over and over, with Luke following, to bring up with a loud splash in the river below.

The force of their fall took them under the surface of the stream, and in the struggle to save themselves both lost their cutlasses. But, as old readers know, each could swim well, and they speedily came up and struck out for the most available landing-place, which was on the opposite bank.

“*Alto!*” came the sudden cry, in Spanish. “Halt!” And now a sentry appeared from behind a pile of cord-wood lying but a short distance away.

“Discovered again,” muttered Luke, and felt for his pistol. “Soaked!” he muttered, in disgust.

The cry of the rebel on guard had given the alarm to several others, and in a twinkling Larry and the old Yankee tar found themselves confronted by an even more determined crowd than that encountered on the road. With the water behind them, escape was out of the question, for a jump back into the river would have courted a fire which must have resulted in death.

“*Americanos!*” muttered one of the rebels, drawing closer. “And sailors, not soldiers,” he added, in his native tongue. “Where did you come from?”

Larry and Luke shook their heads. “Talk United States and we'll speak to you,” said the old sailor.

“You gif up?” demanded an under officer, as he pushed his way forward, with his pistol covering Larry’s heart.

“Ain’t nuthin’ else to do, I reckon,” replied Luke, before Larry could answer. He was afraid the boy might be rash and try running away again.

“Throw down de pistoles, den,” muttered the Tagal, with an ugly frown.

Down went the weapons on the ground, and then two of the rebels advanced to search them. They found nothing of special value excepting the pair’s jack-knives, and these were confiscated and turned over to the officer in command.

The prisoners were then told to march up the river shore to a road leading into Santa Cruz. With their hands bound tightly behind them, they were placed in charge of a detail of four Filipinos, who were instructed to take them without delay before the general in charge of the city’s defences.

“They may hold information of importance,” said the under officer. “Do not delay a minute;” and off went the crowd, the soldiers prodding the prisoners with their bayonets whenever Larry and Luke did not walk fast enough to suit them.

The course taken was through a narrow and exceedingly dirty street. It was after midnight, yet the expected attack of the Americans had kept all the inhabitants awake. The prisoners were jeered at repeatedly, and at one point were covered with a shower of mud and stale vegetables. The onslaught might have been more serious had not the soldiers interfered.

“Get back, you dogs,” shouted the leader, a little Tagal scarcely five feet in height, but with an air of magnificent importance. “These men are to go before the general, and at once!” And much abashed the natives fell back, and the prisoners were molested no further.

It would naturally be supposed that the general in command would be found at the front at such a time, when an attack on the city was but a matter of a few hours. Instead, however, General Bamodo was found at one of the government buildings, calmly smoking a cigar, and conversing with several native business men.

“Spies, eh?” he queried, when the guard had told him about the prisoners. “Bring them in immediately.”

Larry and Luke were told to enter the room, and did so, their still wet clothing forming little puddles at their feet. The guards stood beside and behind them. General Bamodo eyed them critically. He spoke no English, and so called in an interpreter.

“Where are you from?” demanded the interpreter, presently, after a few words with his superior.

“We are from the warship *Olympia*,” answered Luke, briefly.

“You were sent here by General Otis as spies, not so?”

“No, sir, we are jest plain, everyday sailors.”

“Then what brought you here?” demanded the interpreter, after translating their words to General Bamodo.

“We missed our way on the road,” put in Larry, before Luke could answer. He thought it best not to say anything about accompanying General Lawton’s expedition.

“You must have missed it very much, General Bamodo says,” growled the interpreter, after another consultation with his superior. “Santa Cruz is a good many miles from Manila harbor.”

To this Larry remained silent, and another talk in Spanish followed. Then a sudden shot from a distance caused General Bamodo to leap to his feet and dash down his cigar.

“Take them to the prison – I will examine them later on,” he said, in Spanish, and hurried away.

A few minutes later Larry and his Yankee friend were marched off, this time to a stone building several squares away. Here they were taken inside, thrust into a cell, the iron-barred door was locked upon them, and they were left to their fate.

CHAPTER VI IN WHICH LUKE STRIKER IS WOUNDED

The plan to surprise Santa Cruz had failed, yet General Lawton's command was just as eager as ever to press forward and do battle with the native garrison, of which the town on the Laguna de Bay boasted. It was thought the Filipino command could not be a strong one, and even if it had been the Americans would have gone ahead just the same, so accustomed were they to victory over their misguided foes.

It was arranged that the centre and left wing of the infantry should move directly upon the town, while the right wing should swing around, to cut off the Filipinos' retreat, should they start such a movement. In the meantime, protected by a cross fire from the tinclads, *Laguna* and *Oeste*, the cavalry landed on the hill overlooking the bay, and began to do battle with the enemy's force in that territory, cutting its way over field and brush to the left wing as it swung closer to the river already mentioned several times. The cavalry developed a strong resistance which lasted for over an hour; but in the end the Filipinos were glad enough to fall back into the town proper.

Out on the main road leading to the principal bridge over the river the sun was boiling hot, and many a soldier felt more like seeking shelter and resting than like pushing forward with his heavy gun and other equipments. But General Lawton was here and there, encouraging every one, and they pushed on until a sharp fire between the enemy and the advance guard told that a running fight, and perhaps a regular battle, would soon be at hand.

"At them, my men!" cried the various commanders. "They'll run, no doubt of it. They haven't stood up against us yet!" And away went the long skirmishing line, and soon there was a steady crack and pop of guns and pistols as the Americans pushed on, catching many a poor Filipino who was too late in either running or throwing down his arms. A number surrendered, and these were promptly sent to the rear.

Presently the river was gained, and here the Americans came to an unexpected halt. There was a long bridge to cross, and beyond was a barricade of stone and wood. Were the insurgents massed behind that barricade? If they were, to cross the bridge in column of fours or otherwise would mean a terrible slaughter.

"Here goes!" sang out one petty officer, and made a dash forward, which was as reckless as it was daring. As he moved along the bridge several held their breath, expecting to see him go down at any instant. But then came a rush of first half a dozen, then a score, and then whole companies, and it was speedily seen that the barricade was practically deserted. The insurgents were hurrying into the town as hard as they could, with Uncle Sam's men after them, both sides keeping up a steady firing as they ran.

In the meantime, soaked to the skin and utterly miserable over their capture, Larry and his Yankee friend had been thrust into the prison cell and left to themselves. After the door was locked and the jailer walked away, the youth uttered a long-drawn sigh.

"Luke, we're in a pickle, this trip," he groaned. "What do you suppose they will do with us?"

"Heaven alone knows, my lad," responded the old tar. "Bein' as how they ain't cannibals, I don't reckon they'll eat us up," and he smiled grimly.

"They think we are spies."

"That's so."

"Do you know that they shoot spies – and do it in short order, too?"

"And why shouldn't I know it, Larry? I've heard tell on it often enough. But they have got to prove we air spies first, ain't they?"

“They’ll do what they please. I believe half of these Filipinos think the Americans are nothing but cut-throats. They can’t conceive that we should want to come here and govern them for their own good.”

“Because they would rather govern themselves, even if they made a mess of it, than be under anybody’s thumb nail, Larry. Howsomever, thet ain’t the p’int jest now. The p’int is, kin we git out o’ here before they settle to do wuss with us?”

“Get out? You mean break jail?”

“Exactly. We don’t want to stay here if we kin git out, do we?”

“To be sure not.” Larry leaped up from the bench upon which he had been resting and ran to the door. At this Luke smiled glumly and shook his head.

“Ye won’t go it thet way, lad – the guard locked it, I seen him do it, – and the lock is a strong one, too.”

Luke was right, as a brief examination proved. Then the boy turned to the window, an affair less than a foot square, having over it several iron bars set firmly into the stones. “No thoroughfare there,” was his comment.

The two next examined the floor, to find it of brick, and as solid as the walls. “Only the ceilin’ left now,” said Luke. “I reckon we might as well give it up. Even if we do git out, more’n likely a guard outside will shoot us down.”

But Larry was determined to test the ceiling, which was but a couple of feet over their heads. So he had his companion hold him for that purpose.

“There is a loose board up there,” he cried, as he was feeling his way along. “Hold me a little higher, Luke, and perhaps I can shove it up.”

The old sailor did as requested, and with a strong push Larry shifted one end of the plank above, so that it left an opening ten inches wide and several feet long. Catching a good hold he pulled himself to the apartment above, to find it stored with boxes and barrels containing old military uniforms and other army equipments, relics of Spanish rule.

“Any way out up thar?” queried Luke. “If there is, we don’t want to waste any time, ye know.”

“I’ll tell you in a minute,” replied Larry, in a low voice, and ran first to one end window of the storeroom and then the other. In front was the street, fast filling with soldiers. In the rear was a stable which just now seemed deserted. The several windows of the storeroom were all barred, but here the bars were screwed fast to wood instead of being set in stone.

“I think there is a chance here,” said the boy, coming back to the opening. “Here, give me your hand, and I’ll help you up,” and he bent down; and soon Luke stood beside him.

“Think we can git out thet way, eh!” said the Yankee tar, surveying the prospect in the rear. “Well, I reckon it’s worth workin’ for, Larry. But the drop from the window, even if we pull away the bars – ”

“Here is a rope – we can use that,” answered the boy, pointing out the article around several small boxes. While Luke pried away the bars of one of the rear windows he possessed himself of the rope, and tied it fast to a bar which was not disturbed. As soon as the opening was sufficiently large to admit of the passage of each one’s body, Luke swung himself over the window-sill.

“Come on,” he cried softly, and slipped from view. Never had he gone down a ship’s rope quicker, and never had Larry followed his friend with such alacrity. Both felt that life or death depended upon the rapidity of their movements.

The ground was hardly touched by Luke when a Filipino boy appeared at the entrance to the stable. For an instant the youth stared in opened-mouthed astonishment, then he uttered a yell that would have done credit to an Indian on the war-path.

“The jig’s up!” cried the Yankee tar. “Come, Larry, our legs have got to save us, if we’re to be saved at all.”

He leaped across the yard and for the corner of the stable, where he collided with a Tagal soldier, who was coming forward to learn what the yelling meant. Down went both the sailor and the guard; but the rebel got the worse of it, for he lay half stunned, while Luke was up in a trice. As the soldier fell, his gun flew from his hands, and Larry tarried just long enough to pick the weapon up.

Behind the stable was a narrow, winding street, lined on either side with huts and other native dwellings, with here and there a barnlike warehouse. Into this street darted our two friends, and there paused, not knowing whether to move toward the wharves or in the opposite direction.

“Look out!” suddenly yelled Larry, and dropped flat, followed by the Yankee tar. A sharp report rang out, and a bullet whistled over their heads, coming from the prison yard. On the instant Larry fired in return, and the prison guard disappeared as if by magic. Long afterward, Larry learned that he had hit the Tagal in the arm.

There was now a general alarm throughout the prison, and the two escaped prisoners felt that any other locality would be better for them than the one they now occupied. “Let us try to find our soldiers,” said Luke, and once again they started to run, this time up the road where, far away, they could make out a forest of some sort. Then came a second report, and Luke Striker staggered back, hit in the shoulder.

“Luke! Luke, you are struck!” gasped Larry. His heart seemed to leap into his throat. What if his dearest friend had been mortally wounded?

“I – I – reckon it – it ain’t much!” came with a shiver. The sailor straightened himself up and started to run again. “They are after us hot-like, ain’t they?”

A turn in the road soon took them out of sight of the prison, and they breathed a bit more freely. But the strain was beginning to tell upon Luke, and watching him, Larry saw that he was growing deathly pale.

“You can’t keep this up, Luke,” he said, and put out his arm to aid his friend. As he did so, the Yankee tar gave a short groan, threw up both hands, and then sank down in a heap at the boy’s feet.

CHAPTER VII

THE RETREAT TO THE RICE-HOUSE

Larry was greatly alarmed, not knowing but that his companion was about to die on his hands. Quickly he knelt at the Yankee's side, to learn that Luke had fainted away from loss of blood. The shoulder of his shirt and jacket were saturated through and through.

"What shall I do?" the boy asked himself, and gazed hurriedly at the surroundings. To one side of the road were several nipa huts, to the other a long, rambling warehouse. The doorways of all the buildings stood open, and no one seemed to be in sight.

As quickly as he could the youth took up his friend and staggered with his heavy burden to the warehouse, which was about half filled with rice. Entering the structure, he passed to a small apartment somewhat in the rear. Here there was a quantity of old sacking in a heap, and upon this rude couch Larry placed the unconscious form.

The boy had been taught on shipboard just what to do in case of such an emergency, and now he worked as he never had before, for Luke was very dear to him, and the thought that his friend might die was horrible to contemplate. He prayed to Heaven that the old gunner's life might be spared to him.

The wound was an ugly one; yet even to Larry's inexperienced eye it did not look as if it could be fatal, and the boy breathed a long sigh of relief as he bound it up. Then he went in search of water, and finding a well back of the warehouse brought a bucketful in and began to bathe Luke. Soon the sufferer stirred and opened his honest eyes wonderingly.

"Why – er – how's this?" he stammered. "Did I – oh, I remember now!" And he sank back again.

"Keep quiet," whispered the boy. He had heard voices coming toward the warehouse. "If you make a sound, it may be all up with both of us."

The old tar breathed heavily and nodded. Throwing some sacking over the prostrate form, Larry slipped back into the main apartment of the warehouse. He still held the gun, but it was empty and could be used only as a club.

Two men were approaching the warehouse, both tall, slim, and evidently of Spanish extraction. They were talking loudly and excitedly to one another; but as Larry understood but few words of Spanish, what they were saying was lost upon the boy.

"I don't believe they are after us," thought the lad, when the strangers came to a halt just outside the warehouse. As they did so a long volley of rifle shots came from a distance, followed by another and then another. The shooting came from the centre of the town and made Larry's heart beat fast. "Our soldiers must be coming in," he thought. "Oh, I hope they make the town ours!"

The shots appeared to disturb the two Spaniards greatly, for both clutched each other by the arm and looked thoroughly frightened.

Presently an old woman came running out of one of the huts. She yelled at the two Spaniards in her own tongue and pointed at the warehouse. Evidently she had seen Larry and Luke, but had been afraid to expose herself.

The strangers listened to the old woman with interest, then began to talk to each other. "Perhaps we can get some information, José," said one, in Spanish.

"Perhaps we shall get a bullet," answered his companion, grimly. Nevertheless, he consented to enter the building, and both passed through the great doorway of the warehouse.

Hardly knowing how to receive the newcomers, Larry stepped for a moment behind a bin of rice. But then, as the pair moved toward where Luke lay, he raised his gun threateningly.

"Halt!" he called, as sternly as he could. "Halt, or I shall fire!"

"We are betrayed!" roared one of the Spaniards, in his native tongue. "No shoot! no shoot!" he added, in broken English. "We mean you no harm."

“Up with your hands, then,” went on Larry, resolved to make the most of the situation, even though the gun was empty; and four hands went promptly into the air, for the two men before him were as cowardly as they were unprincipled.

There was an awkward silence for several seconds, while boy and men surveyed each other. Larry lowered the gun slightly, but still kept his finger on the trigger. He noted that the newcomers appeared to be unarmed, although they had both knives and pistols hidden upon their persons.

“You are an *Americano* sailor, not so?” asked one of the Spaniards.

“I am,” was Larry’s prompt reply. “Are you one of Aguinaldo’s rebels?”

“No, no! We are no rebels – we are peaceful Spanish gentlemen,” put in the second Spaniard.

“Do you belong here?”

“I belong here,” said the man who had first spoken. “My brother, he belongs at Manila.”

The brother mentioned shot an angry glance at the speaker. “Yes, I come from Manila,” he said. “But I belong truly in Spain, being a merchant of Madrid.”

“Well, our war with you folks is over,” said Larry, slowly, hardly knowing how to proceed. “If you are not going to help the rebels, you ought to help us. We are doing all we can for your prisoners out here,” he added, meaning the Spaniards that were being held by the forces under General Aguinaldo – soldiers who were captured during the struggle between Spain and her Philippine colonies.

“We can do but little,” came with a shrug of the shoulders. “We are not armed, and if we help the *Americanos*, Aguinaldo says he will behead all the Spanish prisoners he is holding.” Such a threat was actually made, but it is doubtful if the Filipinos would have been base enough to carry it out.

“We came in here not to make trouble,” went on the second Spaniard. “We came to learn what the firing means. Are the *Americanos* coming here in force?”

“They are.”

“Then Santa Cruz is doomed,” groaned the Spaniard. He dropped his hands and began to pace the warehouse floor. “I shall lose much if the city falls. The rebels will burn all my property, for they hate me.”

“I trust not,” answered Larry, his fear of the pair gradually leaving him. “Hark to that!” he added, as the rattle of guns was again heard. “Our men must be coming in fast, and orders are to save everything that can be saved. If the rebels – ”

He broke off short as a cry from Luke reached him. Running to the Yankee sailor he found Luke kicking out vigorously with his foot.

“I couldn’t keep still no longer, nohow!” burst out the old tar. “A plagued rat came right up and wanted to nibble my leg, hang him. Who’s them air fellows out thar?”

But the Spaniards had already followed Larry, and were now gazing at Luke in wonder. “Wounded, not so?” said one. “You were in the fight, then.”

“No, we escaped from the prison,” answered Larry, simply. “We were captured during last night. I wish I was sure we’d be safe here until our soldiers come along.” He turned to the old sailor again. “How do you feel now?”

“Better, Larry, a heap better. But I ain’t ready fer no more foot races jest yet.”

“Then we’ll have to remain here. Or perhaps you had better remain here while I go scouting around and see if I can find some of our soldiers, or the ambulance corps.”

“An’ what o’ these gentlemen?”

“We shall go, too,” said one of the Spaniards. “Your friend will be safe here – if he keeps hidden under the sacks,” he added.

Waiting for the strangers to move first, Larry came behind them, still holding the gun as though the weapon were ready for use. The men had spoken fairly enough, yet there was that about them which did not please Larry in the least. “They are regular rascals, or else I miss my guess,” thought the youth.

The roadway still seemed deserted. But far off they could see the natives flying in several directions. Then from a distance came a cheer which Larry knew could only come from American throats.

“Our soldiers must be over there,” he said to the Spaniards. “Will you come with me?”

The men hesitated, and consulted together in their native tongue. “I do not know what to say,” said one, slowly, and began to follow Larry along the highway. Seeing this, the other came, too.

Suddenly a loud shout came to them from a thicket back of some nipa huts, and instantly a band of insurgents burst into view, armed with guns and bolos. They were firing as they retreated, and made a stand on the opposite side of the road.

“José Lupez!” cried one of the officers of the rebels, addressing one of the two Spaniards. “What do you here?”

“And have I no right here?” asked the Spaniard, sharply.

“Who is that with you?”

“My brother, Benedicto, from Manila, who was visiting me.”

“He has betrayed us into the hands of the *Americanos*! If he – ”

The rest of the sentence was drown out in a volley of musketry, and two rebels were seen to fall. Some started to run, but others held their ground.

Larry listened in amazement. He had heard the names José Lupez and Benedicto, and knew that the two Spaniards were brothers. Could this Spaniard, Benedicto Lupez, be the man who had made off with the money Braxton Bogg had stolen from the Hearthstone Saving Institution?

CHAPTER VIII

A PRISONER OF THE FILIPINOS

Larry had retreated to a small nipa hut standing close to the roadway, feeling that if the Americans were coming in that direction, they would soon be at hand to give Luke and himself aid.

While the insurgents and the Spaniards were conversing, the latter had approached the hut, and now both followed the young sailor inside.

“Is your name Benedicto Lupez?” demanded Larry, approaching the taller of the pair.

“Yes,” was the short response.

“Then you are from Manila – you ran away from there about two weeks ago?”

“Ha! what do you know of that?” demanded the Spaniard, eyeing Larry darkly.

“I know a good deal about you,” answered the youth, boldly. “After Braxton Bogg was arrested you made off with the money he had left at your residence.”

“Tis false!” roared the Spaniard, but his face blanched even as he spoke. “I know nothing of that man or his money. I – I was deceived in him.”

“If that is so, why did you leave Manila in such a hurry?”

“I – I wanted to help my brother, who was in trouble. I have not seen a dollar of Bogg’s money. ’Tis he who still owes me for his board, black wretch that he was!” roared Benedicto Lupez, savagely.

At these words Larry was startled. Was Lupez really telling the truth, and if so, where was the money that had wrecked the saving institution?

“He didn’t even pay his board?”

“Not one piaster, boy, – nothing. And I thought him honest, or I would not have taken him in.”

“But his valise is gone, and the bands around the money – ”

“Were as he left them. I can swear I touched absolutely nothing,” answered Benedicto Lupez, earnestly.

Larry was nonplussed. Had the Spaniard looked less of a villain, the young sailor would have been inclined to believe him. But that face was so crafty and calculating that he still hesitated.

“Well, if you are innocent, you will not object to helping me rejoin our soldiers,” he ventured.

“I want nothing to do with the *Americanos*, – they mean to get me into trouble, even though I am innocent,” growled Benedicto Lupez. “Come, José, we will go,” he added to his brother, in their native language.

His brother was already at the doorway. The shouting and firing outside was increasing. Leaping forward, Larry caught Benedicto Lupez by the arm.

“You’ll stay here,” he began, when the Spaniard let out a heavy blow which hurled the young sailor flat.

“I will not be held by a boy!” cried the man. “Let go, do you hear?” For Larry had caught him by the foot. The boy’s hold was good, and in a trice Benedicto Lupez lay flat on his back. Then he rolled over and over and a fierce tussle ensued, which came to a sudden end when José Lupez leaped forward and kicked Larry in the head, rendering him partly unconscious.

What followed was more like a dream than reality to the bruised youth. He heard a confused murmur of voices and a dozen or more shots, and then, as Benedicto Lupez and his brother ran off, several rebels swarmed into the hut, one stumbling over the lad’s form and pitching headlong. This insurgent was about to knife Larry when he saw that the young sailor’s eyes were closed, and that he was bleeding about the head.

“*Un Americano*, and wounded,” he said, speaking in the Tagalog dialect. “If he lives, he may make us a useful prisoner;” and a few minutes later Larry felt himself picked up and borne away, first in a man’s arms and then on horseback. He tried to “locate” himself, but when he opened his

eyes all went swimming before them, and he was glad enough to sink back once more and shut out the swirling sight.

On and on, and still on went the rebels, some on foot and a few on their steeds. In front were a few wagons and caribao carts piled high with camping outfits, and also one or two light guns – all that had been saved from the garrison. General Lawton's attack had been a brilliant success, and Santa Cruz itself had surrendered with hardly the loss of a man to the Americans. The troops coming in did their best to round up the insurgents, but they had scattered in all directions and only a few were caught, and these swore that they were *amigos*, or friends, and had to be given their liberty. This pretending to be friends after they were routed was a great trick with thousands of the natives. They would come into the American camp under the pretext that they had just escaped from the insurgents who had threatened to kill them if they would not join Aguinaldo's forces. What to do with such people was one of the most difficult problems of the rebellion. They could not be placed under arrest, and yet that is what nine out of ten deserved.

When Larry was once more himself he found that it was night. He was in a heap in a large casco which several Tagals were propelling with all speed across the Laguna de Bay. There were several other cascos in front and behind, all filled with natives with guns. The entire procession moved along in almost utter silence.

The youth wanted to know where he was being taken, but no sooner did he open his mouth than one of the soldiers clapped a dirty hand over it and commanded him to be silent. As the soldier carried a bolo in his hand, Larry considered "discretion the better part of valor," and for the time being, held his peace.

A swarm of mosquitoes soon told the boy that they were approaching a marsh, and presently the casco ran in between the reeds and under some high, overhanging tropical bushes. Then those on board leaped ashore, and the youth was made to follow them.

A weary tramp over the marsh and then up a high hill followed. The hill was covered with wild plantains, monstrous ferns, and a species of cedar tree, all thickly interlaced with the ever present tropical vines, which crossed and recrossed the tortuous path the party was following. Overhead the stars shone down dimly, while the forest was filled with the cries of the birds, the chattering of an occasional monkey, and the constant drone and chirp of the innumerable insects. The path was uneven, and more than once Larry pitched into a hollow along with the Tagal who accompanied him and who never let go his hold on the youthful prisoner.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.