

TEA TIME TALK

(BY WILMA J. MARCH)

The following story of Filipino Superstitions is the one promised for the near future. I had the misfortune of having my article for this week stolen.

(By Hadwen H. Williams, F.R.G.S.)

The Filipino thinks he is constantly surrounded by spirits. Some are kind and some are malevolent. All are to be feared. From birth until death the native believes in ghosts, goblins and fairies, and every event that can not be explained is attributed to some supernatural being.

Many of the superstitious beliefs have come from Malay ancestors, who in turn received them from India, via Sumatra and Java. The arrival of the Spaniards in 1521 marked the point where the Filipinos added on a number of new beliefs, some of which have to do with Catholicism. The invading Chinese, who came after Magellan discovered the Islands, contributed still more to the number of spirits which the Filipinos fear.

One spirit that is heard of wherever Spanish is spoken is the duende. I have seen it mentioned in magazines published in Spain, and heard about it in Central America and the Philippines. The word "duende" means "elf". He is a little man with one eye like Cyclops, and he is about one foot in height. He can greatly help those who believe in him.

One morning my Filipino cook came to my door and said "Sir, the duende was under your window last night. His footprints are still there". So I went to see them. In the dust were about a dozen footprints, clear and plain, with marks of heel and toes showing in all of them. They resembled human footprints, except in size, and were about two inches long. What animal had made them I did not know. The cook and servants were happy for many days because they thought the duende had visited our home.

In the Philippines the inhabitants of some provinces believe in certain spirits of which their people in the neighboring provinces have never heard. Other spirits are known throughout the Archipelago. One of the latter is the Asuang, a cruel and blood-thirsty creature.

The walking asuang lives under a house; above the floor lives his companion, the flying asuang. The flying one stays at home in the day time, for he would easily be recognized by his bat-like wings. The walking asuang goes through the town gathering information. When he hears of the birth of a baby, he rushes home and calls up through the floor that there is a new baby in town. The flying asuang walks to the doorway, and as he flies away, his legs separate at the knees, the lower parts remaining on the threshold. The walking asuang shows the way to his companion flying above him. They proceed to the baby's home, where the flying asuang goes through the window, grabs the baby and flies home with it, where both asuangs devour it.

Asuangs are supposed to be frightened away by noise. Therefore the father of the baby sometimes sits astride the roof of his house, beating the thatch with a bamboo stick and yelling loudly to scare the asuang away.

The flying asuang is never seen by foreigners. Certain unpleasant people in the villages are said to be asuangs, and one should not be too intimate with them.

One of the most magnificent trees in the Philippine forest is the balete. The orchids on its branches are never disturbed by Filipinos, for within the thick trunk of the tree the tighalang is supposed to live. This terrible creature can do all sorts of harm, and is ugly in appearance. His legs are like those of a grasshopper in shape and are so long that his knees reach above his head when he sits down. His ears are like those of a horse. Only the Tagalogs, of Luzon, who are the second group in size and the most important one politically believe in the Tighalang, and when they think there is danger, take great care to propitiate him. They always say "Patawad" (excuse me) when passing the balete tree.

Among the Visayans, who live in a group of islands south of Luzon, there are many spirits unknown to the Tagalogs. The Visayans are the

largest ethnological group in the Philippines, of the many groups and tribes in the Islands, the Visayans are preferred by most foreigners. To live among them is an exceedingly pleasant experience. They believe in the Asuang; they also have their own spirits. The Wak Wak is feared by the Visayans. This huge birdlike spirit hovers outside the windows at night, ready to do harm. The Tik Tik resembles the wak wak except that the former is supposed to be tiny in size. Many a night have I listened to what my trembling servants said was the tik tik. The sound was similar to that made by a cricket, and must have been caused by some insect.

Other Visayan spirits are the Tambaloslos, the Taounglipod, the Bruja, the Sigbin, the Koffre (this resembles the African Maffir, and is the name of a black spirit) and the Santelmo. The latter seems to be the European St. Elmo's light, which is phosphorescence commonly seen over swamps.

The Gaddanes of Nueva Vizcaya Province in southern Luzon, believe in the bannig, a ghost that hides in the cemetery. Another spirit to be feared is the galao. While supervising the construction of a drainage ditch around the school grounds at Solano in this province, I found that an ant-hill about four feet high lay directly where the ditch should go. I suggested that the ant-hill be removed. Not one laborer would touch it. They did not fear the ants; they were afraid of the galao that lived inside. Had not the galao attacked and seriously wounded a salano boy the year before? So the ditch was dug around the ant-hill.

Besides believing in a large number of spirits, of which only a few have been mentioned the natives attributed to supernatural causes many phenomena, which they cannot explain. The forty-foot crocodile on the top of Mount Palali in Nueva Vizcaya Province, and the footprints of Jesus on a stone on the peak of Mount Banahao in Lanuna Province have never been seen by human eyes. Yet Filipinos are sure they exist. They are careful not to let a falling lizard light on the face, lest the feet leave marks on the skin that will always remain. No foreigner ever saw the lizards go down and kiss the ground at six o'clock in the evening; natives think that lizards do it without fail.

Between the Colorum Caves and Pagsanjan Falls, which are on the side of Mount Banahao, there is said to be a tunnel, several kilometers in length, through which a little cow of solid gold walks back and forth. Children are lifted over their mother's dead body, as she lies in the coffin, to prevent her coming back to haunt them. As the coffin is lowered into the grave, all the children present at the funeral pelt it with clods of earth in order to be absolutely certain that her spirit will not return. Natives believe that when they sleep, their souls take walks on a cloud. So it is necessary to waken a sleeping Filipino with great care, in order to give the soul time to return to the body before consciousness returns, otherwise the native will have no soul when he awakens. A servant will whisper to his master for twenty minutes as he tries to waken him for breakfast. He does not want his master to be without a soul.

A tenant who moves from one farm to another walks out into the rice field and talks to the poisonous snakes that live on the dikes between the paddles. We have just moved here", he says, "and if you will not harm us, we will let you alone." In case the man later steps on a snake accidentally he begs the snake's pardon, and says "Bulag camandang," which means "Mr. Snake, do not bite me." There are many other incantations, including "Iyong agui, aking agui, presitacionih," which will make two fighters separate instantly, it is said.

Love charms are in constant use. A little lumay, the liquid from the nostril of a horse is supposed to be quite efficacious; a few drops of it applied surreptitiously to a lady's dress will cause her to fall violently in love with the man who has used the charm.

As a means of protecting him from harm, Filipino carries with him an anting anting. This may be almost

any small object, such as a seed, a stone, a piece of metal, a bit of lace, or a piece of paper on which are mystic symbols. The belief is so strong that native soldiers who carried them during the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1901), thought that bullets could not harm them. That the natives were wrong was proved by the many dead insurrecto soldiers who were found with anting antings in their pockets, or suspended from strings tied around their necks.

The difference between the Filipinos and foreigners is perhaps more in degree than in kind. In January, 1932, a Londoner showed supposedly genuine photographs of fairies on the screen in the Theosophists Hall in Los Angeles. A recent news item tells of the belief in witches in New York City. Knocking on wood, avoiding walking under ladders, bad luck connected with Friday and the number thirteen, upsetting the salt, singing before breakfast, putting up an umbrella in the house, holding up one thumb when passing a cemetery, and many other superstitions, show that belief in the supernatural is widespread throughout the world.

TOWNSEND LAKE

(Intended for last week.)

School has re-opened after the Christmas holidays with Mr. Graham Beard again in charge.

The concert at S.S. No. 4 was a decided success. It was the best held at the school for many years and the attendance was large.

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Bradey spent Christmas with Mr. and Mrs. Jos. Richardson at Markdale.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Moran and family spent Christmas with Mr. and Mrs. Myles D'arcy at Traverston.

Mr. Will Henderson and Miss Tena spent Christmas with Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Goodwill.

Mr. Cecil Baines arrived home on Christmas eve for the winter after spending the past season on the boats.

Miss Mary Barry of the Irish Block spent her holidays with her parents,

Mr. and Mrs. John Barry.

Miss Isabel Beatty of McMaster University, Hamilton, visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. I. Beatty.

Mr. W. C. Ritchie was in the city on business the past week.

Miss Margaret Coffey of Toronto spent a few days during the holiday season with her mother, Mrs. Mary Coffey.

Miss Agnes Malone spent Christmas with her sisters in Toronto.

Miss Marion MacArthur of Owen Sound visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. MacArthur.

Mr. Bert Coffey, accompanied by his mother, spent New Years with Mr. and Mrs. X. Sweeney, East of Markdale.

Miss Marie Moran spent New Years with her friends, the Misses Eileen and Priscilla Thompson, in Markdale. Born—in Markdale hospital, on Tuesday, December 17th, 1935, to Mr. and Mrs. John Vasey, a son, Vincent Edgar. Congratulations.

Mr. and Mrs. Ira Stafford and sons were Christmas visitors with Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Livingstone.

Miss Mary Ritchie spent a few days with her sister, Mrs. Lorne Livingstone.

Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Brodie and family were New Year visitors with their daughter, Mrs. Will Campbell, at Priceville.

Mr. Thomas Laughlin has a gang of men engaged at work in Mr. Will Coffey's bush.

Mr. Thos. Moran spent a few days with his daughter, Mrs. Leonard McKeown, near Priceville.

Mr. and Mrs. Pat. O'Neil of Dornoch visited their sister, Mrs. Gillen, at Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Moran's.

A goodly number of the young people of this locality attended the shower on Tuesday evening for Mr. and Mrs. W. Graham, formerly Ethel Aitkens, at the home of her mother, Mrs. Donald McLean.

STRATHAVON

(Intended for last week.)

Ideal winter weather.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Morgan and Miss Islay attended the Morgan-Tait

wedding in Toronto on New Year's day.

Miss Jean Sleight of Woodford spent the week-end with Mrs. Geo. Ramage.

Born—On Monday, December 30, 1935, to Mr. and Mrs. Ian Torrie, twins, a boy and a girl. We are sorry to say the little boy passed away on January 1st.

Miss Cook of Rockford is visiting with her sister, Mrs. French Ramage. Miss Eva McClean has returned to her teaching duties at Dornoch and Mr. Lloyd McClean to the Continuation School at Chatsworth.

Mrs. Art Torrie and Clayton spent a week with Riverdale relatives.

Miss Viola Torrie has returned to Owen Sound after spending a few weeks at the home of her brother, Ian.

A large number from this vicinity attended the shower for Mr. and Mrs. Fraser Ramage at Massie on Tuesday night.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Torrie and Clayton spent Tuesday evening with Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Cesar of Massie.

Married—In Toronto, on New Year's day, Miss Gladys Tait of McKellar to Mr. Arthur Morgan.

Visitors with the Torrie family on Sunday were Miss Luella Nigh and Mr. F. Saunders.

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