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RALPH ELMO McFIE: FROM LAS CRUCES TO DAVAO

By MAUDE McFIE BLOOM

MY OLDER brother Ralph came suddenly out of the background on the day that "Babe" came to us. Babe became the great love of his youth. Innocently she was the cause of a nagging inferiority complex that made of him one of the shyest of men. But that is getting too far ahead. I was to tell the whole story of my remarkable big brother, beginning with the things I so vividly remember of home and him.

Babe was a magnificent, blooded mare. Of bright bay color, seventeen hands high, of amazing intelligence, and a nature as gentle as Mama's house cat. I remember my brother was so terrified of something happening to his pet that he would often sleep in her manger o' nights and my understanding parents never blinked.

That act of Ralph was partly because he knew that "down South" the darky hostlers were on guard day and night. Yet more, southern New Mexico in the 1880's was a wild place. The great herds from the Texan plains had discovered our fertile valleys, and the outlawry connected inseparably with the cattle industry of that time had made deep changes in the outlying districts. There were still bitter hatreds left over from the terrible Lincoln County War. The horse and cattle thieves of those stressful years still hid in the Organ and San Andrés, the White and Sacramento ranges, just east of Las Cruces. And our little town, remember, was both county seat and shipping point. In this connection, I am quite sure that if my mother had had any inkling that my father was so soon to be made judge in that enormous, dangerous southern judicial district, she would never have consented to remain "for a few years" in that borderland of Mexico and Texas.

Always we must have been both a divided and yet a

close-knit family: Mama and Ralph; Papa and me. My brother was tall and slim, two and a half years my senior, and his favorite sport (so it seemed to his younger sister) was to topple her over with one poke at a well-rounded tummy. For which I hated him, of course. He was the pest of my life. A meany. He just wasn't human with feelings like mine.

But Ralph and I believed we knew everything our parents did. They spoke freely before us. Looking back, I used to pity other children who might be sent from the room. We two never were. My parents would say: "Don't mention this, children." Ralph would nod, then glare at me. I would roll my eyes—negro servants always did that—and cross my fat bosom to show my sincerity. I meant well, always.

One afternoon Papa came home fuller of town talk than usual. He said that a friend of ours, the big cattleman Johnnie Riley, had been in the law office to get some legality of transfer papers attended to properly. While in the East, selling a trainload of his La Cueva steers at the new stock-yards in Kansas City, Mr. Riley had been approached by an agent of a Kentucky race-horse farm about the possibility of sequestering a bunch of fine colts for a limited time, and he had agreed to do it. He had hired Pat Coglin and Jim Nolan, and there was a certain remote range across the Organs now ready to receive the stock.

The greatest secrecy was necessary. The closely guarded special car with the colts had arrived that day. It would be unloaded just before dark when loiterers would be at supper and no strangers apt to be prowling. But Papa was to be there. And Mr. Riley, who also was a loving father, had sent word that "Ralphie and Maudie" could be there also. We glowed. We gobbled, and then we three set out to walk the mile to the shiney new red depot. Ordinarily, Johnnie Riley would have come dashing up in his fine buck-board and pair of blacks. But not that evening.

A little knot of reliable men were gathered near the shute in the loading pen where the stock car had been

shunted. The agent and Mr. Riley exchanged papers, and two negro hostlers began leading the beautiful, spirited colts down the board gangway.

The car seemed empty—but not quite. The agent cleared his throat, spoke to a big black inside: "Is she still alive, Pete?"

"Yessuh. But she's good as daid. . . . I'll tote her, suh."

As if carrying costly china, the big black came down the shute, a bay colt pressed to his breast. Tears poured down his face, for this was the finest colt of them all, the real reason for the transfer. The week of travel had been too much even for the scion of the racing farm where the fabulously fast mare "Maud S" was making race track history.

The darky knelt to ease the dying creature to the dungy floor of the yard. Except to roll big eyes she was moveless. Her incredibly long, slender legs were like bent and folded pipestems. Her bright coat was a tight covering over the thin frame, a mere boney rack that was her body.

After a stunned silence, the men moved aside to talk it over. Riley, backed by Pat and Jim, refused to accept a dying animal. The agent cursed and foamed. Hanging to my father's hand I listened to the clash of words and wills. Since the telegraph office was closed for the night, and the New Mexicans were on edge to get out of town, the deadlock had to be settled immediately. It was decided to shoot the colt.

Even here a new snag arose. Hardened men of the range and veterans of cattle wars that they were, the New Mexico men refused to kill the little animal. The negroes, called, likewise refused in horror. The agent, mouthing curses, grasped his long revolver and strode forward to do it himself. And there was my brother with the bright head in his lap. Ralph was fondling her as I did "Blond-head," my newest wax dolly.

Thinking back, it must be the lad grew up in the moments that followed the stern orders to "get outta the

way while I finish the business." He leaped to his feet, straddled the bay colt, and defied anyone. He seemed to grow taller. Outraged fury shook voice and body. Blue eyes blazed.

It was a scene that had only one ending even with hard-headed, sharp business men. "Babe" was given to nine-year-old Ralphie McFie "*to bury.*" Papa was ordered so to alter the papers to read on the morrow. Parting instructions were given by the negro hostler as he carried Babe to the back of the Riley buckboard where Ralph's arms waited.

It was mostly exhaustion. Mama made a muslin nipple and warmed the goat's milk which it took in quantity. In no time Babe staggered to her feet.

Mr. Riley did not know the colt had lived and was growing like a jimson weed until months later when he asked Papa pointblank. He threw back his curly blond head and laughed. He was a fine, generous spirited man.

The advent of Babe was wonderful, but more so to me was the discovery that my tyrant had become heroic, that he had feelings—feelings deeper and stronger than mine because he would fight for them. One of my early indelible memories was his drawn, blazing features in the dusk, gray as the metal called "steel."

It was not that the name was a family one; it was the way my brother looked; fierce, primitive, completely self-forgetful. It was the look of all iron-willed, pioneer men who keep on fighting and thinking of the still greater fields to be claimed; the look common to gallant soldiers who face great odds.

My brother's life was to be one long, bitter fight. He was to be a builder, builder of a small empire thousands of miles from his home. Between the lines of his dry, yet detailed home letters we could visualize his set features as he met the almost twenty years of hard things before all was finally well with him in the far Philippine Islands.

What befell the other colts went by the board with me. Things leaked out. It was said that Babe was foal of "Maud

S." We never investigated but we kids liked to think it was so for boasting purposes. We both rode her with no thought of "breaking" her in. Even when the fine racing cart came from St. Louis, Ralph simply called Babe, backed her into the long shafts, buckled straps around her trim body; then they trotted out of the big corral gate, one body as it were, boy, horse, cart.

Babe was in great demand for races. Her swift, rippling walk kept other horses a-trot. She outran horses brought up from Ft. Bliss, down from Stanton, Bayard—all of which were fine Army horses and the army in those days had the best of animals.

Yet the range had wonderfully fleet little racers. The White Oaks ranches were famous for them—the Rhodes boys, Gene and Clarence, were always on hail for fiesta time at Cruces, or at Mesilla across the Rio Grande.¹

In from the range came the Ake and Isaac mustangs, the Riley cowboys, and other groups who didn't touch our family life: the Fall, Cox, King, and Oliver contingents, still shying off from the Coglin, Nolan, Coe, Gilmore and Doctor Blazer sons. There were big families then—tall, stalwart sons with mild mouths but jutting chins; all wise in range and cattle lore.

With Babe his loadstone, Ralph's ambition was to "run stock," and kind of a Jeff Ake encouraged him—Bunk Ake and my brother were chums. The big Ake clan used to winter (for the younger ones to get schooling) not far from our

1. I can remember only once when my loyalty to Babe faltered—and it was only for a moment. My best friend, at that time, was Nellie Rhodes who lived in Mesilla. We had the same birthday, and once when I rode over to spend the gala day at Nellie's, her grownup brother Gene rode in from their big cattle holdings in the San Andrés range.

Gene was a dapper, nonchalant figure; always singing or humming to himself, I remember. That day he was riding a beautiful black, and its trappings were of carved leather with shining silver trimmings. My heart leaped. I must ride that horse or die.

"Na, na," teased Gene, "a fatty like you would break his back." Oh, how I hated him. It was such an insult. Only Ralph could call me that with impunity. But I remembered that I was a guest. Nellie and I put on dignity and walked down to watch the Rio Grande which was nearby.

After all, I had been disloyal to Babe! I didn't "see" Gene after that.

fine new brick house, a short mile from town, and I remember being vastly proud that Grandma Ake liked best of all the snuffbrushes that I got for her—tender little underground branches of mesquite root, whittled and chewed (!) into a tiny, fine brush with which to dip her ground tobacco.

As Ralph grew, Jeff hired him summers, paying in the fall with steers which Ralph was allowed to select—cows even, in good brooding years. And when Jeff bought the farm halfway to Dona Aña which Papa and Johnny Barncastle owned jointly, Ralph helped out winters too—Babe making it possible to keep their beefers within a safe distance from the valley ranch.²

I remember that Jeff Ake made a trip to Santa Fé to say goodby to Ralph and his own kinfolk when they were getting off so hurriedly to the War—the Spanish American War in '98. At that time Ralph owned a tiny herd of forty head with several good horses to boot, all of which were running the Ake range. Jeff took them over, but Ralph kept his brand, I remember. It was a Flying U Bar, one that couldn't be altered.

To go back, however. Ralph was forbidden to race. One day he did—and his leg was broken when the iron hoof of the other, rearing animal, also ridden by a boy, came down on my brother's leg just above the knee. It had taken place in a pasture in the old river bed close by home. The tall Keezer boys, Roy and Henry, carried Ralph across McFie lane to mama. The story cooked up was an accident at the Keezer swing. The neighbor boys were terrified of their father.

How well I remember the terrible days that followed. It was a fearful break—and there was no doctor obtainable for four awful days.

My uncle Samuel Steel set the limb as best he could . . .

2. This ranch was just north of the big old walled Frank Fletcher-Guadalupe Ascarate hacienda on the east side of the Old Alameda, not far from the hills. The Alameda was grassy and lined by immense old *álamos*. It was the favorite picnic grounds for crowds of any size, with room for baseball and races.

he had had some practice with his dairy herd, and doctoring was a sort of hereditary thing in the Steel family. But it wasn't right, we all knew.

I remember they strapped the swollen limb on a cotton-padded board and kept it across a green-painted, tin foot-tub all those four days and nights. The tub was kept full of hot vinegar, replenished every few minutes by our negro Mollie and her half-grown son Jack who seemed never to rest or sleep. Somebody sat there dipping the hot vinegar over the leg. I remember they had to hold my brother too. Neighbors helped, and all our big family took anxious turns.

Dr. Lane finally was found at a ranch in the hills, where one of the lovely young Davies girls was having typhoid. He could hardly believe what was told him about the four days, for it was a wonder that Ralph had not had gangrene. Of course he had to re-set the leg.

For many a month Ralph was an invalid. Two things resulted. He became set against religion from overhearing my very pious grandmother say his trial was a "retribution," although she was thinking only of its effect on my delicate mother's health.

Ralph said: "Damn religion." His legs were of different lengths and his bitterness was intense. But the "damn" went deep with my parents because such language wasn't used by our clan.

Ralph was then, as I remember, around thirteen; tall, serious, manly. My father had been made judge, and, trying to pass the time for Ralph, Papa would have Jack drive the two of them to court. There, watching the court stenographer take down evidence became absorbingly interesting.

The new interest became known when the lad would tell Papa, afterward, that those Mexican witnesses weren't being taken down exactly enough. There ought to be another stenographer; someone who knew Spanish, he insisted. Mr. H. B. Holt was a fine man but he didn't know Spanish yet.

Ralph began to make scratches which he called Spanish stenography. Characteristically he was secretive about it.

But Papa helped, and it became more or less of a nightly game, while court was in session at 'Cruces, testing Papa's wonderful memory against Ralph's stenography.

When he was strong, school began in earnest—for by then the College was a going concern, and its big tall brick McFie Hall, built by old man Bogardus, was standing like a sore thumb on a bleak, sandy hill two miles south of town.

I was in the very necessary "Preparatory" department and Ralph was in Mr. Lester's business college. We drove down every morning, with lunches, in the cart. Babe whizzed us along at breakneck speed. We were not only a menace to all other traffic on the road, but a worry to all the community. We only laughed.

Babe took us down that dreadful, sandy road in exactly seven minutes, yet I remember only one accident. To avoid a mudhole once, Ralph ran too far up the side of a mesquite bush hilled halfway up by drifting sand, and someway the branches caught the wheel. I was spilled out so hard that I landed clear across the way, in another mesquite briar patch.

I was too plump to be bruised even, but was I furious. We staged one of our cat and dog fights then and there, to the huge enjoyment of the Ford and Newberry tribes, close friends, who were trudging along on foot. Big, pretty Belle Hall—of the Newberry clan—brushed me off and smoothed my ruffles, and my ruffled dignity, as well. And Pinkie Ford shared her lunch with me, I remember. They lived nearer College.

But this is my brother's story. Those were difficult years. Account of the Fountain killing, of my cousin Sam's murder, of the advent of the Fall aggregation, and other matters will be given at another time. My father's fortunes teetered. He went out of office, for in Territorial days the judiciary, as everything else, was appointive. President Chester A. Arthur had put Papa on the bench; when a democratic president went in, Papa was "bounced."

In passing I will say that Judge Fall did not stay on

the bench long. Although a Republican, my father was reinstated, and promoted to the first district at Santa Fé, the capital.

Papa had learned to depend on my brother and the chicken scratches which he called Spanish stenography. By now, Ralph knew much of law. He had begun to study papa's books before he knew the meaning of the hard words.

In his mind Ralph was torn between wanting to be a legal light, like Papa, or a cowman like his range friends. He felt a proper man when on horseback. He could forget his limp. His dear friend Johnnie Riley was another whose kindness helped life.

When the move to Santa Fé came, however, the die was cast. Ralph went with Papa in a court capacity, and began serious study of law.

All too soon came '98; the Spanish American War, and when Teddy Roosevelt asked our Territory for part of the experienced horsemen to make up his regiment of Rough Riders, Ralph was among the first to enlist. Because of his lameness and efficiency with his pencil, he was appointed troop clerk of his company, Troop E.

I remember tense waiting to know whether he would be accepted. And he might not, had there been more men pressing to join the company, and more time before they had to entrain. Ralph's friend Willie Schneppe and my brother stood side by side at the little station. Ralph was the happiest man in that long, irregular line of volunteers.

Tampa. Then Cuba. Col. Roosevelt was playing a waiting game with the Spaniards. The two lines were some distance apart. The nearby city was Santiago, a tall hill intervened, San Juan Hill. One night Ralph was on guard duty. He lay on a ridge, not quite on top lest the outline betray his outpost. It was a neglected plantation, rank and wild, and the tall grass scratched chigger sores up and down his long legs. His long Mauser rifle was on the wet grass beside him. Not a sound but crickets around him.

But suddenly came stealthy creeping noises and the

click of armed men's gear. Presently he knew that a small detail of Spaniards was being stationed on the brow of the hill just above where he was. They were being given final instructions for a surprise attack at dawn upon the American camp. Ralph had no way of knowing what hour it was, but the night was well spent. It was a matter of instinct for him to grip pencil, an old letter, and jot down what was being muttered to the Spaniards above him. Then he crept noiselessly downhill, and ran pellmell for camp.

Fortunately "the Major," who happened to be strolling in the pleasant night, was the one who sighted the limping, wildly excited figure coming into the big camp, using his Mauser to help him over the rough ground.

"Ralph!" Captain Llewellyn grabbed my brother. "You've left your sentry duty. They'll courtmartial you, shoot you. Get back, boy."

"Take this to—Colonel. They're attacking—at dawn," he gasped.

A thousand times "Major" told the story, giving it always a comic twist: Ralph really excited for once in his sober, serious life; the consternation in Teddy's tent at the news, and its acceptance only after Roosevelt had looked sternly to Llewellyn for confirmation; then the puzzlement at Ralph's stenography which none could decipher, and how Major suddenly began to chuckle: "By God, it's Ralphie's Spanish code. Send for him, Colonel." And, a much impressed leader did just that.

It made a good story, but we were used to Major's dramatics. We paid no attention to it, and Ralph said nothing either. But there came a memorable Rough Riders Reunion at Las Vegas, which their beloved Colonel (then president of the United States) attended.

In the course of his formal address at the banquet which ended the festivities, the President pointed to my brother, sitting with my father down the long table. "There is the boy whose quick wittedness and initiative gave me the jump on the Spaniards. Through him we were able to spring

the surprise that won San Juan Hill—and the course of the whole war, gentlemen! Stand up, McFie!”

Papa gasped. Ralph stood up, his blond face aflame with embarrassment.

“My boy, with your knowledge of Spanish, and your peculiar system of shorthand, you can be a valuable man to your country. I am sending William Howard Taft to our island possessions, the Philippines, as governor-general. I am going to tell him to take you with him.”

When the hearty clapping had died down, characteristically, Roosevelt added, in mock scolding: “You’re a son-of-a-gun, McFie. I’ve been here two days and you’ve not paid your old colonel your military respects yet!”

The clapping became furious. It was “Teddy” at his best, and a home boy coming into his own! Whoopee reigned for several minutes, Papa said. Nor was that all that the warm-hearted president did for Ralph. Not long afterward a personal letter came for Ralph to present to Taft.

His parting gift to me was the Rough Rider insignia. It is a silvered circle with crossed guns topped by a large U. S. Ralph went with patriotic enthusiasm uppermost in mind. He fully intended to return to New Mexico to practice law with my father when Papa should retire from the bench. For years, in all the full descriptive letters home, always that intent shone through.

The long voyage was thrilling, with stops in Hawaii, Japan, and China. At Manila finally, Ralph found himself brought up sharply with the irresistible challenge of mixed races, delightful old Spanish culture and architecture which was so familiar. Congenial too was the tropic climate and the easy quiet mode he liked.

The city swarmed with office seekers, many of them known New Mexicans. Too, Taft immediately organized a legal emergency body to free the vast rich estates which the Catholic Church had acquired through the centuries. The “Court of Friar Land Claims” it was named, and Ralph

found himself chief clerk, with a delightful Illinoisan, Judge Ickes, as justice.

It was a congenial, familiar job. But it was monumental, too, for it was to occupy several years during which the court traveled by every imaginable mode of conveyance, over the whole island world. They went wherever there was one of these estates to be taken over and the land redistributed, but general headquarters were at Manila.

For recreation, my enthusiastic brother would spend evenings and holidays grubbing out the veritable cesspools of tenement quarters of the city, and eliminating areas of deadly danger along the river front in the old walled city, with the Sanitary Commission boys who were his chums.

From them he learned the vital importance of careful living. He drank only bottled waters; ate only cooked food; used native remedies for simple needs. From the first his greatest pain was the loss of friends who would not be as cautious in eating and drinking. Especially the latter, for he had contempt for liquor.

As the court began its sessions with witnesses from many races, the old challenge of bungling translation of the language confronted Ralph. Out came his pencil and notebook, word for word he took the testimony. Judge Ickes, a generous spirited gentleman, was merely amused when gradually the witnesses would turn to my brother as their interpreter rather than to the regular official.

In connection with the court were native interpreters. Gradually Ralph became conversant with the six native tongues. In time other courts would borrow his services which made him very proud indeed. This language business was his bit toward the civilization of the Islands. Not for effect, however; justice to the underdog was the mainspring of his life.

It was something like the third year before Ralph's letters changed. It was during a memorable visit of the Court to Davao on the southern end of Mindanao Island. Here he found what seemed an earthly paradise. Here he

would build an hacienda and become a planter. My parents sighed, naturally, but John Junior was coming along in years and showing decided talent for law.

But 'way down in Mindanao! Why, it was the one spot generally conceded impossible of civilizing in all the archipelago. It was a thousand miles from Manila by inter-island boat travel! It was violently volcanic by nature. There were no whites on that whole enormous southern half of the next-to-biggest island. Its native tribes were the Moro head-hunter cannibals, fiercest and wildest of all known groups. The Moros and Igorotes were still wildly antagonistic and treacherous toward the whites. Aguinaldo, up in the mountains of Luzón, was mild by comparison with the little black men of Mindanao!

Yet this was where our Ralph had decided to make his home. In vain my parents wrote quoting to him from his own descriptive letters: "Even the Catholic Friars have lived with boats always moored to their wharf, at the first sign of danger to sail away until it was quiet again." And "Of all the island world, this church land is the poorest, most undeveloped."

But it took a third of a year's time for letters to bring back an answer. Ralph, in partnership with young Harry Ickes, brother of the judge, had bought the vast estate and Ralph was to be its manager—Harry having had more money to invest than Ralph. Then, too, Harry thought he could be chief clerk of his brother's court. That suited Ralph too.

It must be said, however, that on that first visit to Davao, Judge Ickes did his best to deter the two younger men. Harry was put "on probation" in Ralph's position, and Ralph was to spend only part of each year on the hacienda besides being on call at anytime if needed by the Court. Simply the Judge knew he could not spare Ralph's services.

In a few months Ralph was called back to his old job in Manila. And within the year, alas, gay young Harry died violently of bubonic plague right there in Manila.

To go back, however, to that first venture of the court. To be safe the court had a chartered boat on which to live when going about the wild portions of the islands. Davao proved to be a small, typical village of a few miserable, fever-ridden degenerate Spaniards who had clung to their small holdings against the natives because of the protection of the Church and its vast property earnings. Their grip would be gone with the opening to sale of the lands on which they had worked and lived for generations.

However, since the War, there had been a steady influx of Japanese. To outward appearance, Davao was a town in Japan! The Spaniards had lost out anyway. Ralph wrote enthusiastically about the new fields around the dead little village, and the finest, longest staple hemp in the islands. He was all in a fret to get his wide acres under cultivation. The Japs were alright, he said; industrious, quiet as so many field mice, perfectly acclimated. This, however, was before he had won their enmity and his long fight began.

The Court had difficulty in forcing the natives to attend sessions. They were scattered in the mountains; or living on cane pole raft houses out in the water of lagoons and marshes. The men were puzzled. It was not until Ralph went to live there that he found the reason: they were in a great deal of awe, and in very great fear of the Japs!

The Court did not linger any longer than necessary. All food had to be bought from the Japs, even the fish, although fishing was the task of natives. After one poisoning it was discovered that all the fish had to be examined. Mysterious spiders, venomous serpents, made their appearance on their houseboat—obviously slipped on board “by the natives” as the apologetic Japs would say. And the court officials believed it. All in all, Judge Ickes moved on to the next place, glad to be alive.

Yet Ralph and Harry had gone inland and been charmed. Ralph, too, had been interested by the Moros and Igorotes. He sensed their need of a protector, although he could do nothing except make them listen to him talk. He

did a canny thing, however. He took a miserable little native boy back to Manila with him. When he came next to Davao, he had the Igorote language, and a healthy, nimble-minded body servant. The boy refused to leave Ralph's side, which for a time did not make him friends among the natives.

Ralph's first great sorrow at Davao was the death of this boy. It seemed to have happened because he fell asleep on a limb in the sun and one of the many fifteen foot python snakes got him.

Ralph heard, very much startled, the beating of native drums in the wooded slopes of the mountains. All night they beat, many of them. The tribes were assembling in the hills. At dawn, here came a long procession covered with mud for mourning, black, volcanic mud on head and breast. Ralph thought his end was near.

On the contrary, it seemed the python had given the boy a new existence—translated him bodily to the Igorote heaven. They were thanking him! Ralph had had no idea how very much on probation he had been. Next time he walked off his estate he found barriers removed from trails to their villages.

The alert mind of the boy had been an eye opener. Ralph decided he did not want too many Japs on his hacienda; he now decided to employ natives, if they would work. The Japs, departing, showed their teeth. They laughed at the idea of a native working. He would soon see, they said maliciously. He passed several bad hours when, with walking cane tipped with an iron cap to kill snakes and marsh rats, he followed one of the dark funnel-like trails to an Igorote town in the deep jungle.

Having been raised in Apache Indian country, he was aware that he must be surrounded by silent danger at every step, both in the dense wood and by traps underfoot. But nothing happened and he noted that he was received with astonishment. The headmen took him to their ceremonial house, up three ladders to a dizzy height, every step an

immediate risk to a man of his height and weight. But again he arrived atop safely.

Here he was handed a ceremonial cigar, one of the usual foot-long family size. He wondered if it might contain some narcotic or deadly herb, so, taking care to attack the more wrapped end of the huge thing, he took one drag. Then, explaining with a smile that in his land among the Indian natives it was polite to take only one draft, he passed it on to the next in the squatting circle. It had worked. The cigar, drugged, of course, was quietly put aside.

Ralph then took his life in his hands. He stumbled along, but he made them understand that he had come to stay; that he was mild, understanding, and incurious about their private matters. He needed them for friends; he needed them to help him open roads into Davao, and to keep them open all the year around. Davao was seven miles from his place, it would take many men working all the year around to keep the roads open, wouldn't it? Was he an enemy that they wouldn't help him? It wasn't against their religion?

Ralph said the most tense moment of his whole experience was sitting on that rickety, swaying cane platform with ten other men. Below was the sheer fall into marsh water waist deep, a veritable ooze of deathly pollution.

They chattered like so many monkeys, gesticulated like the million monkeys in his forest which made day and night alive with their noise. But in the end each headman chose a young man. All reserve being down, they told him he had walked like a superman over the magic number of their pitfalls; that he had smoked their drugged cigar without passing out; that there now remained no reason why he should not be their neighbor and friend.

"We need you against the little brown devils. You need us too," they said, as the strange procession at Ralph's back took the trail to his new place.

They knew that form of work and did it willingly. He gave them rice, he paid them every Saturday night, and

made them rest on his Sunday. In the dusk he saw them slip away, gripping their precious silver coins some of them fingering the money as if it were a complete curiosity to them. All Sunday, as he and his two Luzón "boys" rested and ate, they wondered if the Igorotes would return on Monday.

Monday at daylight, there stood the ten below Ralph's porch. Their money spread across their girdles in a stiff row, two holes bored in each coin and a stout hemp cord tying the silver to the cloth. My brother told them they were very good looking, and they grinned happily.

"The monkeys cannot steal our wages. Nor the Japs," they explained.

Before long, they trusted him to keep their money, a simple credit system. Barter, rather, for he soon was bringing goods from Manila, and from then on he never lacked for food which they knew how to raise or learned from him to raise. Ralph was as proud as punch over "his" Igorotes.³

The Moros were another problem, however. To them his blood would win them a place in paradise. Had not his Igorote boys been on guard day and night, his life would have been forfeit before he had even known anything about it. I can't seem to remember how he won them, but he did.

And it was the favorite topic of my parents, who made two trips to visit Ralph in Davao, to recount the annual trek of the Moros to Ralph's hacienda on New Year's day to offer an animal, pure and spotlessly white, to show him their white thoughts toward him. Some years it would be a dove; others a pony, one of the tiny variety of Filipino horses; or a rooster.

Meanwhile, Ralph had earned the anger of the Japs. However, when he went back to Manila (which occurred very soon after the peace talk was made) Ralph left word with the alcalde at Davao that if anything went wrong with his place or his Igorotes, he would bring back the Court from Manila on them. So nothing happened.

3. In 1906 at the request of the government, he brought a band of them to the World's Fair at St. Louis. Their loyalty to him was like worship.

The inter-island boat came to Davao once in three months. When it brought the call from Judge Ickes, he left with few misgivings, for he was leaving nothing but a handful of Igorotes.

He had no idea when he might be able to return—and he arrived in Manila to find his moneyed partner dead!

Not for a whole year was he able to return to Davao. Having spent all he could raise for his share of the estate, he was now cumbered with the need to reimburse Harry's widow. From then on great pressure for money was on his shoulders, the mercy being that understanding court officials, realizing his desperate circumstances, raised his salary and gave him other concessions that helped out. They needed him, and said so.

But it was a year before he was able to get another partner. The two spent several hundred dollars in equipment: plows, tools, window glass, etc. The little boat was damaged and nearly capsized in a typhoon so heavily was it loaded with their stuff. When the captain limped into the first port of call, on the northern part of Mindanao, he threw their freight off the boat, and sailed away before they could get down to the wharf to ask what he was doing! They stood there cursing the day of that captain's birth. The blank beach where they stood was scarcely more of a place than Davao town. Robinson Crusoe had nothing on them, they felt.

However, they spent all they had in buying carabaos (water buffaloes) and rickety carts. Their journey was going to take them three weeks, but that was not troubling them. Nobody knew how far it was. Once going they were so weary and depressed they didn't care. The thing was to get there before Christmas which was when Ralph had promised to return to Manila . . . and it was September when they were "ship wrecked!"

They had ten carts, twenty pair of water buffaloes. All went well,—that is, until they were crossing the very last little stream. Here they made camp over night, and swarms

of Igorotes stood guard over them as they slept—they had the habit of sleeping on top of carts.

At dawn a loud wailing awoke the two Americans. Every one of the forty creatures lay dead. Several dogs accumulated on the trek also lay stretched out on the bank. The Japanese had indeed taken a bitter revenge. The two were flat broke again. Still worse, Ralph's new partner went raving crazy.

Disaster followed disaster. In five years, my poor brother had five partners, every one of whom died on his hands! His home letters were indeed grief stricken ones. Had he not been so well known in Manila, so completely trusted by governmental officials from splendid Governor Taft down to the Filipino alcaldes and the very policemen on their beats, "most anybody might have reason to call me a murderer." I remember Mama crying bitterly when she read that letter.

Papa kept sending money, and another man would offer to go into partnership, so wonderful were the hemp and copra from Davao. And at last, Ralph got on his feet so that he was able to resign from the court, and go to live at Davao. In the back of his mind was to develop the bay so that large steamers could and would stop there. He had been able to interest four other men to buy great haciendas in that region, and his hopes were high.

Gradually his house grew. Solid mahogany it was, with furniture of lovely carving. The one thing he required of an overseer was the ability to keep from drink, and to have a hand for carpentering; cabinet making, rather.

His "boys" learned to cook as he wanted it done; he even had a boy who made his suits of cool rajah silk. Ralph's dream now was wife and home. But she had to be from America. He wanted her to have energy, life, vim. He was so tired of Jap medicine—for he had to use it at Davao.

But by now there were rich Japs all over the Islands. When, in a time of homesickness, Ralph offered to sell his hacienda to one of them, the man laughed in his face. "Some-

day, me own your land—all for nothing. Why buy?"

Then it was he began to beg big ships to make his gulf a shipping point. He wrote to every official about fortifying it, wrote letter on letter to Washington about the ultimate need of garrisoning Davao Bay. The only result was that Gov. Leonard Wood, after his appointment, came down to look over the situation. Nothing came of it, however, except Ralph's appointment to be vice-governor of Mindanao Province.

It was when he was vested with this dignity that the Japs decided to be friendly with him. It was then he learned why they had stopped bothering him years before. It was the fact that he had stabilized the food problem in that whole region when an earthquake and volcanic eruption occurred, in the third year he was there. At that time, Ralph had introduced irrigation on his acres so that he had crops when others didn't and were on the point of starving. As such occurrences were common, nobody had ever thought anything could be done about it—but Ralph did. Too, that first time, he sent for rice enough to feed his friendly Igorote tribe through the season till new food grew.

It had impressed the Japs, anyway. Perhaps it had the Moros. They took up the idea of a big harbor. Ralph always said that without their help the Anglos could never have made it the splendid harbor it became. His dealings with the Japs were constant now. All the planters hired Japs, not that they wanted to, simply their expanding haciendas had to have laborers—and there were only Japs for hire! All their haciendas were having wonderful, steady crops. Warehouses were bulging. It was imperative that big boats should come to Davao—and a delegation came asking Ralph to go to Manila to persuade shipping companies to do it. Ralph went.

In vain he limped from company to company showing his handful of wonderful hemp, giving facts and figures, pleading for Davao to be made a port of call. None would listen. It was too damned far off. A whole thousand miles!

At this low ebb in his courage, the news of the World War came over the cable. Ralph sent a capable overseer down to Davao, and took the first steamer for home in the states.

On the tramp steamer he took influenza in the virulent form of 1918. He lay on the deck of the churning little steamer, hemorrhaging until he could not raise his head. Practically the whole boat was in a similar condition; many already had died. So many, indeed, that on arrival at Kobe, Japan, the boat docked and went no further. Japan too was in the throes of the epidemic.

Mercifully a missionary came to the boat. He took Ralph and an Englishman from Borneo home with him, nursed them to recovery, helped them procure passage back to their homes. My poor brother now had to use two canes instead of one. The flu had undermined his wonderful constitution. He was never to be robust again. The flu, not the tropics, had "got" him.

Yet two splendid things came of that terrible experience. Ralph had been impressed with the missionary's type of Christian Japanese. He was so impressed that, the next year after seeing the situation deteriorating at Davao among the planters, he made another trip to Japan, and employed a whole colony of Christian Japs. And he never regretted it.

The second thing was the interest in his project to bring big boats to Davao. His English friend came to his help with tales of the new development of oil in Borneo, and the close proximity of Borneo to Davao Bay!

Soon big steamers were poking their noses into Ralph's harbor, taking on great shipments of wonderful "Manila hemp" for our U. S. navy. Davao Province was made. Wealth poured in, to Anglo pockets—and to Jap.

My brother dreamed of a sweetheart wife. Around the wide porch on three sides of his beautiful mountain home, seven miles inland from the town and port, he had eighteen varieties of orchids abloom the year around. He brought a Jap cabinet maker who made new, beautifully

carved and adorned furniture. The double nets surrounding the cot beds were of the finest net of India. But he was sick and lonely. Not even the arrival of young John Robert, Jr., to be his right hand man, upon the conclusion of the World War, was able to satisfy his longing for a completeness of homelife.

In 1925, the two brothers came home for a six months' visit. On the boat, as they came through the Golden Gate in his last bath aboard, a lurch sent Ralph so violently against the side of the tub as to cause a violent hemorrhage which took him to a hospital on landing. Nothing could be found, in all that big hospital, to stop the flow of his lifeblood. He made his will between spells of half unconsciousness and was kept alive only by transfusions which our brother John gave. Helplessly we saw him fade away, drained of blood and strength.

But Ralph's arrival in the States had been an event well publicized in the California newspapers. His desperate illness, also, got into print. And, as God willed, an old army officer friend read about Ralph. He yanked on his coat, came breathlessly to the hospital. And he stopped that flow of lifeblood within the hour, an old, retired army doctor.

To make a long story shorter, Ralph married the pretty nurse. Months later she went halfway around the world to meet him, and they were married in Japan. In due time a lovely daughter came to Ralph. Monthly he had pictures taken of Mary Rhoda, who was named for both grandmothers.

But his health was going fast. A stroke slowed him still more. In spite of good, loving nursing, he slipped into the unknown, in far Davao. During those same months our blessed father was going too, in Santa Fé. Ralph went first. Papa was not told of the cable.

When mother and Ralph's favorite sister Toots (Amelia's nickname) went to be with Mabel and Mary Rhoda in their great loss, they heard the story.

It seems that his going was sudden in the end. Mabel

hardly had time to get help from Davao, seven miles away, much less notify planter neighbors still further distant. And, in such heat, burial has to be at once.

Mabel said that all that night, sitting with her dead, she kept hearing the thudding of native drums in the mountains and down the valleys, seemingly in every direction. It worried and frightened her. Next morning, when she arrived in Davao for the burial—which was to be at sea by Ralph's express request of long standing with friends there—she was further alarmed to find Moros and Igorotes by scores and hundreds in the town.

When the burial barge was brought to the dock which Ralph had built, it was a bower of the most exquisite orchids, orchids which those natives knew their old friend and protector loved above all other flowers. In the night watches their drums had spread the news of his passing, and their remembering hearts had done the rest. Some of those people had walked the whole night through to be there with their offering.

It was a strange funeral service, even for isolated Davao, Mindanao. There was the Japanese Protestant minister. There stood the Catholic priest with his small train of Filipino acolytes. And there, also, was the chief head-hunter Igorote skullman to see that his friend had a tribal benediction.

As the watchers from the shore saw the body slip into the harbor waters, they set up their tribal wailing for the dead. It was a wierd difficult ending for the young widow with her three-year-old child. But it was understood and significant to those who heard. Never before in the memory of the oldest of the ancient priests, had it been raised in the presence of a white man.