

Tubby's Dummy

How an American Met an Attack of Head Hunters.

By BRADFORD K. DANIELS.

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Tubby Hicks paused in his labored progress along the path which led from the Luzon power plant through the fruit laden longbul bushes to his neat little shack upon an Abra hillside, and as he mopped the sweat from his tropic bleached forehead he gave a low whistle of surprise, for impaled upon a bamboo stake at the turn of the path and on a level with his own eyes was the head of an Ilocano, its pock-marked face looking straight into his with a comical leer. "Humph—did it at one lick," he commented wheezingly as he noted the neat way in which the neck had been severed.

First peering cautiously about him, he hastily wrenched the head from the stake, tucked it under the flap of his wide khaki coat, sauntered on toward home and, wrapping the head in several layers of the Manila Times, he carefully concealed it in the bottom of his trunk.

That evening Tubby, to Sebastian's unbounded surprise, permitted the muchacho to leave an hour earlier than usual and, when the streaming tail of his camisa had vanished round the turn of the path, took possession of the smoke incensed kitchen—with its half dozen primitive clay stoves imbedded in a long trough of ashes. When he had kindled a fire in one of these (the pungent smoke made him sneeze and splutter and anatomize Filipino kitchens in general) he filled with water the largest big bellied jar among Sebastian's sooty pots and, fetching out the mysterious head, dropped it in.

By boiling and rubbing he produced a skull which he stowed once more in the bottom of his trunk and retired to rest under a strictly first class mosquito bar upon a wide and very comfortable old Spanish bed that had cost him 25 pesos.

Somewhat overheated from such unusual exertions, Tubby shifted his bulky form from time to time all over the wide cane woven bottom of the old family cama in a vain search for the coolest spot. And as he puffed and squirmed ponderously about like a stranded grampus he reviewed the situation. "Head hunters, hey!" Another squirm. "Didn't like the way I turned the river aside from their cluster of vile shacks, so they're giving me formal notice to vamoose. Well, it's kind and considerate of 'em, all right, but I guess I like the Abra climate better than Manila, even if it is a bit hot"—another shift made the bed creak—"up here this time of year. Let's see; they're due tomorrow night." And Tubby drew in a long, fishlike gasp as certain possibilities were visualized with startling clearness.

As electrician at the Luzon power plant Tubby was the only white man that side of Vigan, twenty miles away, the force under him consisting wholly of Ilocanos. Of course he could telephone to Captain Alken for a detachment of constabulary to come up and protect him, but the thought of the way the boys would guy him when he went back to Manila rendered such an alternative impossible.

The following morning Tubby made glad the heart of the cook—recently saddened by the large amount of carefully prepared wood that had disappeared from the kitchen during the night—by giving him and the muchacho a holiday, as he was going into the hills to hunt deer, he declared. That the fat senior ever hunted deer was news to them, but they kept their perplexities to themselves and hastened to the cockpit in the village, which the lazy presidente permitted to be kept open on week days in violation of the new law of the "loco Americanos" against the heavenly sport at any time except on Sundays and feast days.

The servants gone, Tubby slipped the heavy wooden bar across the door, closed the sliding bamboo windows and in the subdued twilight of the shack brought out the skull and set to work. With a pillow under his knees to protect them from the hard bamboo slats of which the floor was constructed, he labored over the skull of that obscure and departed Ilocano with as much thought and care as he would have bestowed upon the installation of a new dynamo. Chisels, mallets, wires big and little, solder and a soldering pot, white paper, a can of kerosene oil, a gimlet, to say nothing of heaps of clothing, littered the floor till noon, when, with a satisfied chuckle, the steaming electrician replaced the skull in the trunk, stood a bulky something in the dark interior of the "aparador," or big movable closet, and then opened the windows to the blessed breeze that chanced to be blowing down from the hills.

When he had taken a shower bath from the cask that he had rigged up over the porch he drew up a bottle from the deep well in which he always kept a supply "on ice," as he phrased it in loving reminiscence, lunched on crackers and mangoes and then started for the plant. With him he took his fieldglasses and carefully studied the distant hills as he proceeded. "Humph—they're filing through the pass there from Bongto now," he commented after a long look through the glasses at a gash in the distant mountains. "Well, I hope they enjoy their

reception," he concluded with a fat chuckle, swinging the glasses over his thick shoulder and waddling on. When Tubby threw the stub of his seventh Dos Hermanos cigar out of the window that night and put aside a back number of the Arroyo it was only 10 o'clock, nearly two hours earlier than it was his custom to retire. Although it was a hot night, he closed the windows carefully, switched off all but one of the electric lights that he had installed on a wire from the power house and then brought forth from the capacious closet a bulky dummy dressed in a suit of his own pink pajamas and placed it in a sitting posture in the middle of the bed. Opening the trunk, he brought out the skull and after fifteen minutes tinkering had it secure upon the shoulders of the effigy.

With a wry face, he then made down a bed in the farther corner behind the closet, where the floor chanced to be made of boards and not of openwork slats through which a spear could easily be thrust. Then he opened wide the bamboo windows and, contrary to his custom, the door, switched off the remaining light and, after a glance into the moonless night through the algeroba trees aglow with fireflies, lay down with a groan of protest upon his hard bed, casting a longing look at the dim outlines of the more comfortable one occupied by his alter ego, as he dryly phrased it.

Tubby Hicks was never known to have a case of "nerves" in all his happy life, and the nature of insomnia was quite unknown to him, except as he had observed it in some of his less fortunate fellow mortals. Tonight, however, the usually imperturbable electrician was as wide awake as a cat. For obvious reasons he dare not smoke; he even dare not roll about in search of a soft spot because of the horrible row the growling boards made. So he lay upon his aching back and listened to the big lizards that scurried over the ceiling and "lok-ud" in raucous voices as if deriding his misery.

A clammy thing fell with a smart spat upon his face, and he almost screamed like a schoolgirl, but as the horrible something scrambled away over the wide dome of his stomach he realized that it was only a ten inch lizard that had missed its footing as it frisked along a rafter. Then a pig came nosing about under the kitchen for panaya rinds, and, mistaking the sound for something very different, his heart began to thump ominously. Scarcely had the pig revealed its identity by a satisfied grunt when a party of revelling rats began to dance a ragtime upon the bamboo matting overhead.

But what was that? Tubby opened his mouth and held his breath in an effort to determine. Yes, it surely was the sound of stealthy bare feet upon the bamboo slats of the open platform outside the door. And there, vaguely outlined against the sky, was a dark form rising noiselessly above the window cap. Listen! The faint but unmistakable sound of a spear in the cracks of the bamboo floor under his bed came to him and sent a cold shiver down his spine. Now a dark figure was balancing on the window ledge, spear in hand, and some one was standing in the doorway. Now a half dozen heads were visible at the window to the right of the bed, a villainous forked shield showing between two of them. A hand clutching a poised spear rose stealthily in the doorway—and then Tubby pressed the button.

At the magic touch a skull with eye sockets, nose and mouth aflame appeared upon the shoulders of a portly form in pink pajamas under the mosquito netting, the horrible thing leering at its surroundings in a way that gave even Tubby a thrill. For a moment there was silence nothing short of abysmal, and Tubby noted a score of black eyes bulging with terror from under shaggy manes of hair. With the ghost of a chuckle Tubby pulled a string which released a spring, and the fearful thing under the netting leaped up, the three dozen sixteen candle power lights inside of it that the movement switched on making it glow like a fiery demon from the nether world.

And then Tubby had the surprise of his life. Instead of springing through the windows in a general stampede, the Igorrotes prostrated themselves before the pink glowing god, sending up a chorus of deep guttural groans. One gaunt old savage flopped down so close to Tubby that his feet pressed the luckless electrician's stomach, but the old heathen was so taken up with the newfangled god that he had little surplus thought to bestow upon his pedal extremities.

Then a brilliant idea seized Tubby. Rolling cautiously over, he switched off the current, and the hectic god rapidly faded into blackness. For one long moment Tubby heard nothing but the deep breathing of the dark forms about him, while he held his own breath; then a wandering zephyr strayed in through the nearest window, fanning the bald spot on his cranium, and he sneezed. Promptly a hand came groping in his direction, and in his eagerness to see it he again jabbed at the button and switched on the current.

An ominous grunt from the leathery old monster at the other end of the hand brought every head bunter in the room to his feet, his spear poised in a way that made the genial joker in the corner shiver. For a moment Tubby looked death straight between the eyes; then, with an agility of which he had never dreamed himself capable, he sprang to the bed, slipped under the mosquito netting and, clasping the glowing god in an ardent embrace, stood safe from all danger except that of being roasted alive before daylight brought the presidente and relief.

FOR THE CHILDREN

A Lasting Valentine.

St. Valentine's day was approaching, and Jennie and Rosie spent all their leisure time in fashioning pretty cards for their friends.

While busy at work mamma entered their nursery, and, seating herself between the desks, she began:

"I heard a sad story just now. Mrs. Brown's little girl had a fall the other day and will probably be laid up for many months. Would you like to make her a valentine?"

"Would we?" they shouted in glee. "Let's make her one that will last," said mamma. "I read about a novel idea for such a one the other day. I'll get the slip of paper and read it to you."

Mother returned and read: "Eleven large, strong envelopes were obtained and marked one for each month, beginning with February. A subject was chosen for each envelope, and a picture of each subject was placed on the outside. Each receptacle was filled with all the pictures that could be obtained touching upon that subject. These were cut from old magazines or advertisements. The February envelope contained pictures of and about George Washington, and a pretty valentine was also found hidden away. The other envelopes contained: March, a maple sugar camp; April, spring flowers; May, a visit to the farm; June, a visit to the mountains; July, a visit to the seashore and Fourth of July celebrations; August, a menagerie; September, a ride on a train; October, nuts, nutting and nut trees; November, Thanksgiving; December, Christmas in many lands."

Jennie and Rosie grasped the idea at once, and in a flash they were skimming through old magazines for the necessary materials. Mrs. Brown, their washerwoman, rang the bell in the afternoon of St. Valentine's day to thank the little misses, and by the way she described her child's joy at receiving their token the sisters felt that they were more than repaid for their trouble.—Philadelphia Ledger.

St. Valentine's Post.

One child is selected as postman. This player is blindfolded, and the others sit around the room in a circle. The hostess or some other grown person acts as postmistress and gives to each child the name of a city or town. The blind postman is led to the middle of the circle, and the postmistress takes a position where she can see most of the players. She then calls, "I have sent a valentine from Boston to Denver," for example, and the children representing these cities change places as quickly and quietly as possible. The postman tries to catch one as they run, and if he succeeds in doing this or in sitting in one of the empty chairs the child who is caught or whose chair he has taken becomes postman. The retiring postman is rewarded by a heart shaped valentine slipped into a little heart shaped envelope and addressed "To My Valentine." If a child remains seated when his name is called he must take the postman's place.

A Flag of Truce For a Dog.

One day when Washington's army lay in winter quarters at Valley Forge a fine hunting dog, evidently lost, came to seek something to eat. Washington and his staff were dining at the time. On the dog's collar was the name "General Howe." Washington gave orders that the dog should be fed, and it was then sent to Philadelphia under a flag of truce, with a letter reading: "General Washington's compliments to General Howe. He does himself the pleasure to return to him a dog which accidentally fell into his hands and by the inscription on the collar appears to belong to General Howe." The British commander in reply sent a cordial letter conveying his warm thanks for this act of courtesy of his enemy.

Conundrums.

What herb is most injurious to a lady's beauty? Thyme.
What is the difference between a clock and a partnership? When a clock is wound up it goes; when a firm is wound up it stops.
Why should a needle make a good merchant? It always has one eye open for business and carries its point.
Why is the isthmus of Suez like the first "u" in cucumber? Because it is between two seas.
Why is early grass like a penknife? Because the spring brings out the blades.
Why is a real estate man not a man of words? Because he is a man of deeds.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Riddles.

What is the difference between photographing and measles? One makes facsimiles, the other sick families.
What is smaller than a flea's mouth? That which goes into a flea's mouth.

The Little Tin Soldier's Valentine.

Said the little tin soldier,
Who lived by himself,
To the Japanese doll
On the high mantelshelf:
"My sweet valentine
I say will you be?
For the slant of your eyes
Is most pleasing to me."
Well, the soldier climbed up
At the risk of his life
And carried her down
And made her his wife.
So from this happy ending
Of course you can guess
That the Japanese doll
Must have answered him "Yes."

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