

GREGORIO H. DEL PILAR, THE HERO OF  
TIRAD PASS

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There was in the town of Bulacan, province of Bulacan, a lanky and unobtrusive swarthy stripping, but spruce, smug, debonair, brisk and handsome, with small head, dark, restless eyes, long nose, and thin lips, who jumbled his romantic serenadings of the homes of beautiful maidens with the patriotic adventures of distributing, clandestinely from house to house, the secret propaganda literature of the "Katipunan," such as copies of the fortnightly magazine "LA SOLIDARIDAD" and of the works and writings of Dr. Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar, and other Filipino reformers then residing in Spain. The name of this audacious stripling, who, since early childhood, had demonstrated a very strong leaning toward the military career, was Gregorio H. del Pilar, though his intimates called him just "Goyo." He was born in the town of Bulacan on November 14, 1875. He was the scion of a well-to-do family, being the fourth child of the spouses Don Fernando H. del Pilar and Felipa Sempio. Gregorio, however, grew up in the home of his aunt, Doña Hilaria del Pilar, sister of Don Fernando and wife of Don Deodato Arellano, one of the founders of the "KATIPUNAN". Gregorio's childhood teachers were the "Katipuneros" and famous Tagalog scholars Maestro Monico and Pedro Serrano Laktaw.

It is but natural that under these surroundings Gregorio H. del Pilar should have grown up with the flame of the love of country burning within the very tissues of his body. In repose, Gregorio's sallow face wore an expression that was wary, thoughtful, severe and cold.

The Flight of Don Marcelo

One night the whole house of the Del Pilar family was agog and set into commotion when Don Fernando learned that his elder brother when Don Marcelo had left for Spain.

Marcelo H. del Pilar was a well-known Bulacan lawyer who was suspected and persecuted by the Spanish military authorities and friars because of his liberal ideas and patriotic activities. Before his departure for Spain he had organized a Propaganda Committee to raise funds to help finance the publication of a periodical in Spain to foster the propaganda movement for social, political and religious reforms in the Philippines. Many of his articles written with fiery style and nerve were published in "LA SOLIDARIDAD." Some of his most famous pamphlets are entitled "LA SOBERANIA MONACAL" ("THE MONACAL SOVEREIGNTY"), "LA LOBANEGRA" ("THE BLACK WOLF") and others, wherein the famous Bulacan lawyer exposed pithily and courageously the abuses and injustices of the Spanish friars and officials.

#### Military Career

Like his father Don Fernando and other uncles, Gregorio H. del Pilar was also educated in the Ateneo Municipal, now called ATENELO COLLEGE, when he graduated with brilliant records with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Almost after graduation, he joined, together with Emilio Jacinto, the "KATIPUNAN," and since then he engaged in a military career and devoted all his life to the service of the cause of freedom and justice of his beloved fatherland. His rise in the Philippine Army had been very meteoric. From the rank of mere captain he became later a brigadier general.

Gregorio H. del Pilar, as a soldier, had always demonstrated those virtues and qualities which would indeed dignify the name of any race. He was courteous, punctual, broadminded, generous, and noble. His sense of justice was so deep that he could not tolerate that his own brother Julian, who was a colonel in Gregorio's army, should trample down a poor crone without apologizing to her. Nor would he stand that Antonio Luna, despite his rank as a general, should indulge in a flirtatious affair with an unwary town girl.

Gregorio H. del Pilar had always preserved his name and reputation clean and unblemished. He was a man of very high integrity.