

FAGAN.

THIS story of life in the Philippines is condensed from Collier's Weekly, which awarded its author, Rowland Thomas, a prize of \$5000 in a contest in which over 12,000 stories were submitted by more than 11,000 writers.

While Fagan was still a kinky-haired youngster a question forced itself on his attention. "Why ain't I got a pappy?"

His mother, when asked, laughed the deep melodious laugh of her race, "Lawszee, chile, I reckon you has. Mos' chillen has."

"But who is my pappy?" persisted the child.

"Lawszee, honey, how you 'spec me to 'mamber that? I 'se got other things to 'mamber."

It was a careless, soapless, buttonless, existence that he led, this unfathered negro waif, "whom a" bit of food, a bit of clothing, and a chance to roll around on the levee with the other pickaninnies and bask in the sunshine and sniff the sweet-some smells of the sugar ships, sufficed, and he might have lived on thus indefinitely, but one day at a game of dice his well known good nature was taken advantage of by another black man. Fagan, the kindly, felt a sudden blinding desire to strike. He did so—and the other man dropped dead.

This act of Fagan's was in accordance with the only rule of conduct he could comprehend. He had no desire to harm others—but when they hurt him it seemed no more than fair that he should retaliate. He had not the intelligence to grasp or understand the fact that our community of interest requires every man to forego a cer-

tain amount of freedom and submit to a certain amount of unfairness.

To escape the law Fagan ran away and joined the army. His splendid giant-like physique made him valuable in the ranks, but he found it hard to obey orders, and he was unfortunate in his immediate commander.

Lieutenant Sharp lacked discretion in his methods. When he discovered the buttons on Fagan's blouse uncleaned he reprimanded him before others. Whereupon, Fagan, ignorant of any law against immediate explanation, replied, "Lawzee, Lutenant, I raickon I plumb forgot them buttons." For this retort he was put under arrest and taken to the guard house, mildly expostulating as he went: "He suah'd orter give me a fayah show—all I wanted was a fayah show." By the time the regiment was ordered to the Philippines Fagan's record loomed black with five trials.

It was during the first engagement of the campaign that a little brown man rose in front of Fagan and flashed a dart straight at his breast. The wound was slight, but the first sharp tingle of the flesh stirred something ferocious in Fagan. As once before, he felt a blinding instinct to strike, and whirling his heavy rifle in one hand like a club he felled his opponent. Then a mad joy of strength surged over him. He called to his comrades: "Come on boys, come on and kill these damn Filipinos."

From that day he was called "Wild Fagan." No one had ever equalled him as a fighter, and his methods were original. "He doesn't fire his rifle; just butts in