

THE LAND OF MAÑANA.

BY THOMAS A. GREGG.

The land of Manana is the land of indolence. The gaudy birds which flit through its palm groves ply a slow and heavy wing as if flight were an exertion, the tedium of which they would willingly forego. The reptiles—they are not of a very formidable character—which one may meet in a stroll in unfrequented paths, move sluggishly out of the way; while the flowers even, beautiful beyond comparison, but often inodorate and doomed by climatic influences to premature decay, seem to droop under the general inertia, which finds its highest subjects for exemplification in the natives themselves who seem to be happy in being entirely devoid of the energy which might on occasion surprise them by rousing them to action,—something they are not prone to, save through force of circumstances. The very air of the land of Manana seems imbued with the spirit of sloth; and so insidious is it that it requires but brief contact with it to enervate the vigorous and subdue the strong: by this I mean that the forceful northern nature, nursed to puissance in the invigorating atmosphere of the temperate zone, and habituated to gleaning its provender by the sweat of its brow, sinks into sluggishness and culpable incapacity for activity under the somnolent influence of the calorific atmosphere which enfolds the land of Manana. He who supinely sought rest under the upas unconsciously invited a euthanasia probably as pleasing as it was painless, but he who sets himself down under the fleckless sky of the land of Manana loses not his life, if he escape the miasma of the lagunas, or the vapor of the mezas, but finds his volitive energy subdued, and the engendering

within him of a desire to be like those about him, careless, free and abandoned to a gradation of vagrancy comfortable and pleasant in the extreme. And it seems to be a fitting disposition in a land where labor breakfasts, and to repletion evidently, on bananas, lunches on bananas and dines on bananas, with breadfruit and other similar comforts in reserve. And they grow profusely on the common domain—spontaneously, without cultivation, so that man there can live on the natural productions of the earth and if he be not fastidious as to the extent of his wardrobe, and can find comfort and contentment in a breech-clout, he need not work at all. But at some time in his early history the native was initiated into the subtleties of jumpers, shirts, and tanned trousers and he has wallowed deep in that slough of extravagant dissipation ever since. For these he will work and work hard, and so fond is he of fashion in this direction that at ports of call he may often be seen between decks on the steamer among the coast traders, drawing on six or eight pairs of trousers, one over the other, so as to convey them more handily ashore for his friends. By this forethought he not only does a kindness for those who have not the time or the inclination to visit the steamer, but manages to convey his purchases past the minions of the commandante of the port who might prove tariffically inquisitive should he come ashore with the goods in a shopper's parcel. And one day at Champerico it was obvious to all of inquisitive or observant disposition that this desire for personal adornment was not confined to the males, for we men standing on the promenade deck of a