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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *O TRISTE FIM DE POLICARPO QUARESMA*
(*THE SAD FATE OF POLICARPO QUARESMA*), A NOVEL BY LIMA BARRETO

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ABSTRACT

The thesis presented below is a translation from Portuguese to English of the novel *O Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (*The Sad Fate of Policarpo Quaresma*), written by the Brazilian author Lima Barreto—first serialized in 1911, then published in book format in 1915. The current translation was aided in part by two other translations: one by Robert Scott-Bucleuch, printed in 1978, and a newer translation by Mark Carlyon, published in 2011.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part One	1
Chapter I: The Guitar Lesson	1
Chapter II: Radical Reforms	19
Chapter III: Genelício's News	36
Chapter IV: Disastrous Consequences of a Petition.....	53
Chapter V: The Bibelot	68
Part Two.....	85
Chapter I: At "Tranquility"	85
Chapter II: Thorns and Flowers	100
Chapter III: Goliath.....	115
Chapter IV: "I ask for strength, depart now"	136
Chapter V: The Troubadour	153
Part Three.....	171
Chapter I: Patriots	171
Chapter II: You, Quaresma, Are a Visionary.....	189
Chapter III: ...And Soon Became Silent.....	206
Chapter IV: Boqueirão	225
Chapter V: The Goddaughter.....	243
Bibliography	258

The Sad Fate of Policarpo Quaresma

Translated by: Samuel Borowik

To: João Luís Ferreira

Le grand inconvenient de la vie réelle et ce qui la rend insupportable à l'homme supérieur, c'est que, si l'on y transporte les principes de l'idéal, les qualités deviennent des défauts, si bien que fort souvent l'homme accompli y réussit moins bien que celui qui a pour mobiles l'égoïsme ou la routine vulgaire.¹

Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*

¹ “The great inconvenience of real life and what renders it unbearable to the superior man is that, if one transports ideal principles into it, qualities become defects, in such a way that, often, the accomplished man ends worse than the man driven by egotism or vulgar routine.”

Part One

Chapter I: The Guitar Lesson

As usual, Policarpo Quaresma, better known as Major Quaresma, got home at 4:15 in the afternoon. This had been happening for more than twenty years. Leaving the War Arsenal, where he worked as Subsecretary, he searched in greengrocers for some fruit, cheese (sometimes), and, always, bread from the French bakery.

He did not waste even an hour in these steps, in such a way that, at around 3:40, he would take the streetcar without missing a beat, stepping in his doorstep, in a street removed from São Januario, at exactly 4:15 as if he was an astral apparition, an eclipse—indeed, a mathematically determined phenomenon, foreseen and predicted.

The neighborhood already knew his habits so well that in Captain Claudio's home, where it was common have dinner at around 4:30, the Dona² would yell to the maid when she saw him walk by: "Alice, look at the time! Major Quaresma has already gone by."

And so it was every day, for almost thirty years. Living in his own house³ and having other sources of income besides his salary, Major Quaresma could have a way of life superior to his bureaucratic resources, enjoying, from his neighbors, the respect and consideration deserved of a wealthy man.

He received no one at home. Despite being courteous to his neighbors, who judged him weird and misanthropic, he lived in monkish isolation. If he had no friends close by, he had no enemies either, and the only disaffection he received was from Doctor Segadas, a somewhat

² For practical reasons, I will leave all uses of *dona* in Portuguese. Though the term is not untranslatable, a full rendition of the word would sound clumsy. In my first draft, I had put "mistress," then thought of "lady of the house," but thought, at last, best to leave the word alone, since it is used so frequently in the novel. In short, *dona* is a means of address to women, married or not, young or old, tinged with respect, but, as with many terms of respect, used ironically as well.

³ The *casa própria*, or owned house, is, to this day, a symbol of considerable status in Brazil.

famous clinician, who could not believe that Quaresma had books: “If he’s not a graduate, why? Pedantism!”

The Subsecretary did not show his books to anyone, but when the windows of his living room library were opened, one could always see from the street the shelves filled from top to bottom.

Such were his habits. Lately, however, he had changed a bit, and this provoked some comments from the neighbors. In addition to his goddaughter’s father⁴ and his goddaughter, the only ones who visited him up until then, another person was seen entering his house three times a week and on specific days: a short man, thin and pale, with a guitar in a canvas bag. Right away, this fact intrigued the neighborhood. A guitar in such a respectable household! What would happen?⁵

And, in the same afternoon, one of the Major’s most beautiful neighbors invited a friend, and both passed their time going to and fro, measuring their steps, stretching their necks when they passed by the weird Subsecretary’s open window.

Their spying was not futile. Seated at the sofa, with the stranger by his side, holding the *pinho*⁶ ready to play, the Major listened attentively: “Look, Major, this way.” And the strings vibrated slowly in a wounded note; then, the master would add: “This is ‘re,’ OK?”

But it was not necessary to make an official announcement; the neighborhood soon concluded that the Major was learning to play the guitar. What? Such a serious man getting into such foolish things!⁷

⁴ The term used here is *compadre*. It can mean both a close friend, a godfather, or the father of someone’s godchild. For precision’s sake, I rendered it as “godfather’s daughter.”

⁵ During the time the book takes place, in the late 19th century, guitars were seen as instruments played solely by ex-slaves and the lower classes, hence the bourgeois neighbors’ horror.

⁶ Slang for guitar, meaning “pine.”

⁷ The word used here, *malandragem*, is very hard to translate. It can mean something foolish, tinged with criminality and idleness. A *malandro* is someone who is street-smart, cunning, and leaning towards criminality.

A sunny afternoon—a March sun, strong and implacable—there at around four o’clock, the windows of a barren São Januário Street suddenly filled up, from one side to the next. Even in the General’s house, there were girls at the windows! What was it? A battalion? A fire? None of these: Major Quaresma, with his head lowered, taking small steps as slowly as an oxcart, ascended the street with the wanton guitar under his arm.

True, the guitar was decently wrapped in paper, but these trappings did not hide its shape. Given this scandalous fact, the deserved public consideration and respect for Major Policarpo Quaresma somewhat declined. He was lost, insane, they said. However, he serenely continued in his studies, because he had not even noticed this decline.

Quaresma was a thin, small man, who wore a pince-nez, always with eyes lowered, except when locking his attention towards someone or something. Then, from behind the lenses his eyes took a fierce penetrating light, as if he wanted to enter into the soul of the person or thing he studied.

Despite this, he always looked down, as if guiding himself by the tip of the goatee that decorated his chin. He always dressed in a tailcoat—black, blue, or grey, striped cloth, but always in a tailcoat—and it was rare when he did not cover his head with a top hat, short-brimmed and very tall, made according to an old model of which he knew the time period very well.

On that day, when he came home, his sister opened the door, asking:

—Dinner, already?

—Not yet. Wait for Ricardo, who will dine with us tonight.

—Policarpo, you need to be sensible! An aged man, in a post, respectable, as you are, going around with this hoodlum, a charlatan, even; it’s not done!

The Major put away his sunshade—an old sunshade, with an entirely wooden shaft, and a hilt encrusted with tiny mother-of-pearl lozenges—and answered:

—You’re rather mistaken, sis⁸. It’s a prejudice to suppose that every man who plays the guitar is a nobody. The *modinha*⁹ is the most genuine expression of national poetry and the guitar is its instrument. We are the ones who abandoned the genre, but it was in high regard in Lisbon, during the last century, with Padre Caldas¹⁰ having a large following. Lord Beckford¹¹, a well-known Englishman, praised it.

—But this was during another time, now...

—How does that matter, Adelaide? Do you expect us to allow our genuinely national traditions to die...

—Well, Policarpo, I don’t want to contradict you; go on with your obsessions.

The Major entered an adjoining room, while his sister continued straight to the interior of the house. Quaresma undressed, washed, put on his house clothes, went to the library, sat on a rocking chair, and rested.

He was in a vast chamber, with windows facing a side-street, the whole room lined with iron bookshelves.

There were nearly ten, with four shelves each, besides the smaller ones with the larger tomes. Whoever perused that large collection of books would be amazed at perceiving the spirit that presided over the collection.

⁸ Policarpo calls his sister, *mana*, an endearing and familiar term for sister. Along with the masculine, *mano*, it is still used today, like “bro.”

⁹ The *modinha* is a popular sentimental love song.

¹⁰ Domingos Caldas Barbosa (1739(?)-1800), who created the *modinha*.

¹¹ William Thomas Beckford (1760-1844), art collector and novelist, who visited the court of Maria I in 1786.

In fiction there were only national authors—or those who were thought of as such: Bento Teixeira, of the *Prosopopéia*¹²; Gregorio de Matos¹³, Basilio da Gama¹⁴, Santa Rita Durão¹⁵, José de Alencar¹⁶ (all of it), and many others besides. One could guarantee that not one of the national or nationalized authors of 1880 and thereabouts were absent from the Major's shelves.

Of the history of Brazil the crop was bountiful: the chroniclers Gabriel Soares¹⁷, Gandavo¹⁸; and Rocha Pita¹⁹, Frei Vicente do Salvador²⁰, Armitage²¹, Aires do Casal²², Pereira da Silva²³, Handelmann²⁴ (*Geschichte von Brasilien*), Melo²⁵, Morais, Capistrano de Abreu²⁶, Southey²⁷, Varnhagen²⁸, and others rarer or less famous. Then there were those that touched

¹² Bento Teixeira (1561?–1618?) was a Portuguese poet who wrote in the colony of Brazil. Not much is known about his life, but his epic poem, the *Prosopopéia*, tells the story of Jorge d'Albuquerque Coelho, the governor of the Captaincy of Pernambuco, in *ottava rima*.

¹³ Gregório de Matos Guerra (1636–1695) is considered the greatest Brazilian Baroque writer. He was bestowed the nickname of *Boca de Inferno*, or “Hell's Mouth,” for his critique of the Catholic Church.

¹⁴ José Basílio da Gama (1740–1795) was a Jesuit writer born in colonial Brazil. His most famous poetical work is *O Uruguay*.

¹⁵ José de Santa Rita Durão (1722–1784) was a Brazilian poet and Augustinian friar. He wrote the famous epic poem *Caramuru*, which tells the story of a shipwrecked Portuguese sailor who lives among the Tupi-Guarani.

¹⁶ José Martiniano de Alencar (1829–1877) was a Brazilian journalist, lawyer, politician, orator, and, most famously, novelist. He is the most famous practitioner of the “Indianist” school of writing, which focuses on and romanticizes Brazilian natives.

¹⁷ Gabriel Soares de Souza (1540–1591) was a Portuguese explorer. He traveled to the Brazilian colonies and settled there for seventeen years. He published his *Tratado Descritivo do Brasil (A Descriptive Treatise of Brazil)* in 1587.

¹⁸ Pêro de Magalhães Gândavo (1540–1580) was a Portuguese historian who wrote the *História da Província de Santa Cruz (The History of the Province of Santa Cruz)*, published in 1576.

¹⁹ Sebastião da Rocha Pita (1660–1738) was a historian and poet born in colonial Brazil.

²⁰ Friar Vicente do Salvador, née Vicente Rodrigues Palha was a Franciscan friar and historian. He is called the “father of Brazilian history,” or “the Brazilian Herodotus.” His most famous work is *História do Brasil (The History of Brazil)*.

²¹ John Armitage (1807–1856) was an English merchant who wrote the *History of Brazil from the Period of the Braganza Family in 1809, to the Abdication of Don Pedro the First* in 1836.

²² Manuel Aires de Casal was a Portuguese historian and priest. He was the first man to put the Pero Vaz de Caminha's (1450–1500) letter into print in his *Corografia Brasileira (Brazilian Chorography)*.

²³ João Manuel Pereira da Silva (1817–1898) was a Brazilian historian, journalist, novelist, and politician. He took part in the formation of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.

²⁴ Gottfried Henrich Handelmann (1827–1891) was a German historian.

²⁵ Barreto is perhaps referring to Dom Francisco Manuel de Mello (1608–1666), who was a Portuguese soldier and writer.

²⁶ João Capistrano de Abreu (1853–1927) was a Brazilian historian. His most famous work is *Capítulos da História Colonial (Chapters of Colonial History)*.

²⁷ Robert Southey (1774–1843) was a British poet who also wrote the *History of Brazil* (1810).

²⁸ Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, Viscount of Porto Seguro (1816–1878) was a Brazilian historian, diplomat, and military. He wrote the *Notícia do Brasil (News of Brazil)* (1835–1838) and the *História Geral do Brasil (The General History of Brazil)* (1854–1857).

upon travels and explorations, what riches! There were Hans Staden²⁹, Jean de Léry³⁰, Saint-Hilaire³¹, Martius³², the Prince of Neuwied³³, John Mawe³⁴, von Eschwege³⁵, Agassiz³⁶, Couto de Magalhães³⁷ and there were also Darwin, Freycinet, Cook, Bouganville, and even the famous Pigafetta³⁸, chronicler of Magellan's travels—this is because these last voyagers mentioned Brazil, briefly or amply. There were also reference books: dictionaries, manuals, encyclopedias, compendiums, in various languages.

One sees, then, that his predilection for the poetics of Porto Alegre and Magellan did not come out of an irremediable ignorance of the literary languages of Europe; on the contrary, the Major knew French, English, and German painfully well; and if he did not speak these languages, he read and translated them correctly. The reason was to be found in a particular disposition of his spirit, in the strong passion that guided his life. Policarpo was a patriot. Since he was a young man in his twenties, the love for his homeland took him over completely. It was not a common, garrulous, and empty love; it was a serious, grave, and absorbing sentiment. He had no political or administrative ambitions; what Quaresma thought, or, better, what patriotism made him think about was a consummate knowledge of Brazil, taking him to meditations about

²⁹ Hans Staden (c.1525–c.1579) was a German soldier who voyaged to Brazil, and was captured by the Tupi-Guarani. He wrote and made engravings on the subject of his captivity.

³⁰ Jean de Léry (1536–1613) was a French missionary and writer. He wrote the *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil (The History of a Voyage Made to the Land of Brazil)*.

³¹ Augustin François César Prouvençal de Saint-Hilaire (1779–1853) was a French botanist. He traveled extensively in South America, especially in Brazil.

³² Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius (1794–1868) was a German botanist who explored Brazil.

³³ Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied (1782–1867) was a German ethnologist and naturalist who traveled to Brazil between 1815–17.

³⁴ John Mawe (1764–1829) was a British mineralogist.

³⁵ Wilhelm Ludwig von Eschwege (1777–1855) was a German geologist and geographer. The Portuguese court contracted him to estimate the mineral potential of Brazil.

³⁶ Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807–1873) was a Swiss geologist, biologist, and physician. He went on an expedition to Brazil in 1819–20.

³⁷ General José Vieira Couto de Magalhães (1837–1898) was a Brazilian politician, military, and folklorist.

³⁸ Antonio Pigafetta (1491–1531) was a Venetian scholar who was in Magellan's expedition.

its resources, so that he could point out remedies later, progressive measures, with full knowledge of the cause.

It was not known where exactly he was born, but it certainly was not in São Paulo, nor in Rio Grande do Sul, nor in Pará. One would err in wanting to find in him any regionalism; Quaresma was, above all, Brazilian. He did not have any predilection for this or that part of his country; so much so that what made his passions vibrate was not solely the *pampas* of the South with its cattle, the coffee of São Paulo, the gold and diamonds of Minas, the beauty of Guanabara, the height of Paulo Alfonso³⁹, the talent of Gonçalves Dias⁴⁰, or the impetus of Andrade Neves⁴¹—it was all of these together, molten, reunited, under the star-spangled banner of the *Cruzeiro*⁴².

Right when he was eighteen he wanted to become a military-man, but the health commission judged him unfit. He was hurt, he suffered, but he didn't curse the Homeland. The ministry was liberal; he made himself a conservative and continued more than ever to love “the land that saw his birth.” Prevented from evolving under the stripes of the army, he searched in administration, and chose its military branch.

It was where all was well. In the middle of soldiers, cannons, veterans, paperwork laden with kilograms of gunpowder, names of rifles, and technical artillery terms, he daily breathed the breath of war, of bravura, of triumph, which is the good breath of the Homeland.

During his bureaucratic leisure, he studied, but studied the homeland, poring over its natural riches, history, geography, literature, and politics. Quaresma knew the species of

³⁹ Paulo Alfonso Falls, on the São Francisco River, in the Northeast of Brazil. The falls are 275 feet tall.

⁴⁰ Antonio Gonçalves Dias (1823–1864) was a Brazilian Romantic poet, particularly associated with the school of “Indianism.” His poetry, as well as Indianism, is characterized by patriotic and native themes. Quaresma may also like Gonçalves Dias because he wrote a dictionary of the Tupi-Guarani language, in 1856.

⁴¹ Joaquim de Andrade Neves (1807-1869) was a Brazilian military commander during the Paraguayan War.

⁴² The Brazilian flag contains within its blue sphere at the center the Southern Cross, or, in Portuguese, the *Cruzeiro do Sul*.

minerals, vegetables and animals that Brazil contained; knew the value of the gold and diamonds exported by Minas, the Dutch wars, the battles of Paraguay⁴³, the sources and paths of all rivers. He defended, with harshness and passion the preeminence of the Amazon over all rivers of the world. To do this he would go so far as to commit the crime of amputating a few kilometers from the Nile, and it was with this rival of “his” river that he contended with the most. Woe to whoever mentioned it in front of him⁴⁴! Generally calm and delicate, the Major would become agitated and ill-mannered whenever the extension of the Amazon was discussed in comparison to the Nile.

He had been dedicating himself to Tupi-Guarani for a year. Every morning, before “Dawn, with her rosy fingers opened the way to rosy Phoebus,” he would clutch Montoya until lunch, *Arte y diccionario de la lengua guarani o mas bien tupi*, and studied the *caboclo*⁴⁵ jargon with obstinacy and passion. In the office, the minor employees, amanuenses, and scribes, taking notice of his study of the *tupiniquim*⁴⁶ language, named him for no particular reason—Ubirajara⁴⁷. One time, Azevedo the clerk, about to sign on the dotted line, distracted, without noticing who was behind him, said with a waggish tone: “Have you noticed that Ubirajara is late today?”

Quaresma was well regarded in the arsenal: his age, erudition, modesty, and humility in his way of life won him the respect of everyone. Noticing that the nickname was directed at him,

⁴³ These are the Dutch-Portuguese War (1602-1663) and the Paraguayan War (1864-1870). The Dutch-Portuguese War was a series of conflicts between the Dutch chartered fleets and the Portuguese armada for the control of the Americas, India, Africa, and the Far East. The Portuguese won the wars in South America and Africa, but not in other regions. For the Paraguayan War, see footnote 38.

⁴⁴ The passage reads in the original: *Ai de quem o citasse na sua frente!* *Ai* literally means “oh” or “ah,” but in this passage, both in sense and sound, “woe” is the best translation.

⁴⁵ *Caboclo* is a peculiar term. It refers to a specific group of people, those born of Brazilian native and white, or black, parents. In the draft, I thought of referring to *caboclos* as “half-breeds,” but the term is both offensive and inaccurate.

⁴⁶ This term could be rendered as simply Tupi-Guarani, but the flavor of the sentence would be lost, since *tupiniquim* refers not only to the language, but also to everything else contained in the Tupi-Guarani culture.

⁴⁷ He is a Brazilian native character from the famous “nativist” trilogy by José de Alencar.

he did not lose his dignity, did not burst out in vituperation and insults. He righted himself, fixed the *pince-nez*, raised his index finger in the air and responded:

—Mr. Azevedo, do not be thoughtless. You do not want to ridicule those who work in silence, to the greatness and the emancipation of the homeland.

In this particular day, the Major talked little. It was his habit, at around the time for coffee, when employees were leaving the office, to transmit to his comrades the fruit of his studies, the discoveries of natural riches he had made in his study. One day he read that there was oil somewhere, perhaps found in Bahia; another time it was a new specimen of rubber-tree that grew on the Pardo River, in Mato Grosso; another was a sage, a noteworthy person, whose great-grandmother was Brazilian; and when he had no discoveries to share, he dove into chorography, told of the course of rivers, their navigable extension, the tiniest improvements of which they needed to serve as a proper course from mouth to source. He loved rivers excessively; the mountains he was indifferent to. Too small, perhaps...

Colleagues listened to him with respect and nobody, that is, besides this Azevedo, who would get agitated in front of him, objecting to the least thing, advancing some quip, some saying. However, the moment Quaresma turned his back they avenged themselves from the verbal blows, showering him with ridicule: “This Quaresma! What a bore! He thinks we’re little boys... Poh, he talks of nothing else!”

And in this way he lived his life, half in the office, without being comprehended, and the other half at home, also without being comprehended. The day they called him Ubirajara, Quaresma became reserved, taciturn, mute, and only spoke because, when they were washing their hands in a room near his desk and were ready to leave someone, sighing, said: “Oh, God! When can I leave for Europe!” The Major could not contain himself: he raised his eyes, fixed his

pince-nez, and spoke fraternally and persuasively: “Ingrate! You who have a land so beautiful, so rich, and yet you would prefer to visit that of others! I, if I ever could, would go through mine from start to finish!”

The other objected that, around here, there were only fevers and mosquitoes; the Major contested with statistics and even proved, exuberantly, that the Amazon River had one of the best climates on Earth. It was a climate calumniated by villains, who kept coming back sick...

Such was Major Policarpo Quaresma, who was just arriving at his own residence, at 4:15 in the afternoon, without a minute off, like all afternoons—except on Sundays—exactly, like an astral apparition or an eclipse.

Furthermore, he was a man like all others, excepting those who have political ambitions or desired fortunes, since Quaresma did not have them to the slightest degree.

Seated on his rocking chair, at the center of his library, the Major opened a book and put himself to the task of reading it while waiting for his guest. It was the old *Rocha Pita*⁴⁸, the enthusiastic and gongoristic Rocha Pita of the *Historia da América Portuguesa*⁴⁹. Quaresma was reading this famous passage: “In no other region do the heavens show themselves more serene, nor midnight more beautiful until dawn; the sun, in no other hemisphere, has its rays more golden...” but he could not reach the end. Someone was knocking at the door. He went to open it in person.

—Am I late, Major? asked the visitor.

—No. You are on time.

⁴⁸ Sebastião de Rocha Pita (1660-1738), a Brazilian baroque poet.

⁴⁹ In English, it is *The History of Portuguese America*.

Mr. Ricardo Coração dos Outros⁵⁰ had just entered the home of Major Quaresma, a man known for his ability in singing *modinhas* and in playing the guitar. In the beginning, his fame was limited to a small suburb of the city, in whose “*saraus*”⁵¹ he and his guitar figured as a Paganini and his fiddle in the parties of dukes. Little by little, his fame extended throughout all suburbs, growing, solidifying itself until he was considered as something belonging to the suburbs themselves. Do not judge, however, that Ricardo was just another singer of *modinhas*, a nobody. No, Ricardo Coração dos Outros was an artist to the point of frequenting and honoring the best families of Méier, Piedade, and Riachuelo⁵². Nights in which he received no invitations were rare. He would go to the house of Lieutenant Marques, and the doctor Bulhões and *Seu*⁵³ Castro; his presence was always asked for, delighted in, and appreciated. Even Doctor Bulhões had a special admiration for Ricardo, a delirium, a frenzy, and when the troubadour sung he was ecstatic. “I like songs very much,” said the doctor while in the train a certain time, “but only two people meet my expectations: Tamagno and Ricardo.” This doctor had a great reputation in the suburbs, not as a doctor, for he would not even prescribe castor oil, but as understood in telegraphic legislation, for being the chief of the section of the Department of Telegraphs.

In this way, Ricardo Coração dos Outros enjoyed the general esteem of high suburban society. It is a rather special high society, one that is only high in the suburbs. It is composed of public functionaries, small businessmen, doctors with some clinical practice, lieutenants in different militias, a cream of a crop that trips along the shabby streets of those distant regions, in

⁵⁰ His name literally translates as, Richard Heart of Others.

⁵¹ Word in quotes by Barreto. It is the equivalent of a *soirée*.

⁵² Affluent neighborhoods of late 19th century Rio de Janeiro.

⁵³ The word *seu*, means simply “his,” but it can also refer to an older, (usually) respectable man when used together with a name. I decided to leave it as is because there is no direct equivalent in English, similarly to *dona*.

parties and balls, with more vigor than the bourgeoisie of Petrópolis and Botafogo⁵⁴. This only happens there: in balls, parties, and streets where, if any of its representatives sees some mediocre type, he looks him from head to toe, slowly, like one who says, “Come by the house and I will give you a plate of food.” The pride of the suburban aristocracy lies in having dinner and lunch every day, with lots of beans, lots of beef jerky, lots of stews—there, they judge, is where the touchstone of nobility is, the noble lineage, the distinction.

Outside the suburbs, in Ouvidor Street⁵⁵, in theatres and great parties, this sallow people extinguishes itself, disappears. Even its women and daughters are overshadowed, almost daily, by the gorgeous gentlemen of the never-ending daily balls of that neighborhood.

Ricardo, after being the poet and singer of this curious aristocracy, overflowed and poured into the city itself. His fame already reached São Cristovão⁵⁶ and, (he hoped) Botafogo would soon invite him in as well, since the newspapers already spoke of his name and discussed the reach of his work and his poetics...

But what was he doing there, in the house of someone of such high propriety and of such severe habits? It is not hard to guess. Certainly, he had not come to aid the Major in his studies of geology, poetics, mineralogy, and histories of Brazil. As the neighborhood had correctly supposed, Coração dos Outros was there only to teach the major how to sing *modinhas* and play the guitar. Nothing more, and it's simple.

In accordance with his dominant passion, Quaresma meditated for a long time on what could be the poetic and musical expression characteristic of the national spirit. He consulted

⁵⁴ Petrópolis is a town located roughly 40 miles from the city of Rio de Janeiro. It used to be the summer residence of the imperial family. In fact, the town was named in honor of Peter II. Botafogo is an upper middle-class beach-front neighborhood in Rio.

⁵⁵ Street where, in the late 19th and early 20th century, many newspaper offices and cafés were located. It is still a heavily commercial street.

⁵⁶ In the 19th century, before the Republic, this neighborhood was populated by nobility, including the Emperor and his family.

historians, chroniclers, and philosophers, and was certain that it was the *modinha* accompanied by a guitar. Certain of this truth, he had no doubts: he had to learn how to play the genuinely Brazilian instrument and delve into the secrets of the *modinha*. He was in all this *a quo*, but he needed to know who was the best player in the city and to learn from him. His end was to discipline the *modinha* and to transform it into a strong original force in art.

Ricardo came simply to give him lessons, but by special invitation of the disciple, he would share in his dinner. It was because of this that the famous troubadour arrived earlier at the house of the subsecretary.

—Do you already know how to do D-sharp, Major? Ricardo asked right after sitting down.

—Already.

—Let's see.

He uncovered his sacred guitar; but there was no time. Dona Adelaide, Quaresma's sister, entered and called them to dinner. The soup was already getting cold on the table, it was about time!

—Mr. Ricardo has to forgive us, said the old lady, the poverty of our dinner. I wanted to make chicken with *petit-pois* for you, but Policarpo did not allow it. He told me these *petit-pois* are foreign, and that I should use *quando*⁵⁷. Where has anyone ever seen such a thing as chicken with *quando*?

Coração dos Outros said that perhaps it would be good, a novelty, and experimenting was not a bad thing.

—It is a whim of your friend, Mr. Ricardo, only wanting national things, and we have to ingest such trash, phew!

⁵⁷ A type of white bean.

—Why, Adelaide, you have so many aversions! Our land, which has all climates of the world, is capable of producing all that is necessary for the most demanding stomach. You are the one at fault.

—Example: butter that quickly gets rancid.

—That is because it's from milk, if it was like one of those foreign ones there, made with sewage fats, perhaps it would not spoil... That's it, Ricardo! No one wants anything to do with our land...

—In general, it's like that, said Ricardo.

—But it's a mistake... They do not protect the national industries... With me, there is nothing like this. If there is a national item, I do not use foreign. I dress myself in national fabrics, wear national boots, and so forth.

They sat at the table. Quaresma grabbed a small crystal bottle and served two chalices of *parati*⁵⁸.

—It's of the national program, said the sister, smiling.

—Certainly, it is a magnificent aperitif. These vermouths, poisons; this is good, pure alcohol from sugar cane, not from potatoes or corn...

Ricardo grabbed the chalice with delicacy and respect, raised it to his lips, and it was as if his whole being drank the national liquor.

—It is good, eh? inquired the Major.

—Magnificent, said Ricardo, smacking his lips.

—It's from Angra⁵⁹. Now you will taste the magnificent wine of Rio Grande⁶⁰ that we have... What burgundy! What Bordeaux! We have much better ones in the South, ...

⁵⁸ A type of aperitif made from sugar cane.

And dinner passed in this manner. Quaresma, exalting national products: lard, bacon, and rice; his sister making small objections and Ricardo saying, “Yes, yes, without a doubt”—rolling his small eyeballs in their orbits, wrinkling his small forehead which disappeared in his rough hair, forcing his minute and hard countenance to acquire a sincere expression of delicacy and satisfaction.

The dinner being finished, they went to see the garden. It was a marvel; it did not have a single flower... Certainly, one could not be taken with the miserable garden balsam, gladiolus, *quaresma lutulenta*, melancholic *manacá*⁶¹, and other beautiful exemplars from our fields and meadows. No such things as roses, chrysanthemums, magnolias—exotic flowers; our lands had other much prettier ones, more expressive, more fragrant, like those he had there.

Ricardo agreed one more time and the two entered the living room, when dusk was coming softly, very languidly and slowly, as if it was a long mournful goodbye from the sun as it left the earth, casting upon things its doleful poetry and deliquescence.

The gas being barely lit, the guitar master held his instrument, turned the tuning pins, ran the scale, lowering himself over it as if he would kiss it. He strummed a few chords, to experiment, and directed himself to his disciple, who already had his instrument in position.

—Let’s see. Play the scale, Major.

Quaresma prepared his fingers, tuned the guitar, but there was no firmness in his execution, nor the dexterity with which the master performed the same operation.

—Look, Major, like this.

⁵⁹ Angra dos Reis, a city located in southern Rio de Janeiro State. One of Brazil’s few nuclear power plants is now located there.

⁶⁰ Specifically, Rio Grande do Sul, a state in the southern tip of Brazil. The state is still known today for producing wine.

⁶¹ The former is a palm, and the latter, a shrub.

And showing the position of the instrument, going from the neck to the extended left arm, held lightly by the right; he added afterwards:

—Major, the guitar is the instrument of passion. It needs a bosom to lie upon... one must lean against it, but lean with softness and love, as if she was the lover, the bride, so that she can speak what we feel...

With his guitar, Ricardo grew loquacious, full of high sentence, all of his being shaking with passion for the despised instrument.

The lesson lasted some fifty minutes. The Major felt tired and asked the master if he would sing. It was the first time Quaresma made this request; though flattered, his professional vanity, in principle, forbade him.

—Oh, but I have nothing new, no composition of mine!

Ms. Adelaide replied mildly:

—Sing someone else's, then.

—Oh, by God ma'am! I only sing mine own. *Bilac*⁶²—know him?—wanted to write me a *modinha* and I didn't accept; you don't understand the guitar, *Seu Bilac*. The problem is not in writing the right verses that say pretty little things; the essential problem is in finding the words that the guitar desires and asks for. For example: if I were to say, as I did when I began "The Foot," a *modinha* of mine: "your foot is a clover leaf"—it won't go with the guitar. Do you want to see?

And he rehearsed with a low voice, accompanied by the instrument: your—foot—is—a—clo—ver—leaf.

—See, he continued, how it doesn't fit. Now notice: your—foot—is—a—rose—of—myrrh. It's something else, don't you think?

⁶² Olavo Bilac (1865-1918), major Brazilian poet.

—No doubt about it, said Quaresma’s sister.

—Sing this one, the Major invited.

—No, objected Ricardo. It’s old. I will sing “The Promise,” do you know that one?

—No, both siblings said.

—Oh! It’s going around like “The Pigeons” by Raimundo⁶³.

—Sing it, Mr. Ricardo, Dona Adelaide asked.

Ricardo Coração dos Outros at last tuned his guitar and began in a weak voice:

*I swear by the Holiest Sacrament
That I will be thy love...*

— You see, he said during an intermission, what images, what images!

And he continued. The windows were open. Young ladies and young men began to pile onto the sidewalk to hear the minstrel. Feeling that the street was getting interested, Coração dos Outros refined his diction, taking on a ferocious air he thought of as tenderness and enthusiasm; and, when he finished, applause exploded outside and a young lady came in looking for Dona Adelaide.

—Sit down, Ismênia, said Adelaide.

— I won’t be here for long⁶⁴.

Ricardo righted himself in his chair, looked over the young lady a while, and continued to dissertate upon the *modinha*. Seizing the opportunity of a pause, Quaresma’s sister asked the young lady:

— So, when will you be married?

It was the same question she made her every time. She would then arch her sad little head to the left, crowned with marvelous brown hair, toned with gold, and answered:

⁶³ Raimundo Correia (1859-1911), who, with Bilac, formed part of the “Parnassian” school of poetry.

⁶⁴ The words used here are, “*A demora é pouca*.” It literally means, “The waiting is little.”

— I don't know... Cavalcânti graduates at the end of the year, and then we will set a date.

She said this dragging her words, with an impressive laziness.

The girl, Quaresma's neighbor's daughter, was not ugly. She was even quite charming, with her countenance of small, badly drafted lines, tinted with the colors of kindness.

Her engagement had already lasted years; the fiancée, Cavalcânti, was studying to be a dentist on a two-year course that he'd been dragging on for four, and Ismênia always had to answer the famous question, "So, when will you be married?" with "I don't know...Cavalcânti graduates this year and..."

Intimately, she was not bothered. Life had only one thing of importance to her: to marry. But she was in no hurry, nothing in her pressured her. She had already caught a husband, the rest was a matter of time...

After answering Dona Adelaide, she explained the motive of her visit.

She had come, at her father's request, to invite Ricardo Coração dos Outros to sing at her house.

—Papa, said *Dona* Ismênia, likes *modinhas* very much... He's from the North; you know Dona Adelaide, that people of the North appreciate it very much. Come, please.

And there they went.

Chapter II: Radical Reforms

It had been well over ten days since the major left home. In his modest and relaxed life in the house at São Cristovão, he filled his days in the most useful and pleasant form for the necessities of his spirit and temperament. In the morning, after his *toilette* and coffee, he would sit on his divan in the main room and read the papers. He read many, because he always expected to find in one or the other some curious piece of news, the suggestion of some useful idea to his dear homeland. His bureaucratic habits required him to have an early lunch and, despite being on leave, so he would not lose them, he kept taking his first meal⁶⁵ at nine thirty in the morning.

His lunch finished, he would walk around the country house, the country house where Brazilian fruit-bearing trees predominated, the *pitanga* and the *cambuí*⁶⁶ receiving the most carefully prescribed cultivation according to pomology, as if they were cherries or figs.

The stroll was long and philosophical. Talking with the black man, Anastácio, who had served him for thirty years, about old matters—the marriage of princesses, the break of Souto and others—the Major remained trapped in the problems that ultimately preoccupied him. After an hour or less, he would return to his library and dive into the reviews of the Historical Institute, into Fernão Carnim⁶⁷, into the letters of Nóbrega⁶⁸, into the annals of the National Library, into von den Stein⁶⁹, and he would take notes upon notes, safekeeping them in a small folder.

⁶⁵ The author writes: *continuava a tomar a primeira refeição de garfo*. This literally translates as “taking his first meal with a fork,” which basically means that it was his first “real” meal.

⁶⁶ The *pitanga* is a small, fleshy, sour berry, and the *cambuí* is a tree of the myrtle family.

⁶⁷ A Portuguese Jesuit. His dates are c.1549–1625. He was caught by Francis Cook on a trip from Portugal to Brazil, in 1601.

⁶⁸ Manuel de Nobrega (1517-1570) was a Jesuit priest and missionary in early colonial Brazil. His letters to the Portuguese court are one of the most important documents of the history of colonial Brazil.

⁶⁹ Possibly Johann Gottlob Krügers *Gedancken von den Stein-Kohlen* (1715-1759).

He studied the Indians. It is not exactly correct to say he *studied*, already being familiar with these, not only that which touched upon Tupi, which he had some fluency, but also the simple ethnographic and anthropological aspects. He *recorded* (it is best to say this). He confirmed certain notions of his previous studies, all with the intent of organizing a system of ceremonies and holidays based on the costumes of our sylvans and including all social relations.

In order to comprehend his motives, remember that the Major, after thirty years of patriotic meditation, of studies and reflections, had now reached his period of flowering. His conviction that Brazil was the prime country in the world, and his great love of the homeland, were now active, and impelled him towards great commitments. He felt inside himself imperious impulses to action, to work and to make his ideas concrete. The improvements were small, simple touches, because by itself (such was his opinion), the great Homeland of the Cross only needed time to surpass England.

The homeland had all climates, all fruits, all minerals and useful animals, the best soil for cultivation, and the most valiant, most hospitable, most intelligent, and most sweet people. What else was needed? Time, and a little bit of originality⁷⁰. There were no more floating doubts in his spirit about the originality of customs and usage. They were transformed into certainties after taking part in the merriments of *Tangolomango*, in a party that the general gave in his house.

The case was that Ricardo and his guitar's visit to the brave military-man had awakened in the general and in the family a taste for parties, songs, and genuinely national habits, as they say in those parts. There was in everyone a desire to feel, to dream, to poetize in the national manner of olden days. Albernaz, the general, remembered having seen such ceremonies in his infancy: *Dona Maricota*, his wife, still remembered some verses from Reis; and his offspring, five young ladies and a young man, saw in the whole thing a pretext for parties and applauded

⁷⁰ Since the custom of the time was to imitate European fashions as close as possible.

the enthusiasm of their progenitors. The *modinha* was insufficient; their spirits asked for more plebeian things, more typical of the country and more extravagant.

Quaresma was enchanted when Albernaz spoke of organizing Christmas festivities in the ways of the North, due to the occasion of the anniversary of his division. It was like this in the house of the General: any anniversary had its party, such that there were a good thirty per year, not counting Sundays, holidays sanctified or not, and dances as well.

The major thought very little of these traditional dances and parties previously, but he soon saw their highly patriotic meaning. He approved and encouraged his neighbor. But who would recall and provide the verses and the music? Somebody remembered aunt Maria Rita, an old black woman who lived in Benfica, an old washerwoman of the Albernaz family⁷¹. Off they went, General Albernaz and Major Quaresma, happy, hurried, on a beautiful and crystalline April afternoon.

The general had nothing martial in him, not even his uniform.. During his whole military career, he had seen not a single battle, held no command over a regiment, had done nothing in relation with his profession and his specialty as an artilleryman. He was always an aide-de-camp, assistant, in charge of this or that, a clerk, a warehouse keeper, and a secretary to the Supreme Military Command when he became a general. His habits were of a good state administrator and his intelligence was not very different from his habits. He understood nothing of wars, strategy,

⁷¹ It is important to note that slavery was, at the time the book takes place, only *recently* abolished. The *Lei Áurea*, or Golden Law, which completely abolished slavery, was only ratified in May 13, 1888. Other laws had been passed in previous decades which declared that those who were born to slaves would be born free (Rio Branco Law, passed September 28, 1871), and that slaves who were more than sixty years old gained their freedom (known as “the Law of the Sexagenarian,” passed September 28, 1885). No support was provided to the freed slaves, however, after the ratification of the Golden Law, and the conditions of blacks did not improve much. Perception of whites towards blacks remained similar to that of the post-Civil War South, minus *legally enforced* segregation.

tactics, or military history; though he knew something of the battles of Paraguay, to him the most extraordinary war of all time⁷².

The high-sounding title of general, which reminds one of the superhuman feats of Caesar, Turenne⁷³, and Gustavus Adolphus, hung badly on that placid, mediocre, good-natured man, whose only preoccupation was marrying his five daughters and persuading “bigshots” to make his son pass the Military College exams.

Nevertheless, it was not appropriate to doubt his military aptitude. He himself, perceiving his rather civilian airs, told from time to time a war episode, a military anecdote. “It was in Lomas Valentinas,” he would say... and if someone asked: “Did the general watch the battle?” He would soon respond, “I could not. I became sick and came to Brazil, on the eve of battle. But I learned from Camisão, from Venâncio that it was all very bad⁷⁴.”

The tram took them to old Maria Rita, going through one of the most interesting sections of the city. They went through Pedregulho, an old gate to the city that was the end of an ancient trail that went to Minas, ramified throughout São Paulo, and had opened communication with the Curate of Santa Cruz.

From there, on the backs of beasts, gold and diamonds came to Rio from Minas, and were ultimately called the goods of the country. Less than a century earlier the carriages of King Don John VI, as heavy as ships, swung on their four wide-set wheels, passed along that path toward far-flung Santa Cruz. One cannot believe that it was all very imposing; the Court had money problems, and the King was relaxed. Despite the soldiers in rags, mounted sadly on their sickly

⁷² A war between Paraguay and the Triple Alliance (Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay). It took place between 1864–1870 and ended with the crushing defeat of Paraguay, considered one of the most crushing defeats of all time.

⁷³ Henri de la Tour d’Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne (1611-1675), one of the few military commanders to ever be made into a Marshal General of France. He most famously fought in the Dutch War of 1672.

⁷⁴ The authors uses an idiom, *a coisa ta preta*. It literally translates as “the thing/situation was black.”

nags, the procession had to have its grandeur not for the king, but for the humiliating marks of respect that all had to pay to his lamentable majesty.

Between we Brazilians, all is inconsistent, provisional, does not last. There was nothing that recalled the past in that place. The old houses had large windows, almost square, and small windowpanes that were not very old, barely fifty years old.

Quaresma and Albernaz traversed all this without any thought to its history and went straight to the point. Before surveying the racing courses, a small portion of the city piled with coaches and racehorse farms, bearing great horseshoes, horses' heads, panoplies of whips, and other equine emblems, in the pillars of the gates, in the door panels, in every place where such emblems could be well-seen.

The old black lady's house was beyond, toward the side of the Leopoldina train station. There they went. They passed by the station. Over a large yard, black from coal dust, stacks of lumber, and places where immense piles of charcoal had accumulated; beyond that a train depot and over the rails some locomotives maneuvered and others exhaled under pressure.

They finally reached the narrow footpath where Maria Rita's house was. The weather was dry, and because of that the footpath was not obstructed. Beyond the path was a vast region of mangroves, an immense area, ugly and sad, which goes up to the ends of the bay and, at the horizon, dies at the foot of the blue mountains of Petrópolis. They arrived at the old house. It was short, falling apart, and roofed with heavy Portuguese tiles. It was a bit far from the road. To the right was a garbage mound: leftovers from the kitchen, rags, shellfish shells, pieces of homemade, makeshift crockery—a *sambaqui*⁷⁵ varied enough to please any archaeologist in the

⁷⁵ A name given to “prehistoric deposits of shells, kitchen refuse, and skeletons found on the coast or at river sides near the Brazilian coast” (Dicionário Michaelis).

remote future—to the left grew a papaya tree, close to the fence, and, on the same side, was some rue. They knocked. A little black girl appeared at the open window.

—What do you want?

They said that they wanted to visit and came closer. The young girl called into the house.

—Grandma, there are these two “young men” who want to talk with you.

—Come in, please, she said afterwards, speaking to the general and his companion.

The room was small, with a bare tile ceiling. On the walls were various colored lithograph calendars, many pictures of saints, and newspaper clippings covering the former and climbing two-thirds of the way to the ceiling. By the side of Our Lady of Penha was a portrait of Victor Emanuel⁷⁶, who had enormous unkempt whiskers; a sentimental chromolithograph—the head of a woman in the position of dreaming—and what appeared to be a Saint John the Baptist to the side. Close to the top of the door that led to the inside of the house, an oil-lamp on a corner shelf had blanketed an earthenware Immaculate Conception with soot.

It was not long before the old woman appeared. She entered in a mended shirt, showing her fleshless bosom, decorated with a two-looped bead necklace. She limped on one foot and it seemed she wanted to aid her gait with her left hand resting on the corresponding leg.

—Good afternoon, Aunt Maria Rita, said the general.

She responded, but showed no sign of recognizing who had spoken. The general was perplexed:

—You do not know me any more? I’m the general, Colonel Albernaz.

—Ah! Is you, the colonel!... Is been so long! How’s Miss Maricota?⁷⁷

—She is well. My dear, we’d like you to teach us some songs.

⁷⁶ Probably Victor Emanuel II (1820-1878), king of Sardinia and Italy.

⁷⁷ Aunt Maria Rita speaks in a black Portuguese dialect.

—Oh, but who am I, marster⁷⁸!

—Well! Come on Aunt Maria Rita...you don't forget a thing...don't you know "*Bumba-meu Boi*?⁷⁹"

—Bah, marster, I's already forgot.

—And the "*Boi Espácio*?"

—Old things, from the time of captivity. Why do you colonel wanna know all this?

She spoke dragging her syllables, with a sweet smile, and a vague look.

—It's for a party... Which ones do you know?

The granddaughter listened quietly up until then, but the conversation stimulated her to say something, allowing one to quickly notice her radiant rows of teeth:

—How, forgotten! You must know some, isn't that right auntie?

—I only know the "*Bicho Tutu*".⁸⁰

—Sing that one!

—Marster knows! Don't you know? Bah, he knows!

—I don't know. You sing. If I knew it I wouldn't have come here. Ask my friend over here, Major Policarpo, if I know.

Quaresma made the signal in the affirmative and the old black woman, perhaps with great longing⁸¹ for the time when she was a slave and maid in some great, bountiful, and wealthy house, raised her head, so that she could best remember, and began:

*Here comes the bogeyman
From behind the earthen tower*

⁷⁸ She uses a corruption of the word, "senhor," namely, "ioiô."—

⁷⁹ A traditional Brazilian folk story, usually enacted with song. The title literally translates as "Hit my bull."

⁸⁰ This is literally, the boogeyman, bugbear, or ogre.

⁸¹ The word used here, *saudades*, is impossible to render fully in English. *Saudade* is similar to longing, be it for a place, a time, a person, an object, etc. But it has more melancholic and joyful elements mixed in. Perhaps a good way to render *saudade* is to say it is the longing and yearning for a by-gone time, both good and bad, but mostly good.

*To eat the little master
With much manioc flour*^{82 83}

—Well! said the general with boredom in his voice, this is an old thing to frighten children. Don't you know another?

—No, marster. I's already forgot it.

The two left, sad. Quaresma was discouraged. How can the people not preserve their traditions for only thirty years? How quick did they forget their songs and holidays! It was a sign of weakness, a demonstration of inferiority in front of those tenacious people who guarded theirs for centuries! It was necessary to react, to develop the cultivation of traditions, keeping them always alive in memories and customs...

Albernaz was annoyed. He had counted on arranging a good number for the party he was going to throw, and it had fled him. It was almost like the hope for the marriage of one of his four daughters that would go, because one of them was guaranteed, thank God.

Dusk came, and they arrived at home bathed in the melancholy of the hour.

The disappointment, however, lasted days. Cavalcânti, Ismênia's future husband, informed them that in their immediate surroundings lived a literary man, a stubborn guardian of folktales and popular songs of Brazil. They went to him. He was an old poet who had been famous sometime in the seventies, a sweet and ingenuous man who had let himself be forgotten as a poet, and now entertained himself by publishing collections of tales, songs, adages, and popular sayings that nobody read.

⁸² The term used here is *angu*, a type of manioc flour.

⁸³ The original reads:

“É vem tutu
Por detrás do murundu
Pra cumê sinhozinho
Cum bucado de angu”

His happiness was immense when he learned of the reason behind the two men's visit. Quaresma was lively and spoke with warmth; and Albernaz as well, because he saw in his party, with some folklore numbers, a way of calling attention to his house, to attract people and...to marry his daughters.

The room where they were received was large; but it was so full of tables, shelves replete with books, folders, cans, that one could barely move in it. On a can, it read: Saint Anne of the Stumps; on a folder : Saint Boniface of the Halter.

—You gentlemen don't know, said the old poet, how rich is our popular poetry! How many surprises they store!... Some days ago I received a letter from Urubu-de-Baixo⁸⁴ with a beautiful song. Would you like to see it?

The collector rifled through some folders and, finally, brought from one of them a paper, from which he read:

*If God saw the poor
He would not leave me so:
He'd put in her heart
A little place for me*

*The love I have for her
Does no longer fit in my chest;
It leaves me through my eyes,
Flies straight to the clouds.⁸⁵*

⁸⁴ This is literally "Vulture-From-Under."

⁸⁵ The original reads:

*Se Deus enxergasse pobre
Não me deixara assim:
Dava no curacao dela
Um lugarzinho pra mim.*

*O amor que tenho por ela
Já não cabe no meu peito;
Sai-me pelos olhos afora
Voa às nuvens direito*

Isn't it pretty? Very much so! Do you gentlemen then know the cycle of the monkey, the collection of tales the people have about the simian? Oh, a truly comic epic poem!

Quaresma looked to the old poet with the amazement of someone just finding another man in the desert; and Albernaz, intoxicated for a moment with the folklorist's passion, had more concentration in his eyes.

The old poet put away the song from Urubu-de-Baixo in a folder; and soon went to another from where he removed many sheets of paper. He came up to the two visitors and told them:

—I will read to you gentlemen a little story of the monkey, one of many which our people know... By myself, I have already nearly forty and intend on publishing them, under the title *Stories of Master Simon*.

And, without asking if he was inconveniencing them or if they wished to listen, began:

“The monkey, facing the District Judge. There walked by a band of monkeys making a lot of noise, jumping from tree to tree, by the borders of a grotto. So it befell that one of them saw a jaguar who had fallen into the grotto. The monkeys felt sorry for her and decided to save her. In order to do this, they ripped vines, fastened them tightly together, tied the ropes around their waists and let some of it down for the jaguar. With the united effort of all, they managed to hoist her up, and, quickly, they untied themselves, fleeing. One of them, however, could not make it in time, and the jaguar immediately got a hold of it.

—My friend Monkey, she said, be patient. I am hungry and you will do me the favor of letting yourself be eaten.

The monkey pleaded, urged, cried; but the jaguar appeared to be inflexible. Simon then remembered that the demand would be resolved by the District Judge. They went to him; the

monkey remaining in the clutches of the jaguar. The district judge among the animals was the tortoise, whose audiences were given at the edge of rivers, seating himself on a rock. The two arrived and the monkey argued his case.

The tortoise listened to him and, finally, ordered:

—Clap your hands.

The jaguar had no course but to let go of the monkey, who fled, and so did the judge, jumping into the water.”

Finishing his reading, the old man directed himself to the two:

—Don’t you find this interesting? Very much so! There is, in our people, a lot of invention, creation, true material for very interesting fabliaux... The day when a literary genius were to appear who would fix them into immortal form... Ah, then!

Saying this, he adorned his face with a slow smile of satisfaction, and in his eyes appeared two furtive tears.

—Now, he began after that surge of emotion had passed—let’s get to business. The *Boi Espácio* or the *Bumba-Meu Boi* is still too much for you... It is best we go slowly, starting with something easy... Here is *Tangolomango*, know this one?

—No, said the two.

—It is fun. Arrange ten children, an old man’s mask, a grotesque costume for one of you gentlemen and I will rehearse.

The day arrived. The general’s house was full. Cavalcanti had come; and he and the bride, playing the part at the windowsill, looked to be the only ones not interested in the revelry. He, talking a lot, grimacing; she, a little cold, lying down from time to time, and, to the future husband, a look of gratitude.

Quaresma did the *Tangolomango*, that is, he wore one of the general's old overcoats, put on an enormous old man's mask, leaned on a staff the shape of a crozier, and entered the room.

Ten children sang in chorus:

*A mother had ten sons
All ten in a pot:
Gave him Tangolomango
Only nine remained*

From there, the major would advance, hit the floorboards with his staff, saying: hu! hu! hu! with the children running away, he would at last grab one and take her inside. He was doing this to the great happiness of the room, when, around the fifth stanza, he ran out of breath, his vision darkened, and he fell. They removed the mask from his face, shook him a few times, and Quaresma was himself again.

The accident, however, gave him no displeasure towards folklore. He bought books, read all the publications pertaining to it, but the disappointment came to him after a few weeks of studying.

Almost all the traditions and songs were foreign; *Tangolomango* itself was, too. He would turn, then, to the need of finding something proper, original, a creation of our land and of our spirit.

This led him to study the Tupi customs; and, as one idea leads to the next, he soon expanded his intent. This was the reason why he was organizing a code of conduct, of greetings, of domestic ceremonies, and parties, dressed in Tupi principles.

After ten days in which he had given himself to this arduous task, someone knocked at his door (it was Sunday), while he was working. He opened the door, but did not shake hands. He turned to crying, screaming, tearing his hairs, as if he had lost a wife or child. His sister ran

inside, and Anastácio as well, and the friend and his daughter, for it was them at the door, and were stupefied at the door's threshold.

—But what is this, friend?

—What is this Policarpo?

—But, *padrinho*...

He still cried a little bit more. He dried his tears and, afterwards, explained in the most natural attitude.

—There it is! You do not have the least idea about the things of our land. You would have me shake your hand... This is not ours! Our greeting is to cry when we meet friends, such was the way of the Tupis.

His friend Vicente, his daughter, and *Dona Adelaide* looked at each other, without knowing what to say. Was the man insane? What absurdity!

—But, Mr. Policarpo, said the friend, it is possible that this is very Brazilian, but it is very sad, friend.

—Certainly, *padrinho*⁸⁶, added the young lady with vivacity; it even feels foreboding...

His friend was an Italian by birth. The history of his family is worth the telling. A traveling greengrocer, he furnished Quaresma's household for twenty odd years. The major had his patriotic ideas, but he did not condescend to speak with the greengrocer and even enjoyed seeing him sweaty, curved under the weight of the baskets, with two red roses on the very white face of a recently arrived European. But one beautiful day, when Quaresma was walking around Paço Plaza, very distracted, thinking about the architectural marvels of Master Valentim's⁸⁷ fountains, he met the vegetable vendor. He spoke to him with his very own simplicity of spirit,

⁸⁶ Calling someone *padrinho*, or "godfather," is not considered overly formal in Brazil. This is why I kept *padrinho* in speech.

⁸⁷ Valentim da Fonseca e Silva (1750-1813), Brazilian sculptor and wood-worker who studied in Portugal.

and noticed that the young man was worrying about something serious. Not only that, but, from time to time, he would exclaim for no reason during the conversation, and he would tighten his lips, grind his teeth, clench his fists with rage. He inquired and learned that the greengrocer had a money problem with a colleague, and was ready to kill him, because he would lose credit and soon enough be in penury. There was in his affirmation, a great energy and a great and strange ferocious emphasis which made the Major employ all his sweetness and persuasion to dissuade him from his purpose. And he didn't stop there: he lent him some money as well. Vicente Coleoni put up a stand, earned about thousand *mil-réis*, made himself into an entrepreneur, got rich, married, and had that daughter, who was baptized by his benefactor. It was useless to tell Quaresma about the contradictions between his patriotic ideas and his act of baptism.

It is true that they had not yet solidified in his head, but there already floated and stirred under his consciousness some faint fantasies, fantasies of a young man of barely twenty, fantasies that would not delay taking on some consistency and only waited for the years to free them to become actions.

It was, furthermore, to his friend and his goddaughter Olga, that he had received with the most legitimate *guaitacá* ceremonial garbs, and, if he did not wear the native dress of such an interesting people, there was no reason not to have it. It was at hand, but there was no time to change.

—Do you read a lot, *padrinho*? asked the goddaughter, laying upon him her very luminous eyes.

There was great affection between the two. Quaresma was quite reserved, and the shame of showing his emotions made him economical towards demonstrations of affection. One could guess, however, that the young lady occupied in his heart the place reserved for the children he

had never had. The girl, who was vivacious, habituated to speaking loud and with ease, did not hide her affection as much as she felt in him, with confusion, a tenacity of spirit of which she was not used to seeing in anyone in the world she knew. This admiration did not come from her education. She had received the education common to young ladies of her station. It came from her own inclinations, perhaps from her proximity to European ideas, which made her a little different from our other young ladies.

She asked him a question with a luminous, scrutinizing look:

—So, *padrinho*, do you read much?

—Very, very much so, my dear. I believe that I meditate about great works, a reform, an emancipation of a people.

Vicente went with *Dona Adelaide* to the interior of the house and the two spoke by themselves in the library. The goddaughter noted that Quaresma had something else to say. He spoke now with so much certainty, he, who before was so modest, even hesitant in speaking—what the devil! No, no, it was not possible... But, who knows? And what particular happiness was in his eyes—a joy of the mathematician who just solved a problem, of the happy inventor!

—Don't go getting yourself into some conspiracy, the young lady said in jest.

—Do not be frightened by this. It will happen naturally, there is no need for violence...

During this conversation, Ricardo Coração dos Outros entered with his lengthy, long-tailed, serge tail-coat and his guitar covered in canvas.

—I already know your name, Mr. Ricardo, said Olga.

Coração dos Outros was filled with the contentment of someone who bears good news. His shrunken countenance dilated to his satisfied look; and his skin, which was dry and the color of old marble, became soft and young. That young lady seemed rich, was fine and beautiful, and

knew him—what satisfaction! He, who was always a bit stupid and clumsy when meeting with young ladies, whatever station they may have been, spirited himself, let his tongue go, softened his voice, and became melodious and eloquent.

—You have read my verses, have you not, my lady?

—I did not have the pleasure, but I did read, some months ago, a review of one of your works.

—In the *Tempo*, was it not?

—It was.

—Very unfair! added Ricardo. All critics stick to this question of metrification. They say my verses are not verses... Yes, they are, but they are verses for the guitar. Your excellency knows that the verses for music have something different in them from common ones, isn't it? There is not, however, nothing to admire in my verses made for the guitar, following other metrics and another system, don't you think?

—Certainly, said the young lady. But it seems to me that you, sir, make verses for the music, and not music for the verses.

And she smiled, slowly, enigmatically, leaving her luminous look in place, while Ricardo, suspicious, probed her intentions with his small, livid mousey eyes.

Quaresma, who up until then had remained quiet, intervened:

—Olga, Ricardo is an artist... He tries and works for the elevation of the guitar.

—I know, *padrinho*, I know...

—Between us, my lady, said Coração dos Outros, we do not take these national experiments seriously, but, in Europe, everyone respects and helps...What is it called, major, that poet who wrote in vulgar French?

—*Mistral*, Quaresma assisted, but it was not the vulgar French; it is Provençal, a true language.

—Yes, that's it, confirmed Ricardo. Is not the *mistral* considered respectable? I, by playing my guitar, am doing the same.

He looked triumphantly to one and the other by him, and Olga, directing herself towards him, said:

—Continue with your trials, Mr. Ricardo, which is something worthy of praise.

—Thank you. Be certain, my lady, that the guitar is a fine instrument, and that it has a great many difficulties. For example...

—But what! Quaresma interrupted, abruptly. There are other harder ones.

—The piano? asked Ricardo.

—What piano! The *maraca* and *inúbia*.⁸⁸

—I don't know them.

—Don't know? That's pretty! The most nationally possible instruments, the only ones that are truly so; instruments of our ancestors, of that valiant people who fought and still fight for this marvelous land. The *caboclos*!

—A *caboclo* instrument, well! said Ricardo

—Yes, *caboclo*! What's the matter? Léry said they are very rich and pleasant to hear... If it's because it is *caboclo*, the guitar, too, is not worth a thing— it's a rogue's instrument.

—A rogue's, major! Do not say this...

And the two kept discussing heatedly in front of the young lady, who was surprised, afraid, without a clue, without any explanation for the transformation of the major's genius, up until then so calm, so tranquil.

⁸⁸ The *inúbia* is a type of cornet, used by Brazilian Indians as a war trumpet.

Chapter III: Genelício's News

—So, when do you marry, *Dona Ismênia*?

—In March. Cavalcânti has already graduated and...

Finally, the General's daughter could safely answer the question that had been posed to her for almost five years. The future husband had finally reached the end of his dentist's course, and had marked a date for their wedding three months hence. The family was very happy; and, as is the case with such happy events, it could not pass by without a ball. A party was announced for Saturday, at the pragmatic girl's request.

The bride's sisters, Quinota, Zizi, Lalá, and Vivi, were happier than their nubile sister. It seemed to them that she would leave their path clear, and that she was the one who had prevented them from marrying.

A bride for almost five years, Ismênia already felt half married. This feeling, along with her poor spirit, made her not feel one bit more happy. She stayed the same. To marry, for her, was not the business of passion, nor would she insert it in her feelings or senses; it was an idea, a pure idea. Her rudimentary intelligence had separated the idea of marriage from that of love, the pleasure of emotions, some type of liberty, maternity, and even her fiancée. Since she was a little girl, she heard her mother say: "Learn to do this, because when you get married..." or else: "You need to learn how to sew buttons, because when you get married..."

At any instant, at all hours, there came that "because, when you get married..." and the girl went about convincing herself that all existence depended upon marriage. The instructions, intimate satisfactions, happiness, all these were useless; life came to up in one thing: marriage.

Besides, it was not only in her family where she found that preoccupation. At school, in the streets, in the houses of known families, they only spoke of marriage. “You know, *Dona Maricota*, Lili got married and didn’t make a big deal about it, because it seems like the fiancée isn’t that big of a deal either,” or else: “Zezé is crazy about getting married, but she’s so ugly, my God!...”

Life, the world, the intense variety of sentiment, ideas, our own right to happiness, were mere trifles to that little brain; and marriage represented to her something important, a type of duty, and not marrying, remaining single, “auntie,” appeared to be a crime, something shameful.

Of a very poor constitution, without the capacity to feel anything intensely and profoundly, without any emotional resources for passion or for some great friendship, the idea of “getting married” stubbornly encrusted itself upon her mind as if it were an obsession.

She was not ugly: a brunette, with small, tight features, a small, badly shaped nose, but gentle, not too short nor too thin, and her appearance of passive kindness, of an indolent body, of the idea and sense—she was even of the good type of girls that their boyfriends call “little pretty ones.”⁸⁹ Her dominant feature of beauty, however, was her hair: dense, chestnut colored, with golden tones, silken to the eyes.

At nineteen, she arranged a relationship with Cavalcânti and due to her weakness of will and the dread of not finding a husband, the facility with which the future dentist conquered her was not strange.

⁸⁹ In Portuguese, *bonitinhas*, the diminutive plural of *bonita*. It rings of affection, but also of condescension, as if the girl had beauty, but only the minimal amount of it, with some gentleness bordering on stupidity sprinkled on top. In short, the picture painted of Ismênia is of a mediocre girl.

Her father grimaced. He was always up to date on his daughters' relationships: "Always tell me, Maricota—he would say—who they are. Stay alert!⁹⁰ It is better to prevent than to cure... He can be some rascal and..." Knowing that Ismênia's suitor was a dentist, he was not very pleased. Who is a dentist? he would ask himself. A semi-citizen, a species of barber. He preferred an official, with a pension and half an officer's salary; but the woman convinced him that dentists earned a lot, and he acquiesced.

Cavalcânti then began to frequent the house in the station of the "civilian" fiancée, that is, who did not ask for her hand, and who was not yet "official."⁹¹

By the end of the first year, getting word of the difficulties with which the son-in-law battled with to finish his studies, the General went generously to his rescue. He paid his registration fees, books, and other things. It was not rare that after a long conversation with her daughter, *Dona Maricota* would go to her husband and say: "Chico,⁹² leave me with twenty *mil-réis* because Cavalcânti needs to buy an anatomy."

The General was loyal, good, and generous; besides his martial affectation, there was not a single fault in his character. Moreover, that necessity of marrying his daughters still made him even better when it came to their interests.

He listened to his wife, scratched his head, and gave the money; and even to avoid expenses for the future son-in-law, he invited him to dine at his house every day. Their relationship went like this, until that point.

⁹⁰ "*Olho vivo!*" literally, "Living/Alive eye." It could also be translated as "keep a lookout," "be careful," or "watch yourself."

⁹¹ A pun on the multiple meaning of *oficial*, meaning both a military officer, something or someone being official, or officially recognized—in this case, as Ismênia's husband.

⁹² A Nickname for Francisco.

Finally—Albernaz would say to his wife, during the night of the request, when they had already retired for the day—the thing will end. Fortunately, *Dona Maricota* would answer him, we will cross out this letter.

The General's resigned satisfaction was false; on the contrary, he was radiant. On the streets, if he found a comrade, at the first opportune moment he would tell him:

—It is Hell, this life! Imagine, Castro, that I still have to marry a daughter!

At which Castro would ask:

—Which ones?

—Ismênia, the second, Albernaz responded and soon would add: you are the fortunate one: you only had sons.

—Ah, my friend! the other would say, full of malice, I learned the lesson. Why did you not do the same?

Saying farewell, old Albernaz would run to the warehouses, to the China shops, buying more plates, compote bowls, centerpieces, because the party would have to be imposing, and to have an air of abundance and wealth that would transmit his great contentment.

During the morning of the day of the party for the proposal, *Dona Maricota* woke up singing. It was rare for her to do so: but in days of great joy, she would warble an old aria, something from when she was young, and the daughters, perceiving this certain sign of happiness, ran to her asking for this or that.

Very active and diligent, there was no other housewife more economical, more frugal, and who made her husband's money last so much and put her servants to work as she did. As soon as she woke up, she put everyone to work, both her servants and her daughters. Vivi and Quinota worked on the sweets; Lalá and Zizi helped the servant-girls in arranging the rooms,

while *Dona Maricota* and *Ismênia* made the table, laying it out with much taste and splendor. The table had stayed graceful like this since the first hours of the day. *Dona Maricota* was very happy. She did not comprehend how a woman could live without being married. It was not only the dangers that she felt exposed towards, the lack of support; it appeared to her as something ugly and dishonorable to her own family. Her satisfaction came not only from the simple fact of “having crossed off a letter,” as she said; it came, more profoundly, from her maternal and familial sentiments.

She was arranging the table, nervous and happy; the daughter, cold and indifferent.

—But, my dear, she said, it even looks like you are not the one getting married! What a face! You look like a “dead fly.”

—Mama, what do you want me to do?

—It isn’t pretty to laugh too much, going around like a flirt, but neither is this way you are going about! I never saw such a bride.

For an hour, the young lady tried hard to seem very happy, but soon enough she would return to her natural poverty, incapable of emotional stirrings, and the natural state of her temperament won and did not fail to put her in that sickly lassitude that was peculiar to.

Many people came. Besides the young ladies and their respectable mothers, Rear-Admiral Caldas, Doctor Florêncio, engineer of the springs, the honorary Major Inocêncio Bustamante, Mr. Bastos, bookkeeper, many relatives of *Dona Maricota*, and other important people tended to the invitation. Ricardo was not invited because the general feared the public opinion his presence would generate in such a serious party; Quaresma was invited, but did not go; and Cavalcanti had dined with the future in-laws.

At six o'clock, the house was already full. The young ladies surrounded Ismênia, greeting her, not without some envy in their eyes.

Irene, a tall blond girl, advised her:

—Me, if I was you, I would buy everything from the Park

It was about the bride's dress. All of them, despite being single, gave advice, knew the cheapest houses, the most important pieces, and that which could be dispensed with. They were paired.

Armanda indicated with an enticing movement of her eyes:

—Me, yesterday, I saw in *Constituição* Stret, a room for a couple, very pretty. Why don't you go see it Ismênia? It appears to be cheap.

Ismênia was the least interested one, almost not answering the questions; and, if she answered them, it was in monosyllables. There was a moment when she smiled, almost with happiness and abandon. Estefânia, the doctor, student of a normal school, who had a ring in one of her fingers, with as many stones as a jeweler's shop, in a moment, brought her fleshy lips to the ears of the bride and confided in her. When she stopped saying secrets, as if she wanted to confirm her sayings, she dilated her malicious and hot eyes and said, loudly:

—I want to see this... Everyone says no...I know...

She was alluding what Ismênia answered her in confidence, with parsimony: which what?

All of them, talking, had their eyes on the piano. The young men and some of the old men circled Cavalcânti, who looked very solemn, in a great black tailcoat.

—So, doctor, you finished it, eh? said one in the manner of a compliment.

—It's true! I worked for it. You gentlemen have no idea of the obstacles, the encumbrances—it was a heroic feat!

—Do you know Chavantes? asked another.

—I know him. An inveterate carouser...

—Was he your colleague?

—He was, that is, he is in the medical school. We registered in the same year.

Cavalcânti was not done with one man when he was already obliged to listen to the another.

—It is very nice to be a graduate. If I had listened to my father, I would not be busting my head with “debit” and “credit.”⁹³ Nowadays I twist my ears and no blood comes out.

—Actually, it's not worth a thing, my dear sir, Cavalcânti said, modestly. With these free academies... Imagine, that there's already talk of a Free Academy of Odontology! It's the pinnacle of absurdity!⁹⁴ A course so difficult and expensive, one that requires cadavers, equipment, good professors; how can private citizens maintain them? If the government does badly...

—Well, doctor, another presented himself, I congratulate you. I tell you what I said to my nephew when he graduated: go drilling!

—Ah, your nephew is a graduate? Cavalcânti inquired delicately.

—In engineering. He is in Maranhão⁹⁵, in the Caxias road.

—A good career.

⁹³ In the source text, “‘*deve*’ e ‘*haver*.’”

⁹⁴ In Portuguese, “*É o cúmulo!*”, literally the pinnacle, the cumulus, the apex, summit, of something. In its idiomatic form, it is used as an exclamation, meaning that something is the pinnacle of stupidity, absurdity, etc. One can choose to either mention the absurdity in the same sentence, or not.

⁹⁵ A state in the Northeastern region of Brazil.

Between conversations, all of them would look at the new dentist as if he was a supernatural entity.

To all these people, Cavalcânti was no longer a simple man, he was a man and something else, of a sacred and superior essence; and they could not join the image they actually had of him with what he, perhaps, knew or had learned. This did not affect him in any way; and he, continued, for some, to be vulgar, common in appearance, but with a changed substance, something apart from them, anointed in something vaguely outside of terrestrial nature, almost divine.

The least important people went to Cavalcânti, who was in the drawing-room. The General remained in the dining room, smoking, surrounded by the most titled and the oldest. Rear-Admiral Caldas, Major Inocêncio, Doctor Florêncio, and the artillery Captain Sigismundo was with him.

Inocêncio took advantage of the situation to consult Caldas about some business in military legislation. The Rear-Admiral was extremely interested. Though he was in the Navy, it was only by very little that he did not work with Albernaz in the Army. He had never boarded a ship—besides during the Paraguayan War—but even then, it was only for a short time. The fault, however, was not his. As soon as he became first-lieutenant, Caldas isolated himself little by little, abandoned his group of comrades, in such a way that, without support and friends in high places, he was forgotten, and no one gave him any commissions to board a ship. These military administrations are curious things: commissions are one's deserts, but they are only given to the ones who are protected.

One time, when he was already a lieutenant commander, they gave him the order to board in Mato Grosso⁹⁶. They ordered him to command the ironclad *Lima Barros*. He went, but when he presented himself to the commander of the fleet, he was notified that there was no such ship in the Paraguay River. He queried here and there were some who dared guess that this *Lima Barrosi* was part of a squadron in high Uruguay. He consulted the commander.

—In your place, said the superior, I would leave immediately for the fleet in Rio Grande.

So he packed his bags to go to high Uruguay, where he finally arrived, after an arduous and tiring trip. But there was no *Lima Barros* there. Where was it, then? He wanted to send a telegraph to Rio de Janeiro, but he was afraid of having it censured, since he did not exactly reek of sanctity. He went on like this for a month in Itaquim, hesitant, without receiving his salary and without knowing where to go. One day, he came upon the idea that the ship might be in the Amazon River. He boarded with the intention to go to the extreme north and when he passed through the river, he presented himself to the high authorities of the Navy, in accordance with the etiquette. He was arrested and sent to the counsel.

Lima Barros had sunk during the Paraguayan War.

Though absolved, he never did gain the favor of the ministers and generals. Everyone considered him a blockhead, like some commander from an operetta who went to the ends of the world in search of his ship. They left him “propped,” as they say in the military jargon, and he took almost forty years to get from ensign to commander. Now in his current rank, with a possible graduation to the next, all his bitterness towards the Navy concentrated itself in one long effort of studying the laws, decrees, permits, notices, consultations related to the promotion of officers. He bought legislative catalogues, stored collections of laws, written reports, and filled his house with all this boring and tiresome administrative literature. The petitions, asking for the

⁹⁶ A state in the Western region of Brazil. The state’s name literally translates as “Thick Bushes.”

modification of his post, rained down upon the ministers of the Navy. The petitions would run through the infinite rosary of divisions and were always denied, under consultations from the Naval Counsel or of the Supreme Military Court. Ultimately, he appointed a lawyer connected with the federal courts, and there he would go from public notary⁹⁷ to public notary, elbowing bailiffs, scribes, judges, and lawyers—that uncouth rabble of the forum, who seem to have contracted every possible misery that pass by their eyes and hands.

Inocência Bustamante also had the same demanding mania. He was obstinate, stubborn, but servile and humble. An old servant of the homeland, possessing the honors of a major, there was no day in which he was not at the headquarters to see how his petition—and others'—went. One asked to be included in the Asylum of Invalids, another in the rank of lieutenant-colonel, another for this or that medal; and, when he had no petitions, he would look into other people's petitions.

He was not ashamed of taking care of the petition of a maniac who, because he was an honorary lieutenant, and also in the National Guard, requested to be made immediately into a major, seeing that two plus two gallons makes four—that is to say: a major.

A connoisseur of the meticulous studies of the admiral, Bustamante made his consultation:

—Offhand, I do not know. It is not my specialty, the Army, but I'll see. This, too, is so jumbled up!

Just having answered, he would scratch one of his white whiskers, which gave him the airs of a commodore, or of a Portuguese rancher—since the Lusitanian strain was strong in him.

⁹⁷ In Portuguese, *cartório*. In Brazil, this institution holds an enormous amount of power—one needs to pay such notaries to get anything from a marriage license to property deeds—and are usually run by families, since the post is hereditary, given by appointment of the government, and no public employee can be fired (but *can* be coerced into resigning).

—Ah, my time! observed Albernaz, What order! What discipline!

—No one is good for anything anymore, said Bustamante.

Sigismundo also adventured an opinion, saying:

—I am not a military man, but...

—How are you not a military man? said Albernaz, impetuously. You, sirs, are the real ones: you are always with the enemy right in front of you, don't you think, Caldas?

—Certainly, certainly, said the admiral, grooming his whiskers.

—As I was saying, continued Sigismundo, despite not being a military man, I am pained to say that our morale is very low. Where is a Porto Alegre⁹⁸, a Caxias⁹⁹?

—There are no more of them, my dear sir, Doctor Florêncio confirmed, with a weak voice.

—I have no idea why. Does everything nowadays not go according to science¹⁰⁰?

It was Caldas who spoke, trying some irony. Albernaz was indignant and retorted with some fervor:

—I would like to see these pretty boys, full of “xx” and “yy” in Curupaiti¹⁰¹, eh Caldas?

Eh, Inocêncio?

⁹⁸ Manuel Marques de Sousa, count of Porto Alegre (1804-1875), a Brazilian politician and military man who fought against the rebels in the Farroupilha Revolution (1836). The republican rebels were crushed, and the country remained a monarchy.

⁹⁹ Luis Alves de Lima e Silva, Duke of Caxias (1803-1880), an army officer and politician, who fought in Brazilian War of Independence (1821-1824). It is important to note that, unlike the United States, Brazil *did not* become a republic immediately after independence, but became a representative parliamentary constitutional monarchy, known as the Empire of Brazil, with the head of state being the emperor. Brazil first became a republic in 1889, led mostly by dictators and military men, and undergoing several constitutional transformations and coups until it became the Federative Republic of Brazil, its current state.

¹⁰⁰ The dominant ideology in Brazil during the time of the foundation First Republic (1889-1930), was positivism. This is reflected in the Brazilian flag's motto, *Ordem e Progresso*, “order and progress.”

¹⁰¹ The Battle of Curupaty, which occurred in September 22, 1866. Though the Triple Alliance eventually won, the Brazilian Imperial Navy suffered heavy losses during the battle, something that the General fails to mention because, as he says later, he was “sick” and had to leave on the eve of battle.

Doctor Florêncio was the only civilian of the group. He was an engineer and public functionary. Time and a relaxing life made him lose all the knowledge he had gained by the time he left school. He was more like a plumber than an engineer. Living near Albernaz, there was not a day in which he did not stop by to pass the entire afternoon playing whist with the General.

Doctor Florêncio asked:

—General, you were there, weren't you?

The General did not stop himself, he did not get mixed up, did not stutter, and said with the utmost naturalness:

—I did not. I got sick and returned to Brazil in the eve of battle. But I had many friends there: Camisão, Venâncio...

Everyone stopped talking and looked at the approaching night. Not even a hill could be seen from where they were, the living room. The horizon was circumscribed by the ends of backyards of neighboring houses with their clotheslines, chimneys, and the chirping of chicks. A tamarind tree without leaves reminded one of the open air, great vistas without end. The sun had already disappeared from the horizon and the familiar faint light of gas lamps and streetlights began to light up behind windowpanes.

Bustamante broke the silence:

—This country is no longer good for anything anymore. Imagine, that my petition, asking for the rank of lieutenant-colonel, has been in the Ministry for six months!

—A mess, all exclaimed.

It was night. *Dona Maricota* went to where they were, very active, very diligent, and with her face open with joy.

—Are you praying? and she soon added: Excuse me, I need to say something to Chico, yes?

Albernaz left the circle of friends and went to a corner of the room, where his wife told him something in a low voice. He listened to his wife, then returned to his friends and, in the middle of the way, spoke loudly:

—If they don't dance, it's because they don't want to. Do I have anyone's attention, then?

Dona Maricota got closer to her husband's friends, and explained:

—Sirs, you know how it is: if we do not brighten it up, no one finds a pair, no one plays the piano. There are so many young ladies in the other room, so many young men; it's a pity!

—Well, I'll go over there, said Albernaz.

He left his friends and went to the drawing-room to start the ball.

—Let's go, girls! What is this? Zizi, a valse!

And he went about making the pairs: "No, General, I already have a pair," said a young lady. "Not a problem," he would reply, "Dance with little Raimundo; the other one can wait."

After having started the ball, he came back to the circle of friends sweating, but content.

—This, from my family! What! We present ourselves as fools, he said. You are the one who did the right thing, Caldas; you did not want to marry!

—But I have more children than you. Only in nephews, eight; and the cousins?

—Let's play whist, Albernaz suggested.

—We are five, how will we do it? Florêncio observed.

—No, I don't play, said Bustamante.

—So, we play some other game [quatro de garrancho, I was unable to find what that game is], Albernaz recalled.

The cards came, and so did a small tripod table. The partners seated themselves, and drew lots to see who would deal. It was up to Florêncio to deal. They began. Albernaz had an attentive air when he played: his head would rest on his back and his eyes would take on a great expression of reflection. Caldas righted himself, puffed his chest, and played with the serenity of a Lord Admiral during a game of whist. Sigismundo played with the utmost caution, with his cigarette in the corner of his mouth, and his head to the side to avoid the smoke. Bustamante left the room to watch the dances.

The round had begun when *Dona Quinota*, one of the General's daughters crossed the room to drink some water; Caldas, scratching one of his whiskers, asked the young lady.

—So, *Dona Quinota*, where's¹⁰² Genelicio?

The young lady turned her head with coquetry, clicked her tongue¹⁰³, and answered with a pretend ill humor:

—Poh, I don't know! Am I clamped onto him?¹⁰⁴

—There's no need to get angry, *Dona Quinota*; it is a simple question, Caldas warned her.

The General, who was attentively examining the cards he had received, interrupted with a grave voice:

—I pass.

¹⁰² In the source text, *quedê*, which is, in current usage, *cadê*. It is an informal way of asking where something or someone is.

¹⁰³ In the source text, *muxoxo*. It means a click of the tongue, much like the way one uses to call squirrels, signifying disgust or disdain towards something.

¹⁰⁴ *Ando detrás dele?* Lit., "Do I walk behind him?"

Dona Quinota left. This Genelicio was her boyfriend. He was a relative of Caldas, who thought it certain that Genelicio would marry into the. Everyone favored his candidacy. *Dona* Maricota and her husband filled him up with parties. An employee of the Treasury, already in the middle of his career, a young man of less than thirty years of age, he had the potential for a great future. There was no one more of a submissive toady than he was. He had no shame, no modesty! He would fill his bosses and superiors with all the adulation he could muster. When he left, he would loiter, washing his hands some three or four times, until he could catch the director at his door. He would accompany him, talk to him about the service, give him opinions and ideas, criticize this or that colleague, and leave him off at the streetcar, if the man went home. When a minister came in, he would make himself into an interpreter of his comrades, and would lay down an oration; during any birthday, he wrote a sonnet that began always with—"Hail"—and would always end with—"Hail! Three times hail!" The formula was always the same; he only changed the name of the minister and the date. The following day, the newspapers would speak of his name, and publish the sonnet.

In four years, he had acquired two promotions, and he now worked for the Tribunal of Accounts, to raise himself into a higher post.

In his flattery and climbing maneuvers, he was a true genius. He did not limit himself to the sonnet, to the oration; he searched for other means, other processes. Publishing in the daily papers was one of them. With the design of announcing to the ministers and directors who had a superior erudition, from time to time he would spawn long articles in the newspapers about public accounting. They were merely compilations of moldy decrees, spiced here and there with quotes from Portuguese or French authors.

The interesting part was that his comrades respected him, held his understanding in great regard, and he lived in his department surrounded by the respect given to genius, a genius of paperwork and information. One must add that, Genelicio had, together with his safe administrative position, an almost finished course in law; and so many titles drawn together could not but impress upon the marriage anxieties of the Albernaz couple.

Outside his department, he had a stiff air, which his poor physique made comical, but one that the high support he provided to the State only maintained and nourished. A model employee!

The game continued silently, and the night advanced. At the end of a hand, they would make some brief commentary or other, and in the beginning, only the jargon of the game could be heard: “*solo*, all in, raise, pass.” These being done, they would play in silence; from the drawing room, however, came the festive din of dancing and talking.

—Look who’s here!

—Genelicio, said Caldas. Where were you, lad?

He left his hat and cane on a chair and greeted everyone. Small, already a little hunched, a lean face, with a bluish *pince-nez*, all of which betrayed his profession, his tastes, and habits. He was a bookkeeper.

—Nowhere, my friends! I was taking care of business.

—Is it going well? asked Florêncio.

—Almost guaranteed. The minister promised... That’s nothing, I’m very well, brother.¹⁰⁵

—I am very glad, said the General.

—Thank you. Do you know something, General?

—What is it?

¹⁰⁵ *Cunhado*, or, “brother-in-law.”

—Quaresma is insane.

—But...what? Who told you that?

—That man of the guitar. He is already in the asylum...

—I knew it, said Albernaz, that was a madman's petition.

—But that's not it, General, added Genelicio. He wrote an official letter in Tupi and sent it to the minister.

—It's what I was saying, said Albernaz.

—Who is it? asked Florêncio.

—That neighbor, employee of the arsenal; don't you know him?

—Short, with a *pince-nez*?

—That one, confirmed Caldas.

—There was nothing else to be expected, said Doctor Florêncio. Those books, that obsession with reading...

—Why was he reading so much? Caldas inquired.

—He was missing a screw,¹⁰⁶ said Florêncio.

Genelicio summed up with authority:

—He had never graduated, so why get involved with books?

—It's true, said Florêncio.

—This book thing is for wise men, doctors, observed Sigismundo.

—It should even be prohibited, said Genelicio, that whoever does not have an academic title should not have books. One would avoid disgraces like these. Don't you think?

—Certainly, said Albernaz.

—Certainly, said Caldas.

¹⁰⁶ *Telha de menos* is an expression that literally translates as, "one less tile."

—Certainly, said Sigismundo as well.

They were quiet for a while, and their attentions converged upon the game.

—Have all the trumps been used?

—Let us count, my friend.

Albernaz lost and there was silence in the drawing room. Cavalcânti would sing. He crossed the room, triumphantly, with a large smile on his face, and positioned himself by the piano. Zizi would accompany. He coughed, and, with his metallic voice, accentuating whatever ended with an “s,”¹⁰⁷ began:

*Life is a comedy without any sense,
A history of blood and dust,
A desert without light*

And the piano moaned.

Chapter IV: Disastrous Consequences of a Petition

The events to which the grave personages gathered around the whist table alluded to, in the memorable afternoon of the party commemorating the marriage of Ismênia, had uncoiled with fulminating rapidity. The force of the ideas and sentiments contained within Quaresma had revealed themselves in unprecedented acts, in a sequence as rough and swift as a whirlwind. The first fact surprised, but more and more came, in such a way that what at first seemed like an extravagance, a small whim, soon presented itself as total insanity.

¹⁰⁷ In Brazilian Portuguese, particularly in Rio, the “s” sounds are already quite accentuated.

Just some weeks prior to the marriage proposal, at the opening of the Council's session, the secretary had to read a singular petition, and one which attained a wealth of publicity and commentary little reserved for documents of that type.

The murmuring and disorder that characterize the indispensable gathering to the elevated work of legislating, did not allow the deputies to hear Quaresma; journalists, however, who were close to the table, burst out laughing as soon as they heard him—certainly inconvenient to the majesty of the place. Laughter is contagious. The secretary, in the middle of his reading, laughed, discretely; at the end, the president laughed, the official minute-taker laughed, the page laughed—the whole table and the population surrounding it, laughed at the petition, most of the time wanting to contain their laughter, some of them in such frank joy that tears flowed out their eyes.

Whoever knew that such a piece of paper represented the effort, hard work, a disinterested and generous dream, would feel a painful sadness in hearing that inoffensive laughter alongside it. The document that arrived at the Council's table deserved anger, hatred, the contumely of enemies, not that hilarious treatment of innocent hilarity, without any depth, as if they were laughing at some act of buffoonery, of some sort of circus act, or of a clown's antics.

The ones who laughed, however, did not know the cause of their laughter and only saw in the reading a motive for honest laughter, without any malice. The session that day was cold; and, because of that, the newspaper sections dedicated to the Council, published the following petition, and commented on it in all tones the following day.

The petition was understood to be like this:

Policarpo Quaresma, Brazilian citizen, public functionary, certain that the Portuguese language is lent to Brazil; certain as well that, because of this fact, the speech and writing in general, above all in the field of belles-lettres sees itself within the humiliating contingency of continually suffering the coarse censure of the proprietors of the language; knowing,

furthermore, that, within our country, the authors and writers, especially the grammarians, do not agree with themselves concerning grammatical usage, seeing daily the surge of sour polemics between the deepest scholars of our language—using the rights that the Constitution bestows upon him, comes to ask that the National Congress decree Tupi-Guarani as the official and national language of the Brazilian people.

The petitioner, leaving besides the historical arguments that act in favor of his idea, asks permission to remind you that language is the highest manifestation of a people's intelligence, and their most vivid and original creation; and, therefore, the political emancipation of the country requires, as its complement, and consequence, its linguistic emancipation.

Furthermore, Congressmen, Tupi-Guarani, a most original language, agglutinant, it is true, but one where polysyntaxis gives multiple rich expressions, the only language capable of translating our riches, to put us in relation with our nature, and to adapt perfectly to our vocal and cerebral organs, by being the creation of peoples who have lived and still live here, hence possessors of the physiological and psychological organization towards which we tend, avoiding this way the sterile grammatical controversies, arising from the difficult adaptation of a language from another region to our cerebral organization and to our vocal apparatus—controversies that so impede the progress of our literary, scientific, and philosophical culture¹⁰⁸.

Certain that the wisdom of the legislators will know how to find ways to put forth the above measure, and conscious that the Chamber and the Senate will weigh its reach and utility

Request and await deferment.

Signed and properly stamped, the Major's petition was, for days, the subject of all chatter. Published in all newspapers, with facetious comments, there was not one person who did not make a quip about it, who did not attempt at a joke at Quaresma's expense. They did not remain there; their malicious curiosity wanted more. They wanted to know who he was, where he lived, if he was married, if he was single. A weekly illustration published a caricature, and the major was pointed at in the streets.

The small light-hearted papers, these weekly papers of jokes and jests, these, well, were of such atrocious cruelty towards the poor Major! With an abundance that denounced the joy of the writers in having found an easy topic, the text was full of him: Major Quaresma said this; Major Quaresma did that.

¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that Portuguese has undergone several orthographical reforms, and that Portuguese grammar is relatively difficult to comprehend—compared to other Romance languages with which I am familiar with. The latest orthographic reform took place in 2010, and the first one took place in 1911, with about ten taking place in-between.

One of them, beyond other references, filled up a whole page with the matter of the week. The illustration was entitled: “The Santa Cruz Slaughterhouse, According to Major Quaresma,” and the drawing represented a line of men and women marching into the slaughter house one could see to the left. Another one referred to the case, painting a butcher shop, “Quaresma’s Butcher Shop;” the subtitle: the cook asked the butcher: —Sir, do you have cow’s tongue? The butcher answered: —No, we only have lady’s tongue, do you want that?

With more or less force, commentaries never ceased, and the absence of Quaresma’s acquaintances in the middle of their publication, made them of little habitual constancy. They ran for two weeks with the name of the sub-secretary.

All this profoundly irritated Quaresma. Living for thirty years almost by himself, without clashing with the world, he had acquired a very sharp sensibility, capable of suffering profoundly at the smallest thing. He had never suffered any criticisms, never threw himself into the spotlight, lived immersed in his dream, incubated and maintained alive by the warmth of his books. Besides these, he did not know anyone; and, with the people who he talked with, he exchanged small banalities, everyday sayings, things that his heart and soul had nothing to do with.

Not even his goddaughter could remove him from his nest, despite being regarded above all others.

This closing-in on himself gave him a new outlook on everything, on competitions, on ambitions, since none of these things that beget hate and fights had entered upon his temperament.

Disinterested in money, glory and station, living in the reserve of a dream, he acquired the candor and purity of spirit that inhabit these men who have a fixed idea, the great scholars,

sages, inventors, people who get more tender, more ingenuous, more innocent than the damsels of by-gone poems.

It is rare to find a man like this, but they exist and, when one finds them, even if they have a grain of madness in them, we feel more sympathy towards our species, more pride in being a man, and more hope for the happiness of the race.

The continuation of the jokes in the newspapers, the way in which people looked at him in the street, exasperated him, and he rooted himself in his idea even stronger. He was so affected that he swallowed a joke, a quip, meditated upon remembering it, weighed all its aspects, examined it with caution, compared it with similar things, to record the authors and authorities; and, in proportion that he did this, his own conviction showed how inane the critique was, how light the jest, and the idea took him over, fascinated him, absorbed him more each time.

If the newspapers had received the petition with inoffensive facetiousness, and without hate, the department became furious. In bureaucratic circles, a superiority born outside their circle, made and organized with materials besides the official ones, the knowledge of texts and regulations, of good calligraphy, is received with the hostility of petty envy.

It is as if they saw in the bearer of that superiority a traitor to mediocrity, to anonymous paper pushing. There is not just the question of promotion, of pecuniary interest; there is a question of self-love, of wounded sentiments in seeing that colleague, that fellow galley slave, subject to regulations, the fancy of bosses, the superior looks of the ministers, with more titles to consider, with some right to infringe upon the rules and precepts.

They look upon him with the dissembling hatred with which the plebeian murderer looks at the aristocratic murderer who killed his wife and her lover. Both are murderers, but, even in

prison, the nobleman and the burgher take their own world's air, a remnant of his delicacy, and an inflexibility that wound his fellow in disgrace.

Likewise, in an office where someone whose name does not always recall his station's title, small perfidies show up, whispered slanders, the hints, all the arsenal of ambitious envy¹⁰⁹ of a woman who has convinced herself that her neighbor dresses better than her.

Those who make themselves known through the means of information, in the newspapers, in their assiduity towards work are loved, or rather, supported; more so than the doctorates and baccalaureates, of those who have such titles and fame. In general, the incomprehension towards the work or merit of the colleague is absolute, and none of them can admit that their type, the amanuenses, can give anything interesting for strangers and something for the whole town to talk about.

Quaresma's swift popularity, his success and titled ephemera, irritated his colleagues and superiors. Has one ever seen such a thing! said the secretary. This fool turning to the Congress, and to propose something! Pretentious! The director, passing by the secretariat, looked with obliquity and felt that regulations did not call for any censure towards Quaresma The filing clerk was the least terrible, but soon enough he called Quaresma a maniac.

The major well perceived that false environment, those allusions, and this augmented his desperation and stubbornness towards his idea. He did not comprehend how his petition roused so many storms, a general ill will; it was an innocent thing, a patriotic relic that deserved the assent of everyone; and he meditated, returned to the idea, and examined it with more attention.

The extensive publicity of the fact reached the little palace of Real Grandeza, where his friend Coleoni lived. Enriched by the profits from his construction contracting business,

¹⁰⁹ *ciúme invejoso*, literally, envious envy. However, *inveja* has more tones of resentment towards the successes of another, while *ciúme* has more tones of ambition towards becoming more successful than the other person.

widowed, the former greengrocer retired from business and lived quietly in the ample house that he himself had built, with all the architectural ornaments of his favorite style: urns on the entablature, an immense monogram over the entrance, two earthenware dogs on the pillars near the entrance gate, and other similar details.

The house was in the middle of the property, elevating itself upon a high foundation, had a reasonable garden up front, which advanced upon all sides, dotted with multicolored balls; a veranda, an aviary, where, due to the heat, birds sadly died. It was a bourgeois installation, in the national taste, showy, expensive, with little regard for the climate or comfort.¹¹⁰

Inside, whim dominated, with everything obeying a baroque fantasy, a hopeless eclecticism. Furniture piled up, rugs, valances, bibelots, and the fancy of his daughter, irregular and without discipline, brought still more disorder to that collection of expensive things.

Widowed, for some time now, an old sister-in-law was the one who took care of the house and his daughter, who directed the distractions and the parties. Coleoni accepted this sweet tyranny with good cheer. He wanted to marry his daughter well, and to her taste; he did not place, then, any obstacle in Olga's program.

In the beginning, he thought of giving her to his helper or foreman, a type of architect who did not draw, but made projects for houses and grand edifices. First, he plumed his daughter. He did not find any resistance, but did not find any affirmation either. He convinced himself that the vaporousness of the girl, that distant air of a heroin, her intelligence, her fancy, did not match with the coarseness and pastoral simplicity of the foreman.

She wants a doctor—he thought—so be it! Certainly, he will not have a penny, but I have, and we can accommodate.

¹¹⁰ On a side note, Brazilian architecture, especially in the construction of houses and apartments, remains extremely impractical. For example, instead of the usual plaster and wood walls, most residences in Brazil have walls made of concrete and concrete bricks, which makes plumbing, electric, and other repairs extremely difficult.

He had habituated himself to see the national doctor as the marquis, or the baron, of his homeland. Each country has its nobility; over there, it is a viscount; here, it is a doctor, baccalaureate, or dentist; and he judged it quite acceptable to buy the satisfaction of ennobling his daughter, with a half a dozen thousand *réis*.

There were moments when he would become irritated with the proposals of his daughter. He enjoyed sleeping early, but he had to lose nights and nights in the *Lírico*, in balls. He loved to sit down and smoke his pipe, but he had to walk for hours and hours in the streets, hopping from milliner to milliner behind his daughter, so that at the end of the day he had bought half a meter of ribbons, some bobby pins, and a flask of perfume.

It was amusing to see him in milliners, full of the complacency of a father who wants to ennoble his son, giving opinions on the fabric, finding this one finer, comparing it with another, with a lack of affection for these things that could be guessed even after he had bought them. But he would go, lingering and struggling to enter into the secret, the mystery, full of tenacity and candor, all perfectly paternal.

Up until then, he was doing well, and trampled all contrarities. The only thing that bothered him much were the visits, the friends of his daughter, their mothers, their sisters, with their manners of false nobility, with their feigned disdain, letting the old businessman know how far he was from the society of Olga's friends and colleagues.

He was not profoundly annoyed, though; he wanted and made it this way, he had to conform. Almost always, when these visitors came, Coleoni would distance himself, going deep into the house. However, it was not always possible to do this; during the big parties and receptions he had to be present, and it was then that he saw the veiled trifles of the high nobility of this land. He always remained the businessman, with few ideas beyond those of his

employment. He did not know how to pretend, since he did not care about that tattle of marriages, balls, parties, and expensive trips.

One time or another, some more delicate person would ask him to play poker; he would always accept, and would always lose. He created a circle of friends in his house, of which the lawyer Pacheco was part. He lost, a lot, but it was not that which made him suspend the games. What did he lose? A few thousand—a trifle! The problem, however, was that Pacheco played with six cards. The first time that Coleoni came upon this, it looked like a simple distraction of the distinguished journalist and famous lawyer. An honest man would not do that! And in the second time, would it be as well? And in the third?

So much distraction was not possible. He was certain he was cheating, shut himself up, contained himself with a dignity not expected of a former greengrocer, and waited. When they came to play again, and the trick was put in practice, Vicente lit up his cigar, and observed in the most natural way possible in this world:

—Sirs, do you know that there is now, in Europe, a new system of playing poker?

—What is it? someone asked.

—It is a small difference: one plays with six cards, that is, only one of the partners.

Pacheco feigned ignorance, continued to play and win, took leave at midnight full of propriety, made some commentaries about the match, and never came back.

According to his old habit, Coleoni read the newspapers in the morning, with the leisure and slowness of man little used to reading, when he came across his friend in the arsenal's petition.

He did not understand the petition very well, but the newspapers joked about it, went so deep into the thing that he imagined his former benefactor enmeshed in some criminal plot, having done, inadvertently, something gravely wrong.

He had always held him as the most honest man in the world and still did, but who knew? The last time he had visited him, did he not have these strange manners? It could be a joke...

Despite having enriched himself, Coleoni held his obscure friend in great regard. There was in him not only the gratitude of a peasant who received a great favor, but also something like a double respect to the Major, arising from his quality as a functionary and wise man.

European, from humble village origins, he kept deep inside him that sacred reverence that peasants have towards men who receive the investiture of the State; and, despite living in Brazil for plenty of years, he still did not know how to join Quaresma's learning to his titles, so he held his friend's erudition in high consideration.

It is not, then, strange that he saw with grief Quaresma's name involved in facts that the newspapers reprovved. He read the petition again, but did not understand what the Major wanted to say. He called his daughter.

—Olga!

He pronounced his daughter's name almost without an accent; but when he spoke Portuguese, he put a singular hoarseness to his words, and sprinkled phrases with exclamations and little Italian expressions.

—Olga, what is this saying? *Non capisco...*

—The young lady sat down on a nearby chair and read the newspaper, the petition, and the comments.

—*Che!* So?

—*Padrinho* wants to substitute Portuguese for the Tupi language, do you understand, sir?

—How?

—Today, don't we speak Portuguese? Well then: he wants us to speak Tupi from now on.

—*Tutti?*

—All Brazilians, all of them.

—*Ma che!*¹¹¹ This is not possible?¹¹²

—It can be. The Czechs have their own language, and they had to learn German, after being conquered by the Austrians; the Lorrainers, the French...

—*Per la Madonna!* German is a language, now this *acujelê*, *ecco!*

—*Acujelê* is from Africa, papa; Tupi is from here.

—*Per Bacco!* It's the same thing...He is mad!

—But there is no madness, papa.

—How? So this is something from a *bene* man?

—Maybe not with good sense; but neither with madness.

—*Non capisco.*

—It's an idea, father, it's a plan, maybe absurd at first sight, out of the mold, but it's not all crazy. It is daring, perhaps, but...

As much as she wanted, she could not judge her godfather's acts with her father's criteria. He had common sense, and she had the love of great things, of daring, and of audacious commitments. She remembered that Quaresma spoke to her of emancipation; and if there was any feeling deep within her that was not of admiration towards the Major's boldness, it was certainly not reproof or pity. It was of sympathetic compassion in seeing an act badly

¹¹¹ "But what a thing!"

¹¹² In the source text it is, "Não é possível?" which is also an oddly phrased question. Usually, this expression is used, like in English, as an exclamation.

comprehended, from that man she knew for so many years, following his dream, isolated, obscure, and tenacious.

—This will give him a lot of trouble, Coleoni observed.

And he was right. The archivist's sentence was victorious in the hallway discussions and the suspicion that Quaresma was mad was becoming a certainty. In principle, the subsecretary held back the storm pretty well; but after he guessed that they thought he was ignorant of Tupi, he became irritated, full of a blind rage, which was hard to contain. How blind they were! He, who for thirty years studied Brazil scrupulously, who had to learn the rebarbative German, not to know Tupi, the language of Brazil, the only one that really ever was—what a miserable suspicion!

Let them judge him insane—go! But to distrust in the sincerity of his affirmations, no! And he thought, looked for ways to rehabilitate himself, threw himself into distractions, even writing and doing daily chores. He lived divided in two: one part in the obligations of everyday life, and the other in the preoccupation of proving he knew Tupi.

The secretary had missed a day this one time and the Major had to cover for him. The assignment was large, and the secretary himself had written down and copied part of it. He had begun to make a clean copy of an official letter about some things in Mato Grosso, where there was talk of Aquidauana and Ponta Porã, when Carmo said from the end of the room, with a contemptible tone:

—Homero, knowing is one thing, saying is another.

Quaresma did not even raise his eyes from the paper. Whether because of the Tupi words in the draft or because of Carmo's allusion to Tupi, it was certain that he had been insensibly translating the official piece into the indigenous language.

When he was done, he saw the slip, but soon other employees came with the work they had made, so that he would examine them. New worries drove him away from the first, he forgot about it and the letter in Tupi went away with his comrades. The director did not notice, signed it, and the *tupinambá*¹¹³ ended up in the Ministry.

The clamor that such a thing caused was unimaginable. What language was this? Doctor Rocha was consulted, the most able man in the secretariat, regarding this matter. The functionary cleaned his *pince-nez*, grabbed the paper, turned around, put it up right-side up, and concluded that it was Greek, because of the “yy.”¹¹⁴

Doctor Rocha had the fame for being a wise man in the secretariat, since he had a baccalaureate in law, and said nothing.

—But, the chief inquired, officially, can the authorities communicate in foreign languages? I believe there is a notice from ’84...See, Mr. Doctor Rocha...

They consulted all the regulations and repertories of legislation, going from table to table asking for the help of the memory of each one, and nothing could be found in this respect. At last, Doctor Rocha, after thinking for three days, went to the chief and said, with emphasis and certainty:

—The notice of ’84 concerns orthography¹¹⁵.

The director looked at the subaltern with admiration and considered even more his qualities as a zealous, intelligent, and...assiduous employee. He was informed that the legislation lacked any mention of which language should be used in writing official documents; however, it did not seem to regulate the use of one that was not of the country.

¹¹³ This is a noun that simply means anything related to Tupi, be it the language or the culture.

¹¹⁴ One writes Tupi-Guarani using the Latin alphabet, not Greek.

¹¹⁵ See footnote 61. Another note should be added, however, that orthographical reforms are enacted by *governments*; thus even what seems like the simple substitution of a “ph” for an “f” from *pharmácia* becomes a matter of bureaucracy.

The minister, having this piece of information in sight, as well as many other consultations, returned the letter, and censured the arsenal.

What a morning that was in the arsenal! The doors slammed furiously, the messengers were always in terrible haste, and all the time asked about the secretary, who was late.

Censured! soliloquized the director. There went his generalship, down the drain. Living for so many years dreaming of those stars, and they had fled him like this, because of some secretary's prank!

Still, if the situation changed...But how!

The secretary arrived, went to the director's office. Perfectly acquainted with the motive, he examined the letter, and by its handwriting recognized Quaresma had written it. Call for him, said the colonel. The Major went on his way, thinking of some Tupi verses he read this morning.

—So, you have been having fun at my expense, have you?

—I beg your pardon? said Quaresma, amazed.

—Who wrote this?

The Major did not even want to examine the paper. He saw the handwriting, remembered the distraction, and confessed firmly:

—It was me.

—So you confess?

—Certainly. But your excellency does not know...

—Does not know! What are you saying?

The director stood up from his chair, lips white, and his hand raised up to his head. He had been offended three times: in his individual honor, in the honor of his caste, and in the educational establishment he had frequented, the school in Praia Vermelha, the prime scientific

establishment in the world. Besides this, he had written a story for the *Pritaneu*, the school's review,—“The Longing”¹¹⁶—a piece that his colleagues had praised very much. In this way, having passed all his exams, plainly and distinctly, his head girded with the double crown of a sage and an artist. Titles so rarely found united, even in Descartes or Shakespeare, transformed that “I don't know” into a profound insult, an affront.

—Does not know! How dare you, sir, say something like that to me! Have you, sir, by any chance taken the course by Benjamin Constant? Do you¹¹⁷ know mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, sociology, and ethics? How dare you, then? So you think that because you have read some romances, and know some pathetic bit of French¹¹⁸, you can compare with someone who got a grade 9 in calculus, 10 in mechanics, 8 in astronomy, 10 in hydraulics, 9 in descriptive? Well then!

And the man shook his hand furiously and looked ferociously at Quaresma, who already thought of himself as facing a firing squad.

—But, Colonel, Sir!...

—There are no buts, there is nothing! Consider yourself suspended, until further notice.

Quaresma was sweet, good, and modest. It was never his intent to doubt the wisdom of his director. He had no pretensions to wisdom, and had pronounced the phrase to begin his apology; but, when he saw that torrent of knowledge, titles, floating on such furious waters, he lost the thread of his thought, speech, ideas, and nothing more could be said.

¹¹⁶ “A Saudade.”

¹¹⁷ Here the director addresses Quaresma using, *senhor*, which can serve as *sir*, but also as a more direct form of address, substituting a simple “you.” Given the director's tone, I have chosen to use “you,” instead of adding “sir” to every *senhor*.

¹¹⁸ In the source text, *francesinho*, which is the diminutive of *francês*, The diminutive is often used to put down things, like the director is doing to Quaresma's learning.

He walked out of the Colonel's office, prostrated, like a criminal. The Colonel never stopped staring at him furiously, indignantly, ferociously, like someone injured in all fibers of his being. Quaresma left, finally. Reaching his office, he said nothing: grabbed his hat, his cane, and cast himself out the door, staggering like a drunk. He walked around, went to the bookseller to search for some books. When he was about to take the street car, he found Ricardo Coração dos Outros.

—Early, eh, Major?

—True.

And they shut themselves up, remaining in front of each other in counterfeit dumbness.

Ricardo advanced some words:

—The Major seems to have an idea today, a very strong thought.

—I have, my son, not from today, but from a long time.

—It's good to think. It is consoling to dream.

—Consoling, perhaps; but it also makes us different from others, digs abysses between men...

And the two separated. The Major took the tram and Ricardo got off carelessly at Rua do Ouvidor, with small steps, his pants folded at the ankles, the guitar in its canvas armor under his arms.

Chapter V: The Bibelot

It was not the first time that she went there. For more than a dozen times she had climbed that large stone staircase, with stones of Lisbon marble on one and the other side, of the Charity

and Our Lady of Pity; had penetrated that portico with Doric columns, crossed the tiled atrium, leaving left and right Pinel and Esquirol, meditating over the distressing mystery of madness; climbed another set of carefully-waxed stairs, and went to meet her godfather up there, sad and absorbed in his dream, in his obsession. Her father would bring her here sometimes, on Sundays, when he came to fulfill the pious duty of friendship of visiting Quaresma. For how long was he there? He did not remember, exactly; about three or four months, if that.

Only the name of the house was frightful. The asylum! It is like a living sepulcher, a half-burial, a burial of the spirit, of conducting reason, from whose absence their bodies barely resented.

Health does not depend upon reason and there are many who even appear to acquire more of a life force, to prolong their existence, when it takes flight, and we don't know through which orifice in the body or where it goes.

With what terror, a type of dread of supernatural things, fright of an invisible and omnipresent enemy, did one hear of the poor referring to the establishment of Praia das Saudades! Before that, a good death, they would say.

At a glance, one could not comprehend this astonishment, this fright, this terror of the people towards that immense, severe, and grave house, half hospital, half prison, with its high fences, grated windows, extending for some hundreds of meters, facing the vast green sea, there by the entrance of the bay, on *Saudades* Beach. One entered, saw some men, calm, thoughtful, contemplative, like monks in seclusion and prayer.

The rest, with that silent entrance, bright and respectful, soon forsook the popular idea of madness; the clamor, the grimaces, the furies, the clash of follies said here and there.

There was none of that; it was calm, silent, a perfectly natural order. In the end, however, it was when one closely examined them, in the visiting room, that one felt very well the horror of madness, the tormenting mystery that it enclosed, made by some unknown inexplicable flight of the spirit from that which it supposes real, to possess itself and live out of the appearances of things, or from the appearances of the same: those disturbed faces, bewildered looks, some stupid and without expression, others lost in thought and submerged in an endless intimate dream; seeing as well the excitation of some, more lively when next to the atony of the others.¹¹⁹

Whoever once faced this indecipherable enigma of our own nature, becomes afraid, feeling that the germ of that thing is deposited within us, and that because of anything it invades us, takes us over, smashes us, and buries us in a desperate inverse and absurd comprehension of ourselves, of others, and of the world. Each mad man carries his world within him, and to him there are no more resemblances: what he was before the insanity is something, something very, very much so other than what he will be afterwards.

And this change does not begin, is not felt when it begins, and it almost never ends. With your godfather, how was it? In principle, that petition... But what was that? A caprice, a fantasy, something without any importance, an old man's idea, without any consequence. Afterwards, that post? It was of no importance, a simple distraction, something that happens every once in a while...and after all? Total insanity, the grim and ironic madness that removes our soul and places another, that lowers us... After all, total insanity, the exultation of the "I," the obsession of not going out, of saying one's being persecuted, of imagining friends, even the best, as enemies. How painful that was! The first phase of his delirium, that deranged agitation, the unconnected speech, without any connection with what happened outside himself and with past

¹¹⁹ The author himself was institutionalized several times for depression and alcoholism—the likely cause of this early death at the age of 41, in 1922.

acts, speech that one did not know where it came from, where it exited, from what place it was born! And sweet Quaresma's fright? The fright of one who saw a cataclysm, which made his whole being tremble, from head to toe, and filled him with indifference towards all that was not his own delirium.

The house, books, and his money matters wandered off, untended. To him, none of that was of value, none of these properly existed or mattered. They were shadows, apparitions; the real thing was the enemies, terrible enemies whose names his delirium had not yet created. His old sister was perplexed, stupefied, directionless, not knowing which opinion to take. Having been educated at home, always with a man at her side, her father, afterwards her brother, she did not know how to deal with the world, the authorities, and its influential people. At the same time, in her inexperience and sisterly tenderness, she oscillated between the belief that his ghosts were all true and the suspicion that they were his madness, pure and simple.

If it was not for her father (and Olga loved her coarse father even more for that) who took interest, calling on family interests and avoiding the dismissal that threatened him, transforming it into retirement, what would have happened to him? How easy it is for everything in life to fall to ruins! That methodic, ruled, honest man, with a secure employment, had an unshakeable appearance; however, one little grain of nonsense sufficed...

He had been for some months at the asylum, her godfather, and his sister could not visit him. The disturbance of her nerves, of her emotions, was such that to see him there, in that half prison, gone from himself, one unavoidable attack would follow.

She and her father, sometimes only her father, sometimes Ricardo, only the three, would visit him.

That Sunday was particularly beautiful, mainly in Botafogo, in the proximity of the sea and high mountains that cut through a silk sky. The air was soft, and the sun sparkled softly on the sidewalks.

Her father came reading the newspapers and she, thinking, from time to time, leafing through the illustrated magazines she brought to brighten up and to distract her godfather.

She was like a pensioner; but, despite this, in the beginning she had a certain bashfulness in mixing herself with the visitors.

It seemed to her that her fortune put her above being in the presence of miseries; she trampled, however, this egoistic thought, her class pride, and now entered naturally, highlighting her natural elegance. She loved these sacrifices, these abnegations; she had their feeling of grandeur, and became content with herself.

In the streetcar came other visitors and all of them did not delay in jumping out at the asylum's gate. As in all gates of our social hells, there were all sorts of people there, from various conditions, births, and fortunes. Not only death levels; madness, crime, and disease pass their razor over any distinctions we invent.

The well and badly dressed, the elegant and the poor, the ugly and the beautiful, the intelligent and the foolish, all entered with respect, with concentration, with a point of fear in their eyes as if they penetrated into another world.

The inmates met with their relatives and the wrappings were unmade: there were sweets, tobacco, socks, sandals, sometimes books and newspapers. Some of the inmates spoke with their parents; others kept quiet, in a rabid and inexplicable dumbness; others were indifferent; and the variety of aspects was such in these receptions, that one could even forget the empire of disease

that ruled all these unhappy people, so much did it vary in this one or that one, that it made one think about personal fancies and maxims about the free will of each.

And she thought how our life is varied and diverse, how it is richer in sad than in happy aspects, and how, in the variety of life, sadness can vary in itself more than happiness, and how it gives proper movement to life.

Verifying this, she was almost satisfied, since her intelligent and curious nature pleased itself with the simplest discoveries her spirit would make.

Quaresma was better. His enthusiasm has passed, and his delirium seemed to have completely disappeared. He was shocked in this environment, and soon a salutary and necessary reaction took place. He was mad, since they had put him there...

When he met his friend and his goddaughter, he even brought a smile of satisfaction under his already greying moustache. He had lost some weight, his black hairs were a bit white, but the general aspect was the same. He had not lost completely his gentleness and tenderness of speech, but when his obsession took over he became a bit dry and untrusting. When he saw them, he said amiably:

—So, you always come... I was waiting...

They greeted each other and he even gave his goddaughter a tight hug.

—How is Adelaide?

—Good. She sends her regards and did not come because... Coleoni said.

—The poor thing! he said, and hung his head as if he wanted to push away some sad remembrance; afterwards, he asked:

—And Ricardo?

His goddaughter hurried to answer her godfather with excitement and cheerfulness. She saw he had already escaped the semi-tomb of insanity.

—He is good, godfather. He looked for papa for days and said his retirement is almost over.

Coleoni had seated himself. Quaresma had as well, and the young lady was standing, to better look at her godfather with his very luminous and firm eyes. Guards, orderlies, and doctors, walked through the doors with professional indifference. The visitors did not look at each other, like they did not want to recognize each other in the streets. Outside, the day was gorgeous, the air soft, the sea infinite and melancholic, the mountains outlining a silken sky—the beauty of an imposing and indecipherable nature. Coleoni, though he was more assiduous during the visits, would note the improvements in his friend with a satisfaction that deceived his looks, with a quick smile. He ventured:

—The Major is already much better; want to leave?

Quaresma did not answer right away. He thought a little, and responded firmly and slowly:

—It's best to wait awhile. I am better...I am sorry to inconvenience you so much, but you, who have been so good to me, ought to take all this as kindness. Who has enemies, must also have good friends...

The father and daughter looked at each other; the major lifted his head, and it looked like tears wanted to break out. The young lady promptly intervened:

—You know, godfather, I am getting married.

—It's true, confirmed her father. Olga is getting married, and we came to let you know.

—Who is your fiancée? asked Quaresma.

—It is a young man...

—Certainly, the godfather interrupted, smiling.

And the two accompanied him with contentment and familiarity. It was a good sign.

—It is Mr. Armando Borges, who's getting a doctorate. Are you satisfied, godfather?

Olga said, gently.

—So it is for after the end of the year.

—We hope it is around that time, said the Italian.

—Do you like him very much? inquired the godfather.

She did not know how to answer that question. She wanted to feel she liked him, but she did not. And why would she marry? She did not know... An impulse, something that did not come from her—she did not know... Did she like another? Also no. All the young men she knew did not possess any salience that wounded her, did not have that *something* still indeterminate in her emotions and in her intelligence, which fascinated or subjugated her. She did not know well what it was, it did not get to come into her perception of her inclinations and the dominant quality that she wanted to find in the man. He was heroic, out of the ordinary; he was a force reaching towards great things; but in this mental confusion of our first years, when ideas and desires interlock and mix up, Olga could not gather and register this desire, this way of representing herself and to love the masculine individual.

And she had a reason in marrying without obeying her conception. It is so difficult to see clearly in a man of twenty-three years what she had dreamt of, that it was just as likely as Juno to be taken by a cloud... She married out of a habit of society, a little bit out of curiosity, and to enlarge the breadth of her life, and to sharpen her sensibility. She thought of all this rapidly and answered her godfather without any conviction:

—I like him.

The visit did not take much longer. It was convenient that it was quick, it was unnecessary to fatigue the attention of the convalescent. The two exited without hiding that they were full of hope, and satisfied.

At the gate, there were already some visitors waiting for the streetcar. As the vehicle was not at the stop, they walked along the façade of the madhouse. Along the way, they found an old black woman leaning against the fence, crying. Coleoni, who was always kind, went up to her:

—What’s the matter, my dear?¹²⁰

The poor woman laid on him a slow look, humid and sweet, full of an irremediable sadness, and answered:

—Ah! *Sinhô!*¹²¹ ... It’s sad... A son, so good, the poor thing!

And she continued to cry. Coleoni began to be moved; the daughter looked at her with interest and asked:

—Did he die?

—I wish he had, missie¹²².

And between tears and hiccups she told of how the son did not recognize her anymore, did not answer her questions; he was like a stranger. She wiped away her tears and concluded:

—It was fated.¹²³

The two went away, sad, taking in their souls a little of that humble pain.

¹²⁰ *Minha velha*, which literally means, “my old woman,” is an affectionate way of speaking to old people, though not exactly respectful.

¹²¹ Black Portuguese dialect, a corruption of “mister,” or *senhor*.

¹²² Black Portuguese dialect, *sinhazinha*, a corruption of *senhorazinha*, or the diminutive of *senhora*.

¹²³ *Coisa-feita*, literally, “A done thing.”

The day was fresh and the breeze, which began to blow, wrinkled the sea in little white waves. Sugarloaf Mountain lifted itself, black, motionless, solemn, from the foaming waves, and shadowing over this very clear day.

In the Institute for the Blind, they played the violin: and the plangent and slow voice of the instrument seemed to emerge from all these things, from her sadness, and from her solemnity¹²⁴.

The streetcar was a little late. It arrived. They got in. They descended at Largo Carioca. It is good to see the city during its rest days, with its closed stores, its narrow deserted streets, where steps resound like those of a silent cloister. The city is like a skeleton, its flesh, its agitation, is missing: the movement of cars, carriages, and people. At the door of one store or another, the merchant's sons ride velocipedes, kick balls, and one feels even more the difference between this and the city of yesterday.

There was not yet a habit of searching the picturesque suburbs and only finding, sometimes, couples going hurriedly to visit, as one does now. The São Francisco Plaza was quiet, and the statue, in the middle of that small garden that has disappeared, seemed like a small ornament. The streetcars arrived lazily at the plaza with few passengers. Coleoni and his daughter took one that would take them to Quaresma's house. There they went. The afternoon drew closer and the *toilettes* of the casual Sunday gatherings were already at the windows. Black men with bright outfits and great cigars or cigarettes; groups of errand-boys with ostentations flowers; girls in well-starched muslins; antediluvian top-hats side-by-side with heavy dark satin dresses, hoisted onto the fat bodies of sedentary matrons; and Sunday looked decorated with the simplicity of the humble, with the riches of the poor, and the ostentation of fools.

¹²⁴ It is ambiguous whether Barreto has in mind the mountain or Olga, since both *montanha* and "Olga" are in the feminine case.

Dona Adelaide was not alone. Ricardo had come to visit her, and they were talking. When her brother's friend knocked at the gate, he was telling the old lady about his latest triumph:

—I have no idea how this happened, *Dona Adelaide*. I don't put away my songs, do not write—it's Hell!

The case was to cast a bad light upon an author.¹²⁵ Mr. Paysandón, of Cordoba (The Argentine Republic), a very well-known author in that same city, had written to him, asking for samples of his songs and music. Ricardo was in trouble. He had his verses written down, but not the music. It is true, he knew them by heart, but to write them from one hour to the next was too much work for his strength.

—It's the devil! he continued. It is not about me; the problem is that we lose an opportunity to make Brazil known abroad.

Quaresma's old sister was not very interested in the guitar. Her education, which had shown her the instrument given to slaves or similar people, could not admit that he garnered the attention of people of such stations. Tactful, however, she supported Ricardo's obsession, even if she was beginning to have a bit of esteem for the troubadour of the suburbs. This bit of esteem was brought into existence by the dedication with which he demonstrated in her familiar drama. The little services and jobs, the steps towards and forwards, went well with Ricardo, who took care of them with diligence and good will.

Actually, he was in charge of his former disciple's retirement. It was hard work, this of liquidating a retirement fund, as is said in the bureaucratic jargon. The subject being solemnly retired, by decree, the thing runs through a dozen bureaus and functionaries until it concludes. There is nothing more grave than the gravity with which a functionary says to us: I am still

¹²⁵ The expression used here is, *pôr em maus lençóis*, which literally translates as, "to put under bad sheets."

making the calculation; and the whole thing takes a month, even more than that, as if it concerned celestial mechanics.

Coleoni was the major's solicitor, but not being well-versed in official matters, he handed his power of attorney to Coração dos Outros.

Thanks to Ricardo's popularity, of his frankness, he won over the resistance of the bureaucratic machine, and the liquidation was supposed to take place soon.

He had announced that to Coleoni, when he entered with his daughter. They asked, Ricardo as much as *Dona Adelaide*, for news about the friend and brother.

The sister had never really understood her brother, and with a crisis, she did not comprehend him more either; but she felt profoundly for him with the simple sentiment of a sister and wished ardently for his cure.

Ricardo Coração dos Outros liked the Major, found in him a certain moral and intellectual support that he needed. Others liked to hear his song, appreciating him like simple dilettantes; but the Major was the only one who knew deeply of his trials, and comprehended the patriotic reach of his work.

Besides that, he suffered particularly now—suffered in his glory, the product of the slow work of consecutive years. This was because a certain creole appeared singing *modinhas* and whose name began to gather force, and was already cited alongside his.

He became annoyed with the rival, because of two facts: first: because the subject was black; and secondly: because of his theories.

It was not that he had a particular grudge towards blacks. What he saw in the fact that a black man played the guitar was, that such a thing would diminish even more the prestige of the instrument. If his rival played the piano, and became a celebrity because of that, there was no

problem; on the contrary: the young man's talent would raise his status, through the means of an exalted instrument; but, by playing the guitar, it was the opposite: the prejudice that surrounded his person, demoralized the mysterious guitar that he so esteemed. And to have theories on top of that! Well! To want the *modinha* to say something and to have precise verses! How silly!

And Ricardo took to thinking about this unexpected rival who had put himself in front of him like an unpredicted obstacle in his marvelous ascent towards glory. He needed to drive him away, smash him, show him his indisputable superiority; but how? ¹²⁶

The *réclame* was not enough; the rival had employed that as well. If he had a notable man, a great literary man, who would write an article about him and his work, victory would be certain. It was hard to find one. Our literati were so foolish and lived too absorbed by French things... He thought about a journal, *The Guitar*, in which he would challenge the rival and crush him with a polemic.

That is what he needed to obtain, and his hope was in Quaresma, now put away in an asylum—but fortunately on his way to a cure. When he got news that his friend was better, he was joyful.

—I could not go today, but I will go on Sunday. Is he fatter?

—A little, said the young lady.

—He talked plenty, added Coleoni. He was even happy when he heard that Olga will be getting married.

—Will you marry, *Dona Olga*? Congratulations.

—Thank you, she said.

—When is it, Olga? asked *Dona Adelaide*.

—Around the end of the year... There's time...

¹²⁶ See footnote 28.

And soon enough there rained down questions concerning the fiancée and considerations for the wedding flowered.

And she felt vexed; she judged, the questions and considerations alike, as impudent and irritating; she wanted to escape the conversation, but they returned to the same subject, not just Ricardo, but old Adelaide, more loquacious and curious than usual. This torture which took place during all visits almost made her regret having accepted the proposal. Finally, she found a subterfuge, asking:

—How goes the General?

—I have not seen him, but his daughter always comes here. He must be doing good, but Ismênia is the one who is very sad, desolate—the poor thing!

Dona Adelaide then told the drama that agitated the little soul of the General's daughter. Cavalcânti, that Jacob of five years, had embarked for the countryside, three or four months ago, and had not sent a single letter or postcard since then. The girl felt that as a breakup; and she, so incapable of any profound feeling, of any more serious application of physical or mental energy, felt it hard, as something irremediable that absorbed all her attention.

To Ismênia, it was as if all marriable young men had ceased to exist. To arrange another was an unsolvable problem, it was work above her strength. What a difficult thing! Date, write little letters, make gestures, dance, go on walks—she could no longer bear it. Decidedly, she was condemned to never marry, she would be a spinster, supporting during her whole existence this state of being single, which terrorized her. She could almost not remember her groom's features, his brilliant eyes, his hard and strongly bony nose; independent of his memory, it would always come into her consciousness, when, in the morning, the postman would not deliver any letters, this other idea: not to marry. It was a punishment... Quinota would get married, Genelício was

already taking care of the papers; and she, who had waited for so long, who was the first one to get engaged, would remain damned, lowered below all others. It even seemed like both were content with Cavalcânti's inexplicable flight. How they laughed during the carnival! How they pointed their eyes at that premature widow, during the revelry of carnival! They put so much fury in the throwing of confetti and nuggets, in a way that it made the happiness of both very clear, that glorious march, and envied by her marriage, in the face of her abandonment.

She disguised her impression of their happiness very well, which seemed indecent and hostile to her; but her sister's contempt, who was always saying to her: "Go play, Ismênia! He is far away, go enjoy yourself"—filled her with rage, the terrible rage of weak people, which corrodes the insides, that does not break out in any way.

So, to drive away bad thoughts, she put herself up to look at the puerile aspect of the street, covered in varicolored pieces of paper, and the iridescent serpentines hanging by the balconies, but what really did good to her impoverished, compressed nature, were the carnival revelers, that noise of the *atabaques*¹²⁷, the tambourines, drums, and cymbals. Diving into this cacophony, her mind rested, and the idea that chased her for so long was prevented from coming into her head.

Besides that, those extravagant Indian costumes, those ornaments from a frankly savage mythology, crocodiles, snakes, tortoises, alive, very alive, brought up to the poverty of her imagination smiling images of clear rivers, immense forests, places of repose and purity that comforted her.

There were also those songs of screams, yells, in a hard rhythm and with a great melodic indigence, which came as a reprimand for the disappointment that flowed through her, stifled,

¹²⁷ A cone-shaped drum, which is used in many Brazilian dances and songs.

compressed, contained, which asked for an explosion of screams, but for which there was no remaining strength.

The groom had left a month before Carnival, and after the great *carioca*¹²⁸ festivity her torture was even greater. Without the habit of reading and conversation, without any domestic activity whatsoever, she passed her days laying down, seated, turning around the same thought: not getting married. It was sweet for her to cry.

When it was time for the post, she still had some cheerful hope. Perhaps? But the letter did not come, and she turned to her thought: not getting married.

Dona Adelaide, done telling sad *Ismênia*'s disaster, commented:

—This calls for some punishment, don't you think?

Coleoni intervened with gentleness and good will:

—There is no reason for desperation. There are many people who are lazy when it comes to writing...

—Well! said *Dona Adelaide*. It's been three months, Mr. Vicente!

—He isn't coming back, *Ricardo* said, sententiously.

—And she still waits for him, *Dona Adelaide*? asked *Olga*.

—I don't know, my dear. Nobody understands this young lady. She speaks little, talks in broken sentences... She is of a nature that seems without blood or nerves. One can feel her sadness, but she does not speak.

—Is it pride? *Olga* still asked.

—No, no... If it was pride, she would not refer from time to time to her fiancée. It is, above all, indolence, laziness... It seems like she is afraid of speaking so that nothing takes place.

¹²⁸ The name that is given to those who live in Rio de Janeiro.

—And what do the parents have to say about all that? Coleoni inquired.

—I do not quite know. But from what I gather, the General's discomfort is not great, and *Dona Maricota* judges that she should arrange "another."

—That would be best, said Ricardo.

—I believe she is out of practice, *Dona Adelaide* said, smiling. She was engaged for so long...

And the conversation had already turned to other subjects when *Ismênia* arrived to make her daily visit to *Quaresma's* sister.

She greeted everyone and all felt that she suffered. Her suffering gave more activity to her countenance.

Her eyelids were purple and even her small brown eyes had more shine and expanse in them. She inquired about *Quaresma's* health and afterwards everyone was quiet. At last, *Dona Adelaide* asked her:

—Have you received a letter, *Ismênia*?

—Not yet, she responded, with great economy of voice.

Ricardo shuffled in his chair. He hit his arm on a China cabinet, and a small porcelain figurine came falling to the floor, shattering into innumerable fragments, almost without a sound.

Part Two

Chapter I: At “Tranquility”¹²⁹

The place was not ugly, but it was not beautiful either. It had, however, the tranquil and satisfied aspect of someone who considers himself lucky.

The house was built upon a narrow flat ledge, a type of step, forming the ascent towards the tallest point of a small hill, which made up its back. The front, in between the bamboos of the fence, looked down on a plain that died at the mountains that came from afar; a creek with stale and dirty waters cut through the plains parallel to the street facing the house; up ahead, a train passed, wrinkling the plains with the band of its mowed line; a footpath, with houses on one and the other side, departed from the left and went until the station, crossing the creek and serpentine across the plain. Quaresma’s habitation had an ample horizon, looking towards the east,¹³⁰ the cool and humid hillside untouched by the sun,¹³¹ and it was cheerful and gracious in its whitewashed walls. Edified with the desolating architectural indigence of Brazilian field houses, it possessed vast living rooms, ample bedrooms, all with windows, and a veranda with heterodox colonnades. Beyond all that, the Tranquility Ranch, as it was called, had other buildings: the old mill, which still had an intact oven and a dismantled grinding-wheel, and a stable covered in sape grass¹³².

¹²⁹ Though “tranquility” is an appropriate translation for *sossego*, it does not convey all the meanings of the original. *Sossego* carries with it the meanings of serenity, quiet, restfulness, equanimity and, in a sense, balance. When something is *sossegado*, it is calm, and in its correct state, which is ironic for Quaresma’s semi-abandoned ranch.

¹³⁰ The word used here is *levante*, which can also mean, “the Levant,” and “fig mutiny, insurrection” (*Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês & Português*).

¹³¹ The author uses *noruega*, which literally means “Norway,” but it also carries the meaning used in the translation.

¹³² *Sapê* is used in the text, and *sapé*, is a type of grass used mostly for thatching.

It had not been three months since he had come to live in this house in that secluded place, two hours from Rio by train, after having spent six months in Longing Beach Asylum¹³³. Had he left cured? Who knows? It seemed like it. He was not delirious, and his gestures and intentions were those of a common man, though, under such an appearance, he could always be sure that he had not taken leave of everything, not just speaking of insanity, but of the dream he fed for so many years. There had been six more months of repose and useful sequestration, just as useful as the psychiatric therapy.

Quaresma lived there, in the asylum, resignedly, speaking with his comrades. There he met rich men who thought they were poor, poor men who wanted to be rich, sages speaking ill of wisdom, idiots who proclaimed themselves wise; but of all of them the one he most admired was an old man, a placid merchant from Pescadores Street who believed he was Attila the Hun. I, said the peaceful old man, am Attila, know that? I'm Attila the Hun. He had faint ideas about the personage; he knew the name and nothing more. I'm Attila the Hun, killed many people—and that was it.

The Major had left even sadder than he had been his whole life. Of all sad things to see in the world, the saddest is madness, the most poignant and depressing of all.

That continuation of our quotidian lives¹³⁴, with an imperceptible derangement, but profound and almost always unfathomable, incapacitating our lives, makes us think about something stronger than ourselves, which guides us, impels us, and in whose hands we are simple baubles. During many times and places, madness was considered sacred, and that there must be reason in this sentiment which overpowers us when, upon seeing a madman talking

¹³³ In the original, it is, *hospício Praia das Saudades*. For the complex definition of *saudades*, see note 81.

¹³⁴ *Aquela continuação da nossa vida tal e qual. Tal e qual*, translated as “quotidian,” literally means “such and which,” or “just as, just like.”

nonsense, we soon think that it is not him who is talking, it is somebody else, somebody who sees through him, interprets things for him, behind him, invisible!...

Quaresma left wrapped up, pierced with the sadness of the madhouse. He returned home, but the vista of familiar things did not take away the strong impression that impregnated him. Though he was never cheerful, his countenance presented more grief than ever, more moral dejectedness, and he had withdrawn to that smiling farmhouse, where he dedicated himself to modest horticulture, to rouse his spirits.

It was not he, however, who suggested he move; it was his goddaughter who brought up the idea for that sweet finish for his life. Seeing him in such low spirits, sad, and taciturn, without any will to go outside, cloistered in his house in São Cristovão, Olga directed herself to her godfather, mildly and filially:

—*Padrinho*, why don't you buy a ranch? It would be so good to have your own tillage, your orchard, your vegetable-garden...don't you think?

As taciturn as he was, he could not avoid immediately modifying his countenance at the young lady's suggestion. It was an old wish of his, this of taking food, happiness, and fortune from the land; and when he went on remembering his old projects, he responded to his goddaughter:

—It's true, my daughter. What a magnificent idea you have! There are so many unworked fertile lands throughout... Our land had the most fertile soil in the world... Corn could even give two harvests and four hundred for one...

The young lady was almost regretting her suggestion. It seemed to her that she would kindle in her godfather's spirit his already extinguished obsessions.

—There are fertile lands everywhere, don't you think, *Padrinho*?

—But like Brazil, he hurried to add, there are few countries who have such soil. I will do what you are telling me: to plant, grow, and cultivate corn, beans, English potatoes... You shall see my cultures, my vegetable-garden, my orchard, and then you shall be convinced of how fertile our lands are!

The idea fell into his head and soon germinated. The soil had been tilled, and only awaited a good seed. The cheerfulness he never had did not return to him, but his taciturnity went with his moral dejectedness, and the cerebral mental activity, so to speak, from other times returned to him. He looked into the current prices of fruits, vegetables, potatoes, manioc¹³⁵; he calculated that fifty orange trees, thirty avocado trees, eighty peach trees, other fructiferous trees, as well as pineapples (what a fountain of wealth!¹³⁶), squash, and other lesser products, all of which could give an annual income of more than four thousand, excluding expenses. It would be boring to put down here the details of his calculations, based in all that is established in the bulletins of the National Agricultural Association. He took in consideration the average production of each fruit tree, of each cultivated hectare, and also the wages, inevitable losses; and, as to the prices, he went down to the market in person to get them.

He planned his agricultural life with the meticulousness and exactitude he put into all his projects. He faced his problem in all its aspects, weighing the advantages and burdens; and, being very happy to see it monetarily attractive, not from an ambition of making a fortune, but from seeing in this another demonstration of the excellences of Brazil.

And in obeisance to this order of ideas he bought this ranch, whose name—
“Tranquility”—fitted so well with the new life he had adopted, after the storm that shook him for almost a year. It was not far away from Rio, and he had chosen it in this abused, abandoned way

¹³⁵ The author uses one of the variants for “manioc,” namely, *aipim*. Other variants for manioc include *mandioca*, *macaxeira*, and *uaipi*.

¹³⁶ In the original, *que mina!*, which literally translates as, “what a mine!”

to better demonstrate the force and power of tenacity and gentleness in agricultural labor. He expected great harvests of fruits, grains, and vegetables. From his example would emerge another thousand cultivators, with the capital soon surrounded by a true granary, verdant and abundant to dispense with the Argentines and the Europeans.

With what joy did he go there! He almost did not miss his old house in São Januário,¹³⁷ now the property of other hands, maybe destined to the mercenary business of rented homes... He did not feel that his vast library, the calm shelter for his books for so many years, would serve as a futile ballroom, witness quarrels of an alienated couple, family resentments—that room that was so good, so sweet, so attractive, with its high ceiling and smooth walls, in which the desires of his soul had incrustated themselves into, and all of it saturated with the exhalation of his dreams!...

He left content. How simple it was to live in our land! Four thousand *réis* per year, taken from the earth, easily, sweetly, happily! Oh, blessed soil! How is it that everybody wanted to be a public functionary, rotting on a bench, to suffer his independence and pride? How is it that it was preferable to live in cramped houses, without air, without light, breathing in an epidemic environment, subsisting on bad foods, when one could so easily obtain a happy, plentiful, free, happy, and healthy life?

And it was only now that he came to that conclusion, after having suffered the miseries of the city and the emasculation of government work for so long! It had come late, but not to the point that he could not acquaint himself with farm life and the fertility of Brazilian lands before he died. Then he thought that his desire for capital reforms in institutions and customs were vain. The main grandeur of the shaken homeland is a strong agricultural base, a worship of its most fertile soil, to lay the foundation for all other destinies it had to fulfill. With such fertile lands and

¹³⁷ *Quase não teve saudades de sua velha casa...*

varied climates allowing for easy and fruitful agricultural labor, this path was naturally determined.

And he then saw in front of his eyes the orange trees, flowering, fragrant, very white, lining the hillsides like a procession of brides¹³⁸; the avocado trees, with their wrinkled trunks, bearing the weight of the great green fruit; the dark *jabuticabas*¹³⁹ about to split from their stiff stems; the pineapples crowned as kings, receiving the warm sun's anointment; the squashes dragging themselves with fleshy flowers filled with pollen; the watermelons of a green so steady it seemed painted; the velvety peaches, the monstrous jackfruits, the *jambos*¹⁴⁰, the capitated mangos;¹⁴¹ and from all this surged a beautiful woman, with her bosom rich with fruit and with one naked shoulder, smiling thankfully at him, with the slow immaterial smile of a goddess—it was Pomona, the goddess of orchards and gardens!...

The first weeks he spent in Tranquility, Quaresma put himself to a rigorous exploration of his new property. There was plenty of land there, old fruit trees, a virgin forest with red sage, *bacurubu*, *tinguaciba*, *tibibuia*, *monjolo*, and other specimens¹⁴². Anastácio, who accompanied Quaresma, appealed to his memories as a former slave and taught the names of the jungle's specimens to Quaresma, who was very well read and knowledgeable of Brazilian things.

The Major soon organized a museum for Tranquility's natural products. The forest's and the field's species were tagged with their common names, and, whenever possible, with their

¹³⁸ The author uses an unusual word, *teoria*. The word's most used meaning is as "theory; abstract knowledge based on speculation" or "utopia, visionary or impractical system" (*Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês & Português*) which, considering Policarpo's ludicrous visions, is a deft, and very appropriate, use of the word.

¹³⁹ The *jabuticaba* is a dark, small, round berry. The peculiar thing about the *jabuticaba* is that the berry grows on the trunks and along the main branches of the trees, not on the tips of branches.

¹⁴⁰ The *jambo* is a pear-shaped, dark-red to pinkish fruit. The *jambo*, like the jackfruit, a "typical" Brazilian fruit, is not native to Brazil, but to Southeast Asia.

¹⁴¹ The heavy alliteration in this section is an attempt at replicating the alliteration of the original text. Note the recurrence of "s"s in the original: *os abacateiros, de troncos rugosos, a sopesar com esforço os grandes pomos verdes; as jabuticabas negras a estalar dos caules rijos; os abacaxis coroados que nem reis, recebendo a unção quente do sol; as abobreiras a se arrastarem com flores carnudas cheias de pólen; as melancias de um verde tão fixo que parecia pintado...* etc.

¹⁴² These are all trees native to Brazil, for which there is no translation.

scientific names. The shrubs, in a herbarium, and the timbers, in small stumps, sectioned longitudinally and transversely.

His vagaries¹⁴³ of reading took him to the natural sciences and his autodidactic furor gave Quaresma solid notions on botany, zoology, mineralogy, and geology.

Not only vegetables deserved the honors of an inventory; animals, too, but as he did not have enough space, and the conservation of some specimens demanded more care, Quaresma limited himself to making his museum out of paper, from where he learned the land was populated with armadillos, agoutis, *preás*¹⁴⁴, various snakes, rails, blackish rails, chestnut-bellied finches, *coleiros*¹⁴⁵, tanagers, etc. The mineral part was poor: clays, sand, and, here and there, some exfoliating pieces of granite.

Having finished this inventory, he spent two weeks organizing his agricultural library and a list of meteorological implements to aid him in the fieldwork. He ordered national, French, and Portuguese books; bought thermometers, barometers, pluviometers, hygrometers, anemometers. These came and were arranged and conveniently placed.

Anastácio watched all these preparations with astonishment¹⁴⁶. Why so many things, so many books, so much glass? Was his old boss becoming a pharmacist? The old black man's doubt did not last long. When Quaresma was reading the pluviometer, Anastácio, by his side, looked with fright, as someone who watched a spell being cast. The boss noticed the servant's fright and said:

—Do you know what I am doing, Anastácio?

¹⁴³ The author uses *azares*, which can also mean bad luck or chance.

¹⁴⁴ An animal that is also known simply as the Brazilian guinea pig.

¹⁴⁵ A small, black and white finch-like bird.

¹⁴⁶ The word used here is *assombro*, which also carries other meanings, such as, “fright, terror, dread” (*Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês & Português*). A related word, *assombração*, means “an apparition.”

—No, marster.¹⁴⁷

—I am checking if it rained a lot.

—Why'd you need that, boss? We know at a glance when it rains a lot or little... This planting thing is about weeding, putting the seed in the soil, letting it grow, and picking it...

He spoke with the soft voice of the African, without strong “g”s,¹⁴⁸ with slowness and conviction.

Quaresma took his servant's advice into consideration, without abandoning the instrument. Weeds and grass covered the plots. The orange trees, avocado trees, and mango trees were dirty, ridden with dead branches, and covered with a medusa-like head of mistletoe; but, as this was not the proper season to trim and cut the branches, Quaresma limited himself to weeding in-between the fruit trees. In the morning, soon after sunrise, he and Anastácio went off, with hoes at their shoulders to work in the fields. The sun was strong and harsh; summer was at its peak, but Quaresma was inflexible and courageous. Off he went.

It was something to see him covered with a coconut fiber hat, hitched to a large hoe with a knotted handle, this very small, myopic man, giving strikes upon strikes to remove a stubborn bit of Caesar weed. His hoe resembled more a dredge, an excavator, than a small agricultural instrument. Anastácio, alongside his boss, looked at him with pity and fright¹⁴⁹. By his own will, going to weed under that sun without direction?...There are such things in this world!

And the two went on. The old black man was nimble, quick, scraping off the creeping brush with habituated hands, under which impulse the hoe fell without any obstacle to the ground, destroying weeds; Quaresma was furious, tearing away clods here and there, taking too

¹⁴⁷ Like Aunt Maria Rita in Part 1, Chapter II, Anastácio speaks in a black dialect, though not as strong as Maria Rita's.

¹⁴⁸ The equivalent of the “rr” endings in certain Portuguese verbs. For example, instead of saying *plantar* with the “rr,” one would say something that sounds like, *plantah*, the equivalent of “plantin’.”

¹⁴⁹ The word used is *espanto*, which is also used to form the word for “scarecrow,” or *espantalho*.

long with each bush and, sometimes, when the strike missed and the blade of the instrument scraped the soil, the force was such that it raised an infernal dust, making one think that a cavalry division had galloped there. Anastácio then would humbly intervene, but in a professorial tone:

—It's not like that, *Seu Major*. You don't drive the hoe into the soil. It's light, like this.

And he would teach the inexperienced Cincinnatus¹⁵⁰ the way to make the old tool serve him. Quaresma would grab the tool, put it in position, and try with all his good will to use it in the manner that was taught him. It was in vain. The flange would hit the weed, the hoe would jump up, and he would hear a bird let out an ironic chirp: that-I-saw!¹⁵¹ The Major would become furious, try again, fatigue himself, sweat, fill up with rage, and hit with all his strength. There were many times when the hoe, hitting false, missed the ground, and would make him lose his balance, fall, and kiss the earth, mother of fruit and men. The pince-nez would jump off to rest on a pebble.

The Major would become infuriated and turned with even more rigor and energy to the task he had put himself to do. But such is the firm ancestral memory in our muscles to this sacred work of taking our sustenance from the earth, that it was not impossible for Quaresma to find the proper way of handling the ancient hoe. At the end of a month, he could weed reasonably well, not from sunrise to sunset, but with long rests from hour to hour that his age and lack of habit demanded.

Sometimes, the faithful Anastácio followed him to his break, and both, side-by-side, under the shade of a wide-crowned tree, seated themselves and saw the heavy air of those summer days that wound around the leaves of trees, and put the strong mark of morbid

¹⁵⁰ Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus (519 BCE–430 BCE) was a statesman of the Roman Republic. After his son was convicted and put to death, Cincinnatus was forced to live in a humble farm, until he was called back to serve as dictator. He resigned from this office soon after he defeated the quarreling tribes of the Sabines, Aequians, and Volscians. The parallel with Quaresma is appropriate, if not a bit comical.

¹⁵¹ The tyrant flycatcher's eponymous call is *bem-te-vi*, which literally means "well-I-saw-you."

resignation in all things. It was then, after around noon, when the heat seemed to narcotize everything and sink all life into silence, that the old Major well perceived the soul of the tropics, made up of those incongruences, like these he saw now, of a high, clear, Olympic, sun shining over a torpor of death, that he himself was provoking.

They had lunch in the same clearing, food from yesterday, quickly heated over an improvised stone oven, and work went on like this until dinnertime. There was a sincere enthusiasm in Quaresma, the enthusiasm of an ideologue who wants to put his idea into practice. He was not vexed with the first ingratitude of the land, with its morbid love of weeds and its incomprehensible hate towards the fecund hoe. He weeded and weeded always until he went to dinner.

He took longer with this meal. He talked a little with his sister, told her of the day's tasks, always consisting of evaluating the already cleaned area.

—You know, Adelaide, tomorrow the orange trees will be cleaned, there will not be even a stub of brush.

The sister, older than he, did not share in his enthusiasm for farm things. She regarded him silently and, if she had come to live with him, it was because of her habit to accompany him. Certainly, she esteemed him, but she did not comprehend him. She did not even approach understanding his gestures nor his internal agitation. Why had he not followed the path of others? Graduated and made himself into a deputy? He was so beautiful... To go around with books, years and years, to be nobody, what madness! She followed him to Tranquility and, to entertain herself, raised chickens, with the great joy of her farmer brother.

—It's right, she would say, when the brother told her about the things in his work. Do not go getting sick... Under this sun all day...

—What, sick, Adelaide! Do you not see how this people has such health...If they get sick, it's because they don't work.

Finishing dinner, Quaresma would go to the window facing the chicken coop and throw breadcrumbs to the birds.

He liked this spectacle, that fierce battle between ducks, geese, chickens, large, and small. It gave him a miniature image of life and the reward it held. Afterwards, he inquired about the life of the coop:

—Have the ducks been born yet, Adelaide?

—Not yet. There are still eight days left.

And soon the sister would add:

—Your goddaughter will get married Saturday, won't you go?

—No. I cannot... I will inconvenience myself, a luxury...Send a suckling pig and a turkey.

—Well, you! What a gift!

—What's wrong with it? It's a tradition.

The two siblings were talking just like that this day, in the dining room of the old farmhouse, when Anastácio came in to warn them that there was a gentleman at the gate.

No visitors had come knocking at his door since he had installed himself there, besides the poor people of the place, to ask for this or that, begging slyly. He himself had not gotten acquainted with anybody, and he was surprised to receive the old black man's notice.

He hurried to receive the visitor in the main room. He was already climbing the small staircase up front and going through the veranda further in.

—Good evening, Major.

—Good evening. Please, do come in.

The unknown man entered and seated himself. He was a common type, but his fatness was strange. It was not out of proportion or grotesque, but it had a dishonest aspect to it. It seemed like he had acquired it all of a sudden, and ate until he could no longer do so, with the fear of losing it from one day to the next. It was like that of a lizard that hoarded food for an ungrateful winter. Through the fat of his cheeks, one could perfectly see his natural, normal, thinness, and if he was fat, it was not because of his age—he was no more than thirty years old. He had not given himself time for all of him to fatten; his face was fat, but his hands were thin with long, fusiform, and agile fingers. The visitor spoke:

—I am Lieutenant Antonino Dutra, clerk of the tax collector's office...

—Some formality? inquired the fearful Quaresma.

—None, Major. We already know who you are; there are neither news nor legal exigencies.

The clerk coughed, took out a cigarette, offered another to Quaresma, and continued.

—Knowing that the Major came to establish himself here, I took the initiative to come and trouble you...It's nothing of importance...I believe the Major...

—Oh, by God, Lieutenant!

—I come to ask you for a small assistance, a donation, for the festival of the Conception, our patron saint, of whose friary I am the treasurer.

—Perfectly. It is quite fair. Despite not being religious, I am...

—This has nothing to do with anything. It is a tradition of the place, which we ought to maintain.

—It's fair.

—You know, sir, continued the clerk, people here are very poor, and the friary, too, in such a way that we are forced to appeal to the good will of the more remediated inhabitants.

Since now, then, Major...

—No. Wait a minute...

—Oh! Major, do not inconvenience yourself. It's not for now.

He wiped the sweat away, put away his handkerchief, looked for a while outside, and added:

—What a heat! I have never seen such a summer around here. Have you been doing well, Major?

—Very well.

—Do you intend on dedicating yourself to agriculture?

—I do, and it was because of it that I came to the country.

—Today, it is useless, but, in another time! This ranch was once a beauty, Major! So much fruit, so much flour! The soil is tired and...

—What, tired, Mr. Antonino! There are no tired lands... Europe has been cultivated for thousands of years, however...

—But there they work.

—Why should there not be work around here, too?

—That holds true there; but there are so many troubles in our lands that...

—What, my dear Lieutenant! There is nothing that we cannot win over.

—You will see in due time, Major. In our land, one does not live but by politics, outside of that, it's bye-bye!¹⁵² Even now, everything is held up because of the election of deputies.

¹⁵² The term used here is *baubau*.

As he finished saying that, the clerk launched from under his fat eyelids a searching look over Quaresma's ingenuous countenance.

—What's wrong with that? Quaresma inquired.

It seemed like the Lieutenant awaited that question, and he soon said, with cheer:

—So, you do not know?

—No.

—I will explain it to you: the government's candidate is Doctor Castrioto, an honest man, a good orator; but certain presidents of the District Municipal Chambers think that if they have to join with the government, it is only because Senator Guariba ruptured with the governor, and—*bang*—they presented some Neves who has had no service in the party and no influence... What do you think, sir?

—Me...Nothing!

The tax office clerk was amazed¹⁵³. There was in this world a man who, knowing and living in the municipality of Curuzu, did not trouble himself with the fight between Senator Guariba and the governor of the state! It was not possible! He thought and smiled lightly. Certainly, he said to himself, this rascal wants to remain in good standing with both of them, so that he can later fit in without any difficulty. He was taking a sardine with a cat's paw¹⁵⁴... This man must be a cunning cat; he needed to cut the wings of that stranger, who came from who knows where!

—The Major is a philosopher, he said maliciously.

¹⁵³ Politics is an *extremely* popular topic in Brazil and, at any time, many people know running candidates from the least significant deputies all the way to mayors and governors, not to mention that massive TV and street advertising for politicians constantly bombards people. One need only search on YouTube or Google for *horário eleitoral gratuito*, or “free electoral time,” the time slotted on TV for political commercials, to see the heights of the Brazilian political circus. The lower offices, such as that of city-councilman (*vereador*) are usually the ones that attract the most flamboyant candidates.

¹⁵⁴ Barreto uses an idiom here, *tirando sardinha com mão de gato*.

—I wish, Quaresma said, ingenuously.

Antonino still kept the conversation spinning around the grave question, but unable to penetrate the occult tensions of the Major, he became discouraged, his countenance darkened, and he said in a tone of farewell:

—So, the Major does not refuse in trying our party, isn't it?

—Certainly.

The two said farewell. Leaning at the veranda, Quaresma stayed to see him mount on his little chestnut horse, glittering with sweat, fat, and alive. The clerk distanced himself, disappeared beyond the road, and the Major remained thinking about the strange interest that these people had in political fights, these electoral quibbles, as if there was anything vital or important in them. He could not make out why a gripe between two big shots created such disharmony between so many people, whose life was so removed from the sphere of others. Was not the land good to cultivate and breed? Did it not demand a hard, daily struggle? Why did they not employ that effort that they put into that clamor of votes and proceedings, into the work of fertilizing it, of taking from it beings, lives—the same work as that of God and artists? It was foolish to think of governors and monkeys when our lives depend upon the soil, and she demands kindness, effort, work, and love...

Universal suffrage seemed to him a plague.

The train whistled, and it took him a long time to see it arrive. It is a special emotion for those who live far away, this of seeing the means of transport that put us in communication with the rest of the world. There is a mixture of fear and happiness. At the same time that one thinks about the good news, one thinks of the bad ones as well. The alternative anguish...

The train, or the vapor that comes as if from the unknown, the Mystery, and brings, besides general news, good or bad, also the gesture, the smile, the voice of people who we love and are far away.

Quaresma waited for the train. He arrived panting and stretching himself like a reptile around the station outside of the strong light of the setting sun. It did not take long. It whistled again and it left to take news, friends, riches, sorrows, to other stations beyond. The Major also thought for a while how brutish and ugly it was, and how the inventions of our time distance themselves so much from the imaginary line of beauty that our educators two thousand years ago bequeathed us. He looked up the road that led to the station. Someone was coming... He directed himself to Quaresma's home... Who could it be? He wiped his pince-nez and adjusted it towards the man who walked in a hurry... Who was it? That folded hat, like a morion, that long coat... Small steps...A guitar! It was him!

—Adelaide, there's Ricardo.

Chapter II: Thorns and Flowers

The suburbs of Rio de Janeiro are the most architecturally curious things. The topography of the place—capriciously mountainous—has certainly influenced the overall aspect, but they have influenced it also in the misfortunes of the buildings.

Nothing more irregular, more capricious, more without any plan whatsoever, can be imagined. The houses emerged as if they had been seeded by the wind, and the streets followed the houses. There are some streets that begin as wide as boulevards and end narrow as alleys;

they make turns, useless circuits, and appear to flee from alignment with tenacious and holy hatred.

Sometimes, they follow the same direction with irritating frequency, others distance themselves, and leave between them a long combined and closed interval of houses. In a section, there are houses piled upon each other in desolating anguish, and up ahead a vast field opens an ample perspective to our eyes.

In this way, the edifications march on, laid out at random with its consequent streets. There are houses of all tastes, built in all shapes.

One can see along a street a series of chalets, with doors and windows, thin partition walls, humble, and cramped; when suddenly we are faced with a burgher's house, those with compote bowls on the lacy entablature, raising themselves over a high foundation, with fenced-in mezzanines. Passing by this surprise, one looks and is faced with a hamlet with a wattle and daub wall, covered over with zinc, or thatch, around which a whole population spreads like ants; beyond, there is an old farm house, with a veranda and unclassifiable colonnades, appearing vexed, and wanting to hide itself from this wave of disparate and new buildings.

There is nothing in our suburbs that would remind us of the great famous cities in Europe, with their reposed and satisfied villages, their macadamized roads and streets, all taken care of. One cannot even find those gardens, well taken care of, combed over, because ours, if there are any, are generally poor, ugly, neglected.

The municipal cares are also varied and capricious. Sometimes, the streets have sidewalks, in some parts but not others; some ways of communication are paved and others of

the same importance are still in a state of nature. One finds here a small bridge, well taken care of, over a dry river, and further on one has to cross a stream over small, badly joined planks.¹⁵⁵

There are elegant ladies in the streets, with silks and brocades, carefully avoiding any mud or dust that would dull the shine of their dresses; there are workers in wooden shoes; there are dandies in the latest fashion; there are women in plain cotton; and like this, in the afternoon, when this people comes from work or from a stroll, the mixture appears in the same street, in a block, and almost always the most well-dressed is not the one to enter the best house.

Beyond that, the suburbs have other interesting aspects, not to mention the epidemic dating and the endemic spiritualism; sublets¹⁵⁶ (who would ever suppose!) are one of those unusual things. Houses that can barely fit a small family are divided, subdivided, and the minuscule rooms are thus obtained, leased to the city's miserable population. There, in those tiny boxes, is where one finds the least-observed fauna of our life, where the misery is Dickensian¹⁵⁷.

One cannot imagine the sad and extraordinary professions that dwell in those tiny boxes. Beyond the servants of departments, office pages, we can also find old bone-lace makers, empty bottle buyers, castrators of cats, dogs, and cocks, sorcerers, medicinal herb pickers; in short, a variety of miserable professions that our small and large bourgeoisies cannot guess exist. Sometimes, a whole family piles itself in one of those cubicles, and there are occasions where the head of the household goes on foot to the city because he lacks a train token.

Ricardo Coração dos Outros lived in a poor sublet in one of the suburbs. It was not one of the sordid ones, but it was a sublet in the suburbs.

¹⁵⁵ This is still true to this day. One need only look at multiple street photographs of any major Brazilian city.

¹⁵⁶ The term used here is *casa de cômodos*, or, literally, house of rooms. As is explained in the text, this is a regular house where the landlord divides each room into an apartment.

¹⁵⁷ Barreto writes, *sobre a qual miséria paira com um rigor londrino*, which literally means, "which misery is on par with a London rigor." I considered it appropriate to translate "London rigor" as "Dickensian" since the sense of both expressions appear to be the same, and leaving the original would sound strange to English-speaking readers.

For years he had lived and enjoyed living in the house mounting over a hill, looking out the window of his room towards an ample built extension that went from Piedade to Todos os Santos. Observing from such a height, the suburbs have their grace. The tiny houses, painted in blue, white, ochre, set against the dark green branches of mango trees, in-between, here and there, a coconut tree or a palm, tall and proud, all make the view good, and the lack of perception over the design of the streets puts upon the panorama a taste of democratic confusion, of perfect solidarity between the people who inhabit them; and the quick minuscule train, crosses all this, folding to the left, leaning to the right, very flexible in its great vertebrae of cars, like a snake in a heap of stones. It was from that window that Ricardo scattered his joys, his satisfactions, his triumphs, and also his sufferings and disappointments.

Even now he was there, leaning over the parapet, with his hand on his chin, gathering with the vista a great part of that beautiful, big, and original city, capital of a great country, from his soul, the ways which were true and he felt to be true, consubstantiating his tenuous dreams and desires in comprehensible verses, but if the plangent guitar did not give them any meaning, it did give them something of an attempt, a painful complaint of the country still in its infancy, still in formation...

What was he thinking of? He not only thought; he suffered as well. That black man continued in his obsession of wanting to make the *modinha* say something, and he had adepts. Some already called him Ricardo's rival; others already affirmed that the young man would leave Coração dos Outros far behind, and some even—ingrates!—already forgot his works, the tenacious work of Ricardo Coração dos Outros, for the elevation of the *modinha* and the guitar, and did not even name the unselfish laborer.

With a lost look, Ricardo recollected his childhood, in that country village, his parents' little home, with its corral, and the lowing of young bulls... And the cheese? That ever-substantial cheese, so strong, ugly as the land, but so nutritious that a slice was enough to make one full... And the parties? Longing...¹⁵⁸ And the guitar, how had he learned? His master, Maneco Borges, had he not predicted his future: "You will go far, Ricardo. The guitar wants your heart"?

Why, then, that preying upon, that hatred against him—to the one who had brought to this land of strangers the soul, the juice, the substance of the country!

And tears leapt out of his eyes. He looked a while towards the mountains, smelled the distant sea... The land was beautiful, it was gorgeous, it was majestic, but it seemed ungrateful and coarse in its omnipresent granite that made itself black and evil when it was not softened by the verdure of trees¹⁵⁹.

And there he was, alone, alone with his glory and torment, loveless, without a confidant, friendless, only as a god or an apostle in an ungrateful land that does not want to hear the good news. He suffered in not having a loving bosom, a friend with whom he would shed those tears that fell in an indifferent soil. He recalled the famous verses:

If I cry...the blazing sands drink the tears...

With that remembrance, he lowered his eyes a bit towards the land and saw that, at the house's cistern, a bit hidden from him, a young black woman¹⁶⁰ washed clothes. She lowered her body towards the clothes, carrying all her weight, soaping it all quickly, hitting it against the rock, and began again. He felt sorry for that poor woman, twice unhappy in her condition and her

¹⁵⁸ The author uses *saudades*.

¹⁵⁹ Dark granite mountains surround Rio de Janeiro.

¹⁶⁰ Barreto uses the word *rapariga*, which used to mean simply, "a young woman or girl," and now means "prostitute."

color. An afflux of tenderness came to him and, afterwards, he put himself to thinking about the world, in its disgraces, remaining for an instant enlaced in the enigma of our miserable human destiny.

The young woman did not see him, distracted with her work; and began to sing:

*Of thine eyes' sweetness
The breeze already envious is*

It was his. Ricardo smiled, satisfied, and had the desire to go and kiss that poor woman, embrace her...

And how were things? He was eased by that girl; it was her humble and dolorous voice that comforted her torment! Then he recalled the verses of Father Caldas, his happy predecessor who had an audience of noblewomen:

*Lereno brought joy to others
And never had happiness...*

At last, a mission!... The girl finished singing and Ricardo could not contain himself:
—You sing well, *Dona Alice*, you sing well! If you had not, why would I ask you for a *bis*?

The girl extended her head, recognized who had spoken, and said:

—I didn't know that you were there, sir, then I wouldn't sing within your sight.

—But what! I can guarantee you that it is good, very good. Sing!

—God forbid! So that you can critique¹⁶¹ me, sir!

Though he insisted plenty, the maiden did not want to continue. Sorrow seemed to have left Ricardo's thoughts. He went into his room and put himself to write at his table.

¹⁶¹ The woman says, *acriticar*, a solecism in the same vein as “misunderestimate.”

His room had the least amount of furniture. There was a net with a lace fringe, a pine table with some writing utensils on it, a chair, a bookshelf, and, hanging on a wall, the guitar in its canvas armor. There was also a coffeemaker.

He seated himself and he wanted to begin a *modinha* about Glory, this fleeting thing that one has and thinks he has it not, something impalpable, uncollectable like a breath that lances, burns, disquiets, abrades us like Love.

He tried to begin, got some paper, but he could not. The emotion was very strong, all his nature had been worn off¹⁶², scrambled, with the idea of his merit that they wanted to steal. He could not settle his thoughts, catch words in the air, feel the music buzzing in his ear.

The morning was in full height. The cicadas up front buzzed in the defoliated tamarind tree; the sky began to get hot, a light, tenuous, and fine blue. He wanted to leave, search for a friend, have some fun with him. But who was he? Only if Quaresma... Ah! Quaresma! This man, yes, he brought him comfort and solace.

It is true that lately his friend was little interested in the *modinha*; but even in this state he comprehended his purpose, the ends, and the reach of the work that he, Ricardo, had put himself to accomplish. Only if the Major had been close. But he is now so far away! He checked his pockets. His fortune did not reach two *mil-réis*. How would he go? He would find a ticket and would go. Someone knocked at the door. It was a letter. He did not recognize the handwriting; tore the envelope with emotion. Who could it be? He read:

“My dear Ricardo—Greetings—My daughter, Quinota, will get married the day after tomorrow, Thursday. She and the groom would like it very much if you showed up. If our friend

¹⁶² The word used here is *lavrada*, from *lavar*. This verb, while it can mean “to wear off,” has its primary meaning as “to cultivate, to till” and “to plough” (*Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês & Português*).

is not engaged with someone else, grab your guitar and come over here to have a cup of tea with us—Your friend, Albernaz.”

The troubadour’s countenance changed as he read the letter. Up until then, his expression was heavy and hard; when he finished reading the note, a smile played over his face, descending and rising, going from one expression to the next. The General had not abandoned him. To the respectable military man, Ricardo Coração dos Outros was still the king of the guitar. He would go and arrange to get a ticket with Quaresma’s old neighbor. He contemplated the guitar for a bit, slowly, tenderly, thankfully, as if it was a beneficent idol.

When Ricardo entered the house of General Albernaz, the last toast had been raised and the guests were directing themselves to the drawing room in small groups. *Dona* Maricota was dressed in mauve silks and her short bust seemed even more subdued, more battered, in that expensive cloth that seems to require elegant and flexible bodies. *Quinota* was radiant in her bride’s dress. She was tall, with more regular features than her sister *Ismênia*, but less interesting and more common in temperament and spirit, though she was coquettish. *Lalá*, the General’s third daughter, who had already adjusted herself to being a young lady, had a lot of rice dust, was always adjusting and fixing her hair-do and smiling at Lieutenant *Fontes*. A well esteemed and hoped for marriage. *Genelício* gave his arm to the bride. He was dressed in a badly tailored suit, which highlighted his hump, and he walked clumsily in tight, varnished shoes.

Ricardo did not see any of this take place, since when he entered, the attention was directed towards the General, in a second uniform from the grand days, which went badly with him, like the uniform of a national guardsman in Sunday clothes. But, the one who had an important, martial, and experienced air to him, looking aristocratic at the same time, was Rear Admiral *Caldas*. He was the godfather and he was irreprehensible in his uniform. The anchors

shone like the tack metals during inspections, and his whiskers, very well groomed, enlarged his face, and seemed to ardently desire the great winds of the vast endless ocean. Ismênia was in pink and walked through rooms with her doleful air, with her slowness, with her slow gestures, giving provisions. Lulu, the General's only son, wheezed in his Military College uniform, full of golden decorations and furs, since he had passed the year thanks to his father's protection.

The General did not delay in speaking with Ricardo, and the newlyweds, when the troubadour greeted them, thanked him very much, and even Quinota said—"I am very happy"—leaning her head to the side and smiling at the floor, a smile that filled with immense force the minstrel's sincere soul.

The dances began and the General, the Admiral, Major Inocência Bustamante—who had also come in uniform, with his purple honorary band—Doctor Florência, Ricardo, and two guests went to the dining room to converse for a while.

The General was satisfied. He had dreamed for many years of such a ceremony in his house and, at last, for the first time, he saw this longing realized.

Ismênia's day was a disgrace... That ungrateful man!... But why recall this?

The greetings were repeated.

—He's a strong lad, your new son-in-law, one of the new guests said.

The General took off his pince-nez, which was held in place with a gold chain, and, while he cleaned it, responded, looking in the manner of myopic people:

—I am very satisfied.

He put his pince-nez back on, righted the little chain, and continued:

—I believe I married my daughter well; a graduated lad, well recommended, and intelligent.

The Admiral added:

—And what a career! It's not because he is related to me, but at thirty two years being the first clerk of the Treasury, it's something unseen.

—Genelício is not in the Court of Audits, did he not pass? asked Florêncio.

—He passed, but it's the same thing, replied the other new guest, who was a friend of the newlywed.

In fact, Genelicio had arranged for a transfer and it was not just that which had made him decide to marry. He had written *The Scientific Synthesis of Public Accounting*, and found himself, without knowing how, surrounded by praise by the “press of this capital.” The minister, regarding the exceptional merit of the work, sent him two thousand as a prize, it having been the edition made at the cost of the State, in the National Press. It was a thick volume of four hundred pages, twelve-point type, written in an official style, with an abundant documentation of decrees and regulations occupying two thirds of the book. The first phrase of the first part, the truly synthetic and scientific part, was even very well regarded and praised by the critics, not just by the novelty of the idea, but also by the beauty of its expression.

It went like this: “Public Accounting is the art, or science, of conveniently keeping account of the expenditures and revenues of the State.”

Besides the prize and the transfer, he had already been promised the post of subdirector when the first slot opened.

Having heard all this said by the Admiral, the General, and the new guests, the Major could not help observing:

—After the military, the best career is that of the Treasury, don't you think?

—Yes... Well put, said Doctor Florêncio.

—I do not want to speak of the university students, the Major said hurriedly. These...

Ricardo felt the obligation of saying something, and released the first phrase that came to his lips.

—When one prospers, all professions are good.

—It's not like that, the Major replied mildly, smoothing over one of his whiskers. This is not to put down the others, but ours, eh, Albernaz? Eh, Inocêncio?

Albernaz raised his head as if he wanted to catch a remembrance in the air, and replied:

—It is, but it has its troubles. When there's some trouble, a fire over here, shots from there, one dies, another screams, like in Curupaiti, then...

—Were you there, General? asked the guest, who was a friend of Genelicio.

—I was not. I got sick and came to Brazil. But Camisão... you do not imagine what it was like—you know, don't you, Inocêncio?

—If I was there...

—Polidoro had the order to attack Sauce, Flores to the left and we fell onto the Paraguayans. But the scoundrels were well entrenched, had taken advantage of the time.

—It was *Seu* Mitre, said Inocêncio.

—It was. We attacked with fury. There was a fearsome thundering of cannons, bullets everywhere, the men dying like flies...A Hell!

—Who won? asked one of the new guests.

All looked at each other, amazed, except for the General, who judged his wisdom regarding Paraguay to be exceptional.

—The Paraguayans did, that is, they repelled our attack. And because of that I say that our profession is good, but it has its kinks...

—This doesn't mean anything. Also in the Siege of Humaitá¹⁶³...the Admiral went on speaking.

—Were you aboard, sir?

—No, I went later. Persecutions did not allow me to be designated a ship, because the boarding was the equivalent of a promotion... But in the Siege of Humaitá...

In the drawing room, the dances went on with animation. It was rare for someone to go in where they were. The laughter, music, and other things one could infer was happening did not distract those men from their bellicose preoccupations. The General, the Admiral, and the Major filled those peaceable bourgeois with fright, telling of battles at which they were not present and of valorous battles that they did not fight.

There is nothing like a peaceable citizen, well fed, having drunk some generous wines, to appreciate the narratives of war. He only sees the picturesque parts; the, so to speak, spiritual part of the battles, the encounters. The shots are volleys and if they kill, it's something of little import. Death itself, in these narratives, loses its tragic importance: only three thousand dead!

In the other stories, told by General Albernaz, who had never seen a war, everything was sweetened, a war out of the *bibliothèque rose*¹⁶⁴, a war in the popular vein, in which there was no bloodshed, brutality, or ordinary ferocity.

When Ricardo, Doctor Florêncio, the same man employed as the engineer of the waterworks, and Albernaz's two recent acquaintances were enraptured, open-mouthed, and envious of the imaginary prowess of these three military men, an honorary man, maybe the least peaceable of the three, the only man who had actually taken place in anything warrior-like—then

¹⁶³ Naval battle that began in February 19, 1868, and ended in July 25, 1868. The Brazilian Imperial Navy was victorious, and headed afterwards towards the Paraguayan capital, Asunción.

¹⁶⁴ A series of illustrated books published in France for a young audience, created by Louis Hachette in 1856. They had pink covers, hence their name.

Dona Maricota arrived, always diligent, elevated, giving motion and life to the party. She was younger than her husband, still had a whole head of black hair on her small head, which contrasted a lot with her enormous body. She came in breathless, and directed herself to her husband:

—So, Chico, what is this? All of you stay here and I'm to liven things up, to make the ladies lively... Everyone, to the room!

—We're going, *Dona Maricota*, somebody said.

—No, the lady of the house said quickly, now. Let's go, *Seu Caldas*, *Seu Ricardo*, gentlemen.

And she shoved each one by their shoulder.

—Hurry, hurry, because *Lemos's* daughter is about to sing, and, afterwards, you... Are you paying attention, *Ricardo*?

—Of course, madam. It's an order.

And they went. On the way, the General stopped for a while, went up to *Coração dos Outros*, and asked:

—Tell me one thing: how goes our friend, *Quaresma*?

—He goes well.

—Has he written to you?

—A few times. General, I would like to...

The General suspended his head, raised his pince-nez, which was beginning to fall, and asked:

—What?

Ricardo was intimidated by the martial air with which Albernaz asked him the question. After a slight hesitation, he responded to him in a burst, for fear of losing his words.

—I would like you, sir, to arrange a ticket for me, a pass, so that I can go see him.

The General lowered his head for a few instants, scratched his head, and said:

—This is difficult, but drop by the office, tomorrow.

And they kept walking. Still walking, Coração dos Outros added:

—I miss him¹⁶⁵, and I am a bit troubled... You know, sir, a man who has a name...

—Go there tomorrow.

Dona Maricota appeared up front and spoke irritatedly:

—You aren't coming!

—We're coming, already, said the General.

And, afterwards, turning to Ricardo, he added:

—That Quaresma would've been well, but he had to meddle with books... That's it! I have not touched a book for a good forty years...

They arrived at the room. It was vast. It had two great portraits in heavy gilt frames, furious oils of Albernaz and his wife; an oval mirror and some small pictures, and the decoration was complete. One could not judge the furniture, since it had been removed to give more space to the dancers. The groom and the bride were seated on a sofa, presiding over the party. There were one or two low-neck dresses, a few coats, some overcoats, and many tailcoats. Between the curtains of a window, Ricardo could see the street. The sidewalk in front of the house was full. The house was tall and had a garden; only from there could the curious ones, the snoopers¹⁶⁶, see

¹⁶⁵ Ricardo uses "*saudades*."

¹⁶⁶ The term used here is *serenos*, which can also be translated as dew, mist, or serene, but one of the figurative meanings of the word is a specific gathering, a crowd gathered *only* to look into a party.

anything of the party. Lalá, on a balcony, was speaking with Lieutenant Fontes. The General observed them and blessed them with an approving look...

The young lady, Lemos's famous daughter, was ready to sing. She went to the piano, placed the score, and began. It was an Italian *romanza* that she sang with the perfection and bad taste of a well-educated young lady. She finished. General, but cold, applause sounded.

Doctor Florêncio, who was behind the General, commented:

—This young lady has a pretty voice. Who is she?

—She's Lemos's daughter, Doctor Lemos from the Sanitation, responded the General.

—She sings very well.

—She's in her last year at the conservatory, Albernaz further observed.

It was Ricardo's turn. He occupied a corner of the room, grabbed his guitar, tuned it, and ran the scales. He then took on the tragic airs of someone about to act as Oedipus Rex, and spoke with a thick voice: "Ladies, gentlemen, and gentlewomen." He fixed his voice and continued: "I will sing 'Your Arms,' a *modinha* of my own composition, music, and verses. It is a tender composition, decent, and with an exalted poetry." At this moment his eyes almost left its sockets. He added: "I hope that there is no noise, because then the inspiration takes flight. And the guitar is an instrument that is very...ve...ry de-li-cate. Now."

There was general attention. He began. He began softly, plaintively, sweetly, and long, like the sob of a wave; then, there was a quick, skipping measure, in which he would strum the guitar. Alternating between one pace and the other, the *modinha* ended.

The song reached into the depths of everyone. It had run into the dreams of the young ladies and into the desires of the men. The applause was uninterrupted. The General embraced

him, Genelício stood up and shook his hand, Quinota, in her immaculate bride's dress, did so as well.

Ricardo ran into the dining room to flee from the compliments. They called him from the hallway: "Mr. Ricardo, Mr. Ricardo!" He turned around. "What can I do for you, madam?" It was a young lady asking for a copy of the *modinha*.

—Don't forget, she said, affably, don't forget. I like your *modinhas* so much... They are so tender, so delicate... Look, leave it with Ismênia and she'll deliver it to me.

Cavalcânti's fiancée approached and, hearing her name, asked:

—What is it, Dulce?

The other explained. She accepted her duty and, in her turn, asked Ricardo with a doleful voice:

—Mr. Ricardo, when do you intend to see Dona Adelaide?

—The day after tomorrow, I hope.

—Will you go there?

—I will.

—Then, tell her to write to me. I so want to receive a letter from her...

And she furtively wiped her eyes with her small lace handkerchief.

Chapter III: Goliath

On the following week's Saturday, the day in which the General's daughter would receive as husband the grave hunched-over Genelicio, the glory and pride of our civil service, Olga would get married. The ceremony ran with the pomp and wealth proper to people of her

status. There were some Parisian imitations of brides' *corbeilles* and other little *chic* details, which did not bother her, but which did not fill her with the larger satisfaction of ordinary brides. Perhaps she did not even have that.

She did not go to church in virtue of a certain determination of her will. She still did not find any motives within her for doing so, but, apparently, no extraneous will had influenced her in this decision. Her husband was the happy one. It did not have much to do with his bride, but with the turn that his life was about to take. He was rich, and being a doctor, full of talent in his grades and letters of recommendation, he saw a broad highway of triumphs in positions and in the clinical industry laid out in front of him. He had no fortune whatsoever, but he judged his banal title a charter of nobility, equivalent to those with which the authentic European noblemen polish the birth of Yankee¹⁶⁷ sausage-makers' daughters. Despite his father being an important farmer in some region¹⁶⁸, somewhere in Brazil, his father-in-law gave him everything, and he accepted everything without shame, with the contempt of a duke, a duke fully decorated with medals, receiving homage from a peasant who had not wasted away on the benches of the "academy."

He judged that his bride would accept him because of his marvelous title, his diploma. However it was not so much because of his title, but by his simulation of intelligence, love of science, and his grand dreams of wisdom. This image that she had of him only lasted a few instants; afterwards, it was the inertia of society, its tyranny, and her natural timidity towards rupturing the relationship that brought her to the wedding. She even thought, to herself, that if it

¹⁶⁷ The actual term used by Barreto. The term "Yankee," is used with regard to *all* Americans, not just those from the Northeast of the country.

¹⁶⁸ Being a farmer usually means owning a *latifúndio*, or plantation. The predominant agricultural method of Brazil was (and still is) a monoculture, in which one region would have, say, only coffee or sugar cane.

were not this man, there would be another just like him, and the best thing she could do was not to delay anything.

It was because of this that she would not go to church. It was in virtue of a certain determination of her will, though she did not perceive the constraint¹⁶⁹ of an extraneous compulsion.

Despite the pomp, she was far from being a majestic bride. Notwithstanding her purely European origins, she was small, very much so, next to the groom, who was tall, erect, with a radiant visage of happiness. She disappeared inside her dress, the veils of that obsolete ornament with which they adorn¹⁷⁰ young ladies about to marry. Of the rest, her beauty was not a great beauty—that which we demand of wealthy brides, following the model of classical patterns.

There was nothing Greek in her face, that authentic or second-hand¹⁷¹ Greek, or of operatic majesty. She had many irregular features, but her countenance was profound and proper. Not only the light of her great black eyes, which almost filled her whole sockets, made her expressive face flare, but her small, fine, mouth expressed goodness and malice, and her general air was of reflection and curiosity.

As opposed to custom¹⁷², they did not leave the city, and went to live in the former entrepreneur's house.

Quaresma did not go to the party, but he had sent the suckling pig, the traditional turkey, and sent a long letter. The ranch had absorbed him, the heat would pass, the rainy season would

¹⁶⁹ The word used here is *constrangimento*. It can mean “constraint,” but it is often used in the sense of “embarrassment, disconcertedness.”

¹⁷⁰ The author uses *arrear*, which can also mean “to harness,” emphasizing the way with which she is being treated more like a commodity than as a person.

¹⁷¹ Barreto uses *de pacotilha*. *Pacotilha* can mean either carry-on luggage, or something shoddy, of poor quality.

¹⁷² The custom being leaving the city to live in the wealthier suburbs. However, nowadays the periphery of great Brazilian cities are usually the most poverty-stricken parts of the city. A panoramic picture of contemporary Rio de Janeiro can show this, where the wealthy apartments are located close to the shore and densely packed, while the surrounding mountains and hills are covered with *favelas*.

come, seeding had to be done, and he did not want to distance himself from his lands. The trip would be brief, but even then, losing a day or two, it would be like deserting the battlefield. The whole orchard was clean and the beds of the vegetable garden were prepared. Ricardo's visit distracted the Major without side-tracking him from his agricultural chores.

Ricardo spent a month with the Major, and the visit was a triumph. The fame of his name preceded him; so much so that the whole municipality sought after him and invited him to parties.

He first went into town. It was four kilometers away from Quaresma's house, and there was a railway station there. Ricardo dispensed with the highway and went by foot, alongside the railroad, if this could be called a railroad at all, full of potholes, going up and down hills, cutting through plains and rivers by rickety bridges. The town!... It had two main streets: the old one, made so by the former marching of troops, and the new one, whose origin came from the connection of the old one with the railroad. They met at a T, the vertical arm being the path to the station. Other streets branched from these, the houses ordered close together at the start, then spacing out, spacing out until it ended in brush, in fields. The old street was called Marshal Deodoro¹⁷³, formerly Emperor Street, and the new one was Marshal Floriano¹⁷⁴, formerly Empress Street. From one of the ends of Marshal Deodoro Street, Matrix Street led to the church at the top of a hill, ugly and miserable in its Jesuit style. The Republic Square was to the left of the station in a field, which led up a badly laid out street with isolated houses, where stood the Municipal Chamber. This building was a great rhomboid of bricks, cornices, and iron-barred

¹⁷³ Marshall Manuel Deodoro da Fonseca (1827-1892), was the first President of the First Republic of Brazil. He became president by heading a military coup and deposing Emperor Pedro II, marking the end of the Empire of Brazil. Despite having declared a "republic," Fonseca actually became the first of many dictators of Brazil.

¹⁷⁴ Marshall Floriano Vieira Peixoto (1839-1895), was the first Vice-President and second President of the First Republic. He is often called the "Iron Marshall" and "Consolidator of the Republic."

windows, in the pure style of foremen. This poverty of taste touched the hearts of whoever could recall the edifications of a similar nature in French and Belgian medieval communes.

Ricardo entered a barbershop in Marshall Deodoro Street, the Rio de Janeiro Salon, and had a shave. He introduced himself, and the barber gave him some information about the town. There were a few bystanders. One of them took responsibility over Ricardo, and soon enough he had several acquaintances. When he returned to the Major's house, he already had an invitation to Doctor Campos's ball, the president of the Chamber, a party that would take place next Wednesday.

Saturday passed, and he went for a stroll into town on Sunday.

There had been a mass, and the troubadour watched the congregation leaving. Competition is never great in the country, but Ricardo could see some of those ladies of the country, lymphatic and sad, all dressed up, full of bows, silently descending the hill where stood the church, spreading through the streets, and soon entering their houses, where they would go through a week of seclusion and boredom. It was at the end of the mass that he was presented to Doctor Campos. Though he lived far away on his farm, he was the local doctor, and he came to town on his light two-wheeled carriage with his daughter, Nair, to attend the religious office.

The troubadour and the doctor chatted for a while his daughter, very thin, pale, and with long unfleshed arms, looked on with feigned vexation at the dusty street. When they parted, Ricardo reflected for a while on that offspring of the Brazilian outdoors.

He went to Doctor Campos's party, and others followed where Ricardo honored with his presence and the joy of his voice. Quaresma did not accompany him, but he took pleasure in his victory. If the Major had abandoned the guitar, he still went on prizing that essentially national instrument. The disastrous consequences of his petition had not shaken his patriotic convictions.

His ideas continued deeply rooted, so much so that he hid them, so that he would not have to suffer the incompetence and malice of men. He enjoyed, then, Ricardo's fulminating victory, which well indicated in that population the existence of a strong residue of our nationality, resisting the invasions of foreign fashions and tastes.

Ricardo received all honors, all favors, on the part of all parties. Doctor Campos, president of the Chamber, was the one who most heaped honors onto him. One morning, when he was waiting for one of the council member's horses to go for a stroll in Carico, he said to Quaresma, who still had not left for his field work¹⁷⁵:

—Major, it was a good idea to come to the country. You can live well and rise...

—I have no desire to do so. You know how strange these things are to me.

—I know... Yes... I don't say that you should ask, but, when it's offered, we should not reject it, don't you think?

—It depends, my dear Ricardo. I could not accept the responsibility of commanding a fleet.

—I wouldn't go as far as that. Look, Major, I like the guitar very much. I even dedicate my life to its moral and intellectual elevation, but if the president were to say to me tomorrow: "Mr. Ricardo, you will be a deputy," do you think, sir, that I wouldn't accept, knowing perfectly well that I wouldn't be able to strike its strings in a lament anymore? Of course! One should never let a good hand slip by, Major.

—Each one has their own theories.

—Certainly. Another thing, Major: do you know Doctor Campos?

—By name.

¹⁷⁵ Barreto uses a very specific word for this, *eito*. Another meaning for *eito* is, "plantation or field where Negro slaves worked" (*Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês & Português*).

—Do you know he is the president of the Chamber?

Quaresma glanced at Ricardo with a slight mistrust. The minstrel did not notice the friend's gesture and added:

—He lives a league from here. I already played for him at his home and today I'll go ride with him.

—You do well.

—He wants to know you. Could I bring him here?

—You can.

A comrade of Doctor Campos's, in this instant, was coming in through the gate, bringing the promised horse. Ricardo mounted and Quaresma followed towards the farm to meet his two employees. There were now two, for, besides Anastácio, who was not quite an employee but a member of the household¹⁷⁶, Quaresma had hired Felizardo¹⁷⁷.

It was a summer morning, but the continual rains of the two preceding days had attenuated the temperature. There was a great profusion of light and the air was sweet. Quaresma went walking among these murmurs of life, murmurs that came from the rustle of grasses and the twittering of birds. Red tanagers flew by, a band of finches; ani birds flew and placed small black blotches on the greenery of the trees. Even the flowers, these sad flowers of our fields, at this moment, appeared to have exposed themselves to the light, not only for vegetable fertilization, but also for beauty.

Quaresma and his employees now worked far away, making a clearing, and it was to help with this work that he had employed Felizardo. He was a lean fellow, tall, with long legs like an ape. He had a copper-colored face, a scruffy beard, and, despite a semblance of muscular

¹⁷⁶ Barreto uses a word specific to somebody who lives on a family's land, but is not part of the family, *agregado*.

¹⁷⁷ The name means somebody lucky and happy.

weakness, there was nobody more energetic than he to make clearings. Because of that, he was an untiring prattler. In the morning, when he arrived at around six o'clock, he already knew all the municipality's little intrigues.

The clearing's purpose was to win terrain over the brush, on the north side of the ranch, where the copse was invading. That space being obtained, the Major would plant half an *alqueire*¹⁷⁸ or a little bit more of corn, and some English potatoes in the spaces in-between, a new crop in which he had high hopes. He had already felled the trees and the clearing was open to prevent the spreading of a fire¹⁷⁹; Quaresma, however, did not want to set it on fire yet. He wanted to avoid the calcination of the terrain, the elimination of volatile elements. Now his work was to separate the thicker branches, to use them for firewood; the small branches and leaves he would take far away, where he would then burn them in small heaps.

This would take time, costing falls, his body badly habituated to stumps and vines. But it promised to improve the yield of the crops. During their work, Felizardo would tell the news to distract himself. There are those who sing. He talked, and it little mattered to him whether people paid him attention or not.

—People are going around very excited, said Felizardo as soon as the Major arrived.

Sometimes, Quaresma asked him some questions, attended to Felizardo's conversation, which was not rare. Anastácio was silent and grave. He said nothing: he worked and, from time to time, stopped in contemplation, in a hieratic posture out of a Theban mural painting. The Major asked Felizardo:

—What's going on, Felizardo?

¹⁷⁸ A "land measure = 48,400 m² in Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Goiás; 27,225 m² in the Northern States; 24,220 m² in São Paulo" and, "land into which one measure of 13.8 litres seed has been sown" (*Michaelis Moderno Dicionário Inglês & Português*).

¹⁷⁹ The specific term used for this clearing is *aceiro*.

His companion rested the thick red sage trunk on the pile, wiped the sweat with his fingers, and answered in his bland, hissing voice:

—Some political stuff... Mr. Lieutenant Antonino almost fought¹⁸⁰ yesterday with Mr. Doc Campos¹⁸¹.

—Where?

—At the station.

—Why?

—Party business. From what I hears: Mr. Lieutenant Antonino is for governor and Mr. Doc Campos is for senator... It's a mess, boss!

—And you, who are you for?

Felizardo did not answer right away. He picked up the sickle and finished cutting a branch that was tied around the trunk he was removing. Anastácio was standing up and considered for an instant the figure of his gabbler friend. He responded, finally:

—Me! I dunno... A naked vulture don't put himself in the middle of the crowned¹⁸².

This'd be more of a thing for you, marster.

—I'm like you, Felizardo.

—I wish, marster. Only 'fore yesterday¹⁸³ I hear that the boss's the Marshall's friend.

He drew back with his log; and, when Quaresma came back he inquired, frightened:

—Who said this?

¹⁸⁰ Felizardo says, *quase briga*. The grammatically correct phrase would be, *quase brigou*.

¹⁸¹ Felizardo speaks in a "rural" accent, not unlike the black dialect.

¹⁸² Literal translation of Brazilian idiom, *Urubu pelado não se mete no meio dos coroados*. Since the meaning of the idiom is not obscure, I have decided to leave it in the text.

¹⁸³ Felizardo says, *trasantonte*, which I believe to be a mangled version of, *atrás de anteontem*, literally, "behind the day before yesterday."

—I dunno marster. I just overhear that over there by the Spaniard’s shop, so much so that Doc Campos’s swollen like a frog by your friendship.

—But it’s false, Felizardo. I’m not his friend in any way... I met him... And never said this to anyone here... What, a friend!

—Wha! said Felizardo, with a wide, hard smile. The boss’s playing innocent¹⁸⁴.

Despite all of Quaresma’s effort, there was no way of removing from that childish head the idea that he was Marshal Floriano’s friend. “I met him during my time of employment,”—the Major said; Felizardo smiled from ear to ear and once said: “Wha! The boss’s crafty as a snake.”

Such stubbornness did not leave Quaresma unaffected. What did all that mean? Furthermore, Ricardo’s words, his insinuations in the morning... He counted the troubadour as a loyal man and a faithful friend, incapable of arming traps to make him feel bad; his enthusiasms, however, together with the desire to be a good friend, could delude him and make him the instrument of something perverse. Quaresma remained thoughtful for an instant, not removing the cut branches. Soon, however, he forgot about all of it and his preoccupations dissipated. In the afternoon, when he went to have dinner, he did not even remember the conversation and the meal passed by naturally—not very happy, nor very sad, but without any troubling shadow on his part.

Dona Adelaide, always with her cream *matinée* and black skirt, seated herself at the head of the table; Quaresma on the left and, on the right, Ricardo. The old woman was the one who always pulled the troubadour’s tongue¹⁸⁵.

—Did you enjoy your stroll, Mr. Ricardo?

¹⁸⁴ Felizardo uses the idiom, *varrendo a testada*, which literally translates as, “sweeping the sidewalk [facing a house].” The idiom would appear nonsensical to an English-speaking audience, so I have presented the figurative translation of the idiom.

¹⁸⁵ This is more or less a literal translation of the expression, *puxar a lingua*. The sense is quite clear: “to gently coax one to talk.”

There was no way she would say *seu*. Her “lady-like” education of another time did not allow her to use this widespread plebeianism. There were her thoroughly Portuguese parents who said *Mister* and she kept saying so without any affectation, naturally.

—Very much. What a place! A waterfall... How marvelous! Here, in the country, is where the inspiration lies.

And he would take on that attitude of ecstasy: the countenance of a Greek tragedy’s mask and a cavernous voice that rolled like muffled thunder.

—Have you composed much, Ricardo? inquired Quaresma.

—I finished a *modinha* today.

—What is it called? inquired *Dona* Adelaide.

—“Carola’s¹⁸⁶ Lips.”

—How pretty! Have you already written the music?

Quaresma’s sister was the one asking him when Ricardo was still lifting the fork to his mouth; he left it suspended between his lips and the plate, and answered with all conviction:

—Music, madam, is the first thing I do.

—You should sing it to us soon.

—But of course, Major.

After dinner, Quaresma and *Coração dos Outros* left for a walk around the ranch. It was the only concession that the friend made to Policarpo, in regard to his agricultural labors. He would always take with him a piece of bread, which he would crumble and spread near the chicken coop, to see the vicious dispute of the birds. That being done, he would stay for a while considering their lives: raised, kept, and protected for his own nourishment. He smiled at the chickens, grabbed the chicks, still featherless, very avid and alive, and took his time to appreciate

¹⁸⁶ “Carola” is a nickname for Carolina.

the turkey's stupidity; imposing, walking in a round, making presumptuous bursts. After that, he would go to the pigsty. He would watch Anastácio give out the feed, pouring it into the troughs. The enormous fat hog with great hanging ears would get up with difficulty and, solemnly, come to plunge its head into the trough; in another compartment, the piglets grunted, and grunting they came with their mother to wallow in the food. The avidity of those animals was truly repugnant, but their eyes had a quite deep human sweetness to them that made them sympathetic.

Ricardo little appreciated those inferior life forms, but Quaresma would stay for minutes forgotten, contemplating them in a long, mute interrogation. They sat on a tree trunk, and Quaresma looked to the deep sky, while Coração dos Outros told some other story.

The afternoon was ahead of them. The land already began to soften, at the end of that long ardent kiss of the sun. The bamboos sighed; the cicadas chirred; the doves moaned amorously. Hearing steps, the Major turned around. Godfather! Olga!

They barely saw each other, hugged, and when they separated themselves they were still looking at each other with clasped hands. And then came those stupid and touching phrases of satisfied encounters: When did you arrive? I did not expect... It's far... Ricardo looked on, enraptured with the tenderness between the two; Anastácio took off his hat and looked at the missus with his tender and empty African look. The emotion having passed, the young lady leaned over the pigsty, after having taken in the vista from north to south and east to west. Quaresma asked:

—Where's your husband?

—The doctor?... He's inside.

Her husband had resisted accompanying her quite a bit. It did not look good for him to have that intimacy with a man without a title, without a brilliant position, and without a fortune.

He did not understand how his father-in-law, despite being a rich man, in another sphere of existence, could have maintained and tightened relations with a small employee in a secondary division, and to even make him his daughter's godfather! That the contrary would be the case, that would be fair; but as it was, the whole thing seemed to undermine the whole national hierarchy. But, definitively, when Dona Adelaide received him with immense respect, with particular consideration, he was disarmed, and all his small vanities were filled and satisfied.

Dona Adelaide, an old woman, from the time when the Empire was arming that scholarly nobility, possessed within herself a particular reverence, an adoration for the doctorate. And it was not hard for her to demonstrate that to him when she saw herself in front of the doctor Armando Borges, of whose grades and awards she took particular notice.

Quaresma himself received him with the biggest marks of admiration and the doctor, enjoying his super-human prestige, went on talking pausefully, sententiously, dogmatically; and, to the proportion that he talked, perhaps so that the effect would not dissipate, he would turn his right hand with the large "symbolic" ring, the talisman, which covered the phalange of his right indicative finger, in the way of a marquis.

They talked a lot. The young man spoke of the political agitation in Rio, the revolt in the Santa Cruz fortress. Dona Adelaide spoke of the epic of the move, broken furniture, parted objects. At around midnight everyone went to sleep with a particular happiness, while the frogs rose in the nearby creek with their grave hymn to the transcendent beauty of the black sky, deep and starry.

They woke up early. Quaresma did not go to work straightaway. He drank his coffee and remained talking with the doctor. The mail arrived, and with it the newspaper. He tore the wrapper and read the front page. It was *The Municipality*, a local weekly newspaper affiliated

with the party in power. The doctor had gone somewhere; he took advantage of this situation to read the cheap paper. He put on his pince-nez, leaned back on the rocking chair, and unfolded the paper. He was on the veranda; the land breeze blew on the bamboos that lazily leaned. He began reading. The leading article was entitled “Intruders,” and it consisted of a tremendous censure to those not born in the place where they lived—“true foreigners that came to meddle in the particular and political life of the family of Curuzu, disturbing their peace and tranquility.”

What the devil did that mean? He was going to put the cheap paper away when it seemed to him that he read his name among some verses. He searched for the place and met with this ditty:

POLITICS OF CURUZU

*Quaresma, my dear Quaresma!
Quaresma, my dearest!
Let the potatoes be,
Let the beans rest!*

*You have no skill in this,
Quaresma, let it be!
Return to your old obsession
Of writing in Tupi.¹⁸⁷*

Eagle Eye

The Major was stupefied. What was that supposed to mean? Why? Who wrote it? He could not guess, could not find a motive and depth of a similar attack. His sister came near him,

¹⁸⁷ The original verses read:

Quaresma, meu bem, Quaresma!
Quaresma do curacao!
Deixa as batatas em paz,
Deixa em paz o feijão.

Jeito não tens para isso
Quaresma, meu cocumbi!
Volta à mania antiga
De redigir em tupi.

accompanied by his goddaughter. Quaresma gave her the newspaper with a trembling arm:

“Read this, Adelaide.”

The old woman soon saw the brother’s perturbation and quickly read it with solicitude. She had that ample maternity of spinsters, since it seems that the lack of children reinforces and enlarges that womanly interest in the pains of others. While she read, Quaresma was saying: but what have I done? what have I to do with politics? And he scratched at his already hoary head.

Dona Adelaide then said, sweetly:

—Relax, Policarpo. Only this? ... Well now!

The goddaughter also read the verses and asked the godfather:

—Have you ever gotten yourself into any of the local politics?

—Me, never! I will go so far as to say that...

—You’re crazy! the two women exclaimed at the same time, with the sister adding:

—That would be cowardice... A satisfaction... Never!

The Doctor and Ricardo came in and found the three in these considerations. They noticed the change in Quaresma. He was pale, with wet eyes, and he kept scratching his head.

—What is it, Major? inquired the troubadour.

The ladies explained the case and gave him the ditty. Ricardo then spoke of what he had heard in town. Everyone believed that the Major had come with the intent of being in politics, so much so that he gave alms, allowed the people to get firewood from his land, distributed homeopathic remedies... Antonino had affirmed that he ought to unmask the hypocrite.

—And you did not contradict him? asked Quaresma.

Ricardo affirmed that yes, but the scrivener did not want to believe him and reiterated his intent of attacking.

The Major was profoundly impressed with everything, but, in accord with his genius, he hid away his first impressions and he did not demonstrate any preoccupation when his friends were with him. Olga and her husband stayed at Tranquility for around fifteen days. Her husband, already appeared to be tired at the end of the first week. There were not many walks. In general, our hamlets are very poor in picturesqueness; there are one or two celebrated places, just as in Europe each village has its own historical curiosity.

In Curuzu, the famous promenade was at Carico, a distant waterfall, two leagues from Quaresma's house, towards the strips of mountains that barred the horizon. Doctor Campos had already locked relations with the Major and, thanks to him, there were horses and side-saddles that also allowed the young lady to go to the waterfall.

They went in the morning, the president of the Chamber, the Doctor, his wife, and Campos's daughter. The place was not ugly. A small waterfall, some fifteen meters high, falling in three parts, by the flank of the mountain below. The water shook during the fall, as it twisted and pulverized upon a great stone basin, roaring and booming. There was much greenery and, as in any waterfall, there was a vault of trees over the basin. The sun percolated down with difficulty and sparked the water, or rocks in small stains, round or oblong. The parakeets, of a clearer green, reposed on the branches as incrustations of that fantastic great hall.

Olga could see all this at will, walking from one to the other side, because the president's daughter was in a sepulchral silence the whole time and her father listened to medical news from her husband: how does one cure erysipelas nowadays? Does one still use emetic tartar often?

What most impressed her during this stroll was the general misery, the lack of tillage, the poverty of the houses, the sad, prostrated air of the poor. Educated in the city, she had the idea

that farm people were happy, healthy, and cheerful¹⁸⁸. Why were the houses not of bricks and had no tiles on their roofs if they had so much clay, so much water? It was always that sinister wattle and daub and that thrashing that always left the frame in view like the skeleton of an invalid. Why was it that, around those houses, there were no cultures, a vegetable garden, an orchard? Would it not be easy to do so, a work of a few hours? And there was no cattle, big nor small. It was rare to find a goat, a sheep. Why? Even in the farms, the spectacle was no more encouraging. Everything was saturnine, low, almost without the fragrant orchard or the succulent vegetable garden. Besides the coffee¹⁸⁹ and corn fields here and there, she could see no other cultivation, no agricultural industry whatsoever. It couldn't only be laziness and indolence. Man always has the energy to work for his own expense, for his own use. All the populations most accused of laziness, work, relatively. In Africa, in India, in Indochina, in all parts, couples, families, tribes, planted a little something for themselves. Could it be the soil? What could it be? And all these questions challenged her curiosity, her desire to know, and also her pity and sympathy for those pariahs, ragamuffins, badly housed, maybe even hungry, dejected! ...

She thought about being a man. If she were, she would stay there and in other locales for months and years; would inquire, observe, and, certainly, would be able to find the cause and remedy it. These were the living conditions of a Medieval peasant, and the beginning of our condition: it was La Bruyère's¹⁹⁰ famous animal that had a human face and articulated speech...

¹⁸⁸ Six years after the publication of *Policarpo Quaresma*, in 1918 Monteiro Lobato would publish a collection of short stories called *Urupês*, in which the now famous character Jeca Tatu is introduced. Jeca Tatu is a *caipira*, or redneck, who lives in the squalid condition described by Barreto. Lobato, however, when he writes of *caipiras*, believes that they are in this state of indigency because they are laden with disease, and if they were to be cured, they would have the energy to work. As he writes: "Jeca Tatu does not exist like this, he is like this for now" (*Jeca Tatu não é assim, ele está assim*). Barreto, I would argue, believes that the disease is not just biological, but mostly psychological.

¹⁸⁹ Brazil in the 19th Century did, for the most part, cultivate in large, monoculture plantations. The coffee plantations were mostly located in the South and Southeast regions, from Rio Grande do Sul all the way to Minas Gerais, all of them cultivated by black slaves.

¹⁹⁰ Jean de la Bruyère (1645-1696), was a French philosopher and moralist.

Since the next day she would go for a walk around her godfather's clearings, she took the advantage to interrogate Felizardo the tattler about this matter. The labor in the clearing was almost over; the great tract of land was almost completely clean and climbed a little in a ramp towards the hill that formed the ridge of the ranch.

Olga found the fellow down there, chopping the thicker logs with an axe. Anastácio was high up, at the border of the woods, collecting the fallen leaves with a rake. She spoke to him.

—Good mornings, yer *Dona*.

—So, do you work much, Felizardo?

—As much as I can.

—Yesterday I was at Carico, a pretty place... Where is it that you live, Felizardo?

—In 'nother side, by the town's road.

—Is your ranch big?

—There's some land, yes ma'am, yer *Dona*.

—Why is it that you do not plant for yourself?

—Wha, yer *Dona*! What would we eat?

—What you plant or what you earn from selling it.

—Yer *Dona*'s thinking one thing and it's another. While the plant grows, what then?

Wha, yer *Dona*, it's not like that.

He struck with the axe, the trunk slipped off. He put it in a better position and, before he let the axe fall, said:

—The land's not ours... And th'ants?¹⁹¹ ... We don't 'ave tools... This is good for Italians or Jurmans¹⁹² that the government gives everything... The government don't like us...

¹⁹¹ Felizardo says *frumiga*, which is the corrupted version of *formiga*, or "ant."

¹⁹² Felizardo says *alamão*, a mispronunciation of *alemão*, or "German."

He let the axe fall, firm, safely, and the wrinkled trunk opened in two parts, almost equal, of a clear yellowish color, where the dark pith began to show.

She returned wanting to drive away from her spirit that discord that the fellow had shown, but she could not do so. It was correct. For the first time she noted that the government's self-help¹⁹³ was only for the natives; the others had all the help and incentives they wanted, not counting their former education and support from patricians. And was the land not theirs? But whose was it then, all this abandoned land that was to be found there? She even saw closed farms, with the houses in ruins... Why this exploitation, these useless and unproductive plantations?

Her short attention span did not allow her to think any more on the problem. She went back home, as it was dinnertime, and she was starting to get hungry. She found her husband and her godfather in a conversation. The former had lost some of his mortician's looks, and he was even natural in some occasions. When she arrived, her godfather was exclaiming:

—Fertilizers! Is it possible that some Brazilians have such an idea? We have the most fertile lands in the world!

—But they get exhausted, Major, observed the Doctor.

Dona Adelaide was quiet and kept doing her crochet with attention, Ricardo was listening with wide-open eyes, and Olga interfered with the conversation:

—What indignation is this, *padrinho*?

—It's your husband who wants to convince me that our soil needs fertilizers... This is such an offense!

—Major, be certain, that if I was you, added the Doctor, I would try some phosphates...

¹⁹³ Barreto uses the actual words, "self-help," here.

—Certainly, Major, Ricardo replied mildly. I, when I began to play the guitar, didn't want to learn how to read music... What music! What nothing! Inspiration is enough! ... Today I see it is necessary... It's like that, he concluded.

Everybody looked at each other, except for Quaresma, who soon said with all the strength of his soul:

—Doctor, Brazil is the most fertile country in the world, and the most gifted with its lands and they do not need any “loans” to sustain its men. Be certain!

—There are more fertile ones, advanced the Doctor.

—Where?

—In Europe.

—In Europe!

—Yes, in Europe. The black lands of Russia, for example.

The Major considered the young man for a while and exclaimed triumphantly:

—You, sir, are not a patriot! These young men...

Dinner went on more calmly. Ricardo made some remarks about the guitar. At night, the minstrel sang his latest production: “Carola's Lips.” It was suspected that Carola was a servant of Doctor Campos, but nobody alluded to that. They heard him with interest and he was well praised. Olga played on *Dona Adelaide's* old piano, and, before eleven o'clock, they had all gone to bed.

Quaresma got to his room, undressed, put on a nightshirt and, lying down, put himself to read an old elegy of the riches and opulence of Brazil.

The house was silent; outside, there was not a single noise. The frogs had suspended their nocturnal orchestra for a while. Quaresma read and recalled that Darwin heard with pleasure this

concert of the mires. Everything in our land is so extraordinary! he thought. From the store-room, which was adjacent to his room, came a strange noise. He pricked up his ears and paid attention. The frogs restarted their hymn. There were low voices, others higher and more strident; one followed the other, and, in a one instance, all joined in sustained unison. They suspended their music for an instant. The major pricked up his ears; the noise continued. What was it? There were some subtle cracks; it seemed as if someone was breaking twigs, that they let some fall to the ground... The frogs began again; the regent gave a hammer-blow and soon came the low tones and tenors. They took a long time; Quaresma could read only some five pages. The frogs stopped; the noise continued. The Major got up, picked up the candleholder, and went into the room of the house from whence came the noise, as he was, in his nightshirt.

He opened the door, saw nothing. He went searching in the corners when he felt a sting on the sole of his foot. He almost screamed. He lowered the candle to see better and found himself with an enormous *saúva* ant¹⁹⁴ holding onto his thin skin with all its fury. He discovered the origin of the noise. There were ants that, through a hole in the floor, had invaded the pantry and were carrying away his reserves of corn and beans, whose receptacles had been inadvertently left open. The floor was black, and, loaded with the grains, they, in close formation, dove into the ground in search of their subterranean city.

He wanted to scare them away. He killed one, ten, twenty, a hundred; but there were millions, and at each strike the army grew. One came along, bit him, then another, and went on biting along his legs, feet, climbing his body. He could no longer stand it, screamed, stomped, and let the candle fall.

¹⁹⁴ The *saúva* ant is a leaf-cutter ant, notorious, in Brazil, for its ferocity and painful bites. They are also, as Quaresma later finds out, an almost indomitable pest.

He was in the dark. He struggled to find the door, found it, and ran from that infamous enemy that, perhaps, could not even be revealed by the sunlight...

Chapter IV: "I ask for strength, depart now"

Dona Adelaide, Quaresma's sister, was some four years older than he was. She was a beauty of an old woman, with a medium body, a complexion that began to acquire that grand patina of old age, a thick head of hair already wholly yellowed, and a tranquil, calm, and sweet look. She was cold, without imagination, of a lucid and positive intelligence; all in all, she was a great contrast to her brother. However, there was never either a profound separation nor a perfect understanding between them. She did not understand, nor searched to understand, her brother's substance, and, concerning him, nothing reacted with that methodical, systematical, and organized being but simple, mean, and clear ideas.

She had already reached fifty and he was marching towards that age, but both had healthy airs, little complaints, and still promised much life. The calm, sweet, and regulated existence that they had carried along until then agreed with the good health of both. Quaresma incubated his obsessions until he was beyond forty and she never had any.

For *Dona Adelaide*, life was a simple thing: it was to live, that is, to have a house, dinner and lunch, a wardrobe—everything modest, mean. She had no ambitions, passions, desires. When she was a young lady, she had not dreamt of princes, beauties, triumphs, not even of a husband. If she had not married, it was because she had not felt any necessity to do so; sex did not weigh her down, and she had always felt complete in soul and body. In their domestic

setting, her tranquil aspect and the ease in her green eyes, of a lunar emerald glow, framed and accentuated her brother's agitation, disquietude, and mortification.

That is not to say that Quaresma went around disturbed like a madman. Happily, he did not. In outward appearance one could even imagine that nothing perturbed his soul. However, if one examined more carefully his habits, gestures, and attitudes, one would soon find that that ease and placidity had no place in his thoughts.

There were occasions when he stared, for several minutes, at the far horizon, lost in a daydream; at other times, when he was working at the farm, he suspended all movement, locked his gaze at the ground, staying like this for a while, scratching one hand with the other, smacked his lips, then continued the work; and there even arose moments where he did not repress an exclamation or a phrase. Anastácio, during such instances, looked with downcast eyes at his boss. The old slave did not know how to fix his eyes anymore, and would say nothing; Felizardo would continue to talk about the flight of Custódio's daughter with Manduca, of the store; and work would go on.

It would be foolish to say that his sister did not notice any of this, even if they lived apart besides dinnertime and the first hours of the day. Quaresma would be in the fields, the plantations, and she superintending the domestic service.

Other people who knew them could not notice as well the Major's absorbing preoccupations, by the simple reason that they were far away.

Ricardo had not visited him for six months and his goddaughter and her father's last letter was a week old, he having not seeing the girl for quite some time, as much as the troubadour, and that had been almost a year ago, that is, since the time since they stayed at "Tranquility." During that time, Quaresma did not cease in taking interest in the good use of his lands. His habits had

not changed and his activities continued to be always the same. It is true that he had partially abandoned the meteorological instruments.

The hygrometer, the barometer, and its other companions were no longer consulted, nor the observations registered in a notebook. He had fared bad with them. Whether because of his inexperience and ignorance of their theoretical basics, or simply because it was fated, it was certain that all of Quaresma's previsions based upon his data had come out wrong. If he expected good weather, there came rain; if he expected rain, there came a drought.

This way, he lost a lot of seeds and Felizardo even smiled at his devices, with that coarse and cavernous smile of the troglodyte.

—What, boss! This rain thing comes when God wans¹⁹⁵.

The aneroid barometer's dial kept dancing in a corner unnoticed; the thermometer registering maximums and minimums, a legitimate Casella, hung abandoned at the veranda without receiving a friendly look; the pluviometer's pail was in the chicken coop and served as a water basin for the birds. Only the anemometer continued turning stubbornly, turning already without its thread, at the top of the mast, as if it were protesting against this contempt for science that Quaresma represented.

Quaresma lived like this, feeling that the campaign they had begun against him was occultly cultivated, even though he left the public eye. There was in his spirit and in his character a will to finish it at last, but how, if they did not accuse him, if they did not articulate anything directly against him? It was a fight against shadows, against mere appearances, which would be ridiculous to accept.

¹⁹⁵ Felizardo says, *qué*, which is the corrupted version of *quer*, or "wants."

Of the rest, the general situation that surrounded him, that misery of the rural population that he had never suspected, the abandonment of the lands to unproductivity, led his meditative patriotic soul toward anguished preoccupations.

The Major saw, with sadness, the nonexistence of the sentiment of solidarity, of mutual support, in that humble people. They did not associate with each other for any reason and lived separated, isolated, in generally irregular families, without feeling the necessity of union to work the land. However, they had close to them the example of the Portuguese, who united at six and more, and managed to cultivate together farms of some significance by plow, profiting, and living off it. Even the old custom of “*moitirão*” [no clue as of yet] had already been extinguished.

How to remedy this?

Quaresma despaired...

The affirmation concerning the lack of working hands seemed to him the affirmation of bad faith or stupidity, and the stupid one or the one in bad faith was the government who went about importing them by thousands, without worrying whether or not they already existed. It was as if in the field in which they put to pasture barely half a dozen heads of cattle, were introduced another three, to make more manure! ...

In his case, he well saw the difficulties, the obstacles of all sort that were there to make the land unproductive and remunerated. A fact eloquently showed him two aspects of the question. Having won over the mistletoe, the mistreatment, and abandon of so many years, the avocado trees managed to bear fruit, weakly it's true, but in a way superior to the needs of his home.

He was very happy. For the first time, money that the land, always the mother and always virgin, had given to him would pass through his hands. The problem was selling them, but how? To whom? In that place there were one or two who would want to buy them for insignificant prices. He decided to go to Rio and look for a buyer. He went from door to door. They did not want them, there were too many. They told him to look for a certain Mr. Azevedo at the Market, the king of fruit. There he went.

—Avocadoes! Well now! I have many... They are very cheap!

—However, said Quaresma, even today I inquired at a confectioner's and they asked me five *mil-réis* for a dozen.

—In such portion, you know, sir, that... It's that... Well, if you'd would like, send them over...

Afterwards, he tinkled his heavy gold chain, put one of his hands on the armhole of his waistcoat, and said, almost with his back to the Major:

—It is necessary to see them... Their size matters...

Quaresma sent them over and, when the money came to him, he had the proud satisfaction of one who has just won a great immortal battle. He fondled the dirty notes one by one, read well the number and the stamp, arranged them all one on the side of the other over a table and it took a very long time for him to have the disposition to exchange them.

To analyze the profit, he discounted the freight, by railway and carriage, the cost of the boxes, the salary of the auxiliaries, and, after this calculation, which was not hard, he concluded that he had made a thousand five-hundred *réis*, no more, no less. Mr. Azevedo had paid him down to the cent the quantity with which one buys a dozen.

Even so, he was no less proud, and he regarded that ridiculous profit as the object of a contentment bigger than if he had made a higher profit.

He returned to work, then, with redoubled activity. This year's profit would be higher. The current problem was to clean the fruit trees. Anastácio and Felizardo continued busy in the big plantations. He employed another man to help him in the treatment of the old fruit trees.

He put himself to work sawing tree branches, dead branches, and those that the weeds held close to their roots, with Mané Candeeiro. The work was arduous and difficult. Sometimes they would have to climb to the top of trees to extirpate the affected branch; the thorns tearing their clothes and injuring their flesh; and, in many occasions, they ran the risk of going aground, Quaresma and saw, or his comrade, altogether.

Mané Candeeiro spoke little, unless it was related to hunting; but he sang like a bird. As he sawed, he would sing field songs, ingenuous ones, where, surprisingly, the Major did not see the local flora and fauna, the customs of the field's professions. They were vaporously sensual and very tender, mawkish, even; by chance there would come one where a local bird would fly by. Then, the Major would listen:

*I will say farewell
As does the bacurau,
With a foot on the highway,
The other on the bough.*

This *bacurau* in the song particularly satisfied Quaresma's aspirations. The popular curiosity already began to interest itself with the environmental spectacle, already became emotional with it and our race thrust its roots into the great land it inhabited. He copied the song and sent it to the old poet from São Cristovão. Felizardo would say that Mané Candeeiro was a liar, since all the hunts after the peccary, jacu¹⁹⁶, and jaguars were tall tales; but he respected his

¹⁹⁶ A large ground-dwelling bird that resembles a turkey.

poetic talent, mainly in the challenge. The boy was good! He was clear and had regular, caesarean, hard, and strong looks that were a bit softened by African blood. Quaresma sought to find in him that odious aspect which Darwin had found in half-breeds; but, honestly, he did not find it.

It was with the help of Mané Candeeiro that Quaresma was able to finish cleaning the fruit trees of the old ranch that had been abandoned for almost ten years. When the work was done, he saw those mutilated trees with sadness, with some leaves here, without leaves there ... They appeared to suffer, and he thought of the hands that had planted them some twenty or thirty years ago, slaves, perhaps, melancholy and hopeless! ...

But it did not take long for the blossoms to burst and for everything to be green again, and the rebirth of the trees bringing the contentment of the birds in the coop, and other birds in general. In the morning, red tanagers would fly by, with their poor tweets, a species of bird so useless and of such beautiful plumage that they seemed to have been born for the sake of ladies' hats; the drab and dun doves in a band, searching for insects in the mowed ground; during the middle of the day, there were other tanagers¹⁹⁷ singing high up in tress, lined seed-eaters, the clouds of finches; and in the afternoon, how all of them gathered tweeting, singing, chirruping in the tall mango trees, cashew trees, avocado trees, sounding praises to the tenacious and fecund work of old Major Quaresma.

This happiness did not last long. An enemy unexpectedly appeared, with the daring speed of a consummate general. Up until then, they had shown themselves timid, only sending informants out.

¹⁹⁷ The term used here is *sanhaçu*, which can refer to any tanager, especially those of the genus *Thraupis*.

Since that attack on Quaresma's provisions, no sooner were they driven away, they reappeared. On that morning, when he contemplated his cornfield, it was as if someone had taken his soul, and he was paralyzed and the tears welled in his eyes.

The corn had already regrown. Very green, small, with the timidity of children, it had grown around half a palm above the ground; the Major had even ordered copper sulfate for the solution with which he would clean the English potatoes, to be planted in between the cornstalks.

Every morning, he would go there and see the cornfield already grown with their white corn blossoms and the cobs with their wine-colored tufts, oscillating to the wind; this morning, he saw nothing more. Even the tender stalks had been cut and taken far away! "It even looks like the work of people," said Felizardo; however, it had been the leaf-cutters, the terrible hymenopterans, infamous pirates that had fallen onto his work with a Turkish rapidity... He ought to combat them. Quaresma quickly went to the field, discovered the main openings of the anthills, and in each one, he burned a mortal insecticide. Days went by, the enemy seemed defeated, but, one night, going to his orchard to better appreciate the starry night, Quaresma heard a strange noise, as if someone were crushing the trees' dead leaves... A crack... And it was close... He lit a match and what he saw, my God! Almost all of the orange trees were black with immense leaf-cutters. There were hundreds of them on trunks and branches above, and they shook, moved, walked as if in heavily trafficked streets watched over by the population of some great city: some climbed, others descended; there was no confusion, running over, disorder. It was as if the work was regulated by the sounding of trumpets. Up there, some were cutting leaves by their petioles; down there, some sawed them into pieces that were, at last, carried away by a third group, raising them above their enormous heads, in long files through a clean track opened between the low weeds.

There was a moment of despondency in the Major's soul. He had not expected that obstacle, nor suspected it to be so strong. Now he saw very well that it was an intelligent, organized, and daring society, not to be trifled with¹⁹⁸. He recalled, at that time, Saint-Hilaire's saying: if we do not drive away the ants, they will drive us away.

The Major was not certain if these were the exact words, but the sense was there, and he was surprised that they only occurred to him now.

The following day, he recovered his spirit. He bought ingredients, and ordered Mané Candeeiro to open trails, to make sagacious efforts, to discover the central redoubts, the terrible insects' underground lairs¹⁹⁹. Then it was as if they were bombarding them: the sulfate burned, exploded in mortal, lethal volleys!

And from then on it was a battle without respite. If there appeared an opening, an "eye," soon they applied the insecticide, for no planting was possible even if these ants were extinct, since other ant colonies from neighboring lands and pastures would not delay in settling in his terrain.

It was torture, punishment, a species of vigilance directed at a Dutch dyke, and Quaresma well saw that only a central authority, some government, or a deal among the planters could ever bring into effect the extinction of that scourge that was worse than hail, hoar-frost, drought—ever-present, winter or summer, autumn or spring.

In spite of this daily fight, the Major did not lose his spirits and was able to harvest some produce from his previous work. If due to the occasion of the fruits his happiness was great, it was more expressive and profound when the season for pumpkins, manioc, and sweet potatoes

¹⁹⁸ C.f., the narrator's despondent description of the Brazilian *caipiras*.

¹⁹⁹ The exact word here is *panelas*, which literally means "pans."

came in carts, in open woven baskets. The fruits were, in part, the work of other hands—he had not planted the trees—but not these, these came from his sweat, his initiative, his work!

He went to the station to see those baskets, with the tenderness of a father watching his son depart towards glory and victory. He received the money days afterwards, counted it, and went about calculating the profit. He did not go to the fields that day; the work of bookkeeping removed him from that occupation. His attention, already quite worn out, did not favor this task with figures, and only at noon could he say to his sister:

—You know how much was the profit, Adelaide?

—No. Less than that of the avocados?

—A little bit more.

—Then... How much?

—Two-thousand five hundred and seventy *réis*, answered Quaresma, speaking syllable by syllable.

—What?

—That much. Only in freight, I paid a hundred forty and two thousand five-hundred.

Dona Adelaide remained for some time with lowered eyes, concentrated on her sewing. She then raised her eyes:

—Look²⁰⁰, Policarpo, it's best for you to let go of this... You have wasted so much money... Only with the ants!

—Well then, Adelaide! Do you think that I want to make a fortune? I do this to give an example, to elevate agriculture, to enjoy our most fertile lands...

²⁰⁰ Adelaide says, *homem*, which simply means “man.” In its figurative meaning, the word carries the sense of a person addressing another with some impatience, as in other expressions like, *Larga disso, homem!* (Leave it be!).

—That's it... You always want to be the queen bee... Have you ever seen the great ones making such sacrifices? ... Go and see if they make them! Histories... They get themselves into coffee, which has all the protections...

—But, I do them.

His sister turned back to her sewing, Policarpo stood up and went to the window that faced the chicken coop. It was a dull and irritating day. He fixed his pince-nez, looked, and from there he spoke:

—Oh! Adelaide! Is that not a dead chicken?

The old woman stood up holding her sewing things, went to the window, and verified with her sight:

—It is... It's already the second one that died today.

After this light conversation, Quaresma went back to his study. He meditated on great agricultural reforms. He would send for catalogs and he would examine them. He already had in mind a double plough, a sower, a seed-disperser, a machine for removing stumps, fences, all American, of steel, rendering the effective production of twenty men. Up until then, he had not wanted those innovations; the richest lands in the world did not need these processes which, to him, seemed artificial, to work. He was now, however, disposed to employ them as an experiment. On the other hand, as to the fertilizers, his spirit resisted. Turned soil, said Felizardo, is manured soil; it seemed to Quaresma a profanation to employ nitrates, phosphates, or even common manure, in a Brazilian land... An insult!

When he had convinced himself that they were necessary, it seemed to him that his entire system of ideas went under, and the motives in his life disappeared. He was choosing plows and

other “Planets,” “Bajacs,” and “Brabants” of various shapes like this when his small servant announced the visit of Doctor Campos.

The councilman entered with his joviality, his mansuetude, and his large body. He was tall and fat, a little paunchy, with brown eyes, with almost flowering cheeks, a straight and medium forehead; the nose, badly done. Being a bit swarthy, worn, and with already graying hair, he was what is called in those parts a *caboclo*²⁰¹, though his mustache was curly. He was not born in Curuzu, he was from Bahia or Sergipe, though he had inhabited the place for more than twenty years, where he had married and prospered, thanks to the genius of his wife and his clinical activities. With the latter, he did not spend much mental energy: he could treat the local illnesses with his reduced formulary, by knowing half a dozen prescriptions by heart. As President of the Chamber, he was one of the most notable people in Curuzu, and Quaresma particularly esteemed him for his familiarity, his affability, and simplicity.

—What ho, Major! How have you been doing? A lot of ants? We no longer have any at home.

Quaresma answered with less enthusiasm and joviality, but he was content with the Doctor’s communicative cheer. He continued to speak naturally and with ease:

—Do you know what brings me here, Major? You don’t know, do you? I need a small obsequy from you.

The Major was not surprised; he sympathized with the man and opened himself with offerings.

—As the Major knows...

Now his voice was soft, flexible, and subtle; the words fell sugared from his mouth, doubling upon themselves, congealing together:

²⁰¹ See footnote 45.

—As the Major knows, the elections will take place in these next few days. The victory is “ours.” All of our tables are with us, except for one... Even then, if the Major wants...

—But, how, if I am not a voter, don't meddle, nor do I want to get into politics? Quaresma asked, ingenuously.

—Exactly because of that, said the Doctor with a strong voice; and, then, softly: the section works in your neighborhood, it's there, in the school, if...

—So what?

—I have here a letter from Neves, directed to you, sir. If the Major wants to respond, and it's best to do so now, that there was no election... Do you want that?

Quaresma looked at the Doctor firmly, scratched his goatee for an instant, and responded clearly, firmly:

—Absolutely not.

The doctor was not angered. He put more unction and softness in his voice, adduced arguments: that it was for the party, the only one that fought for the elevation of the fields. Quaresma was inflexible; said that no, that such disputes were totally antipathetic, that there was no party, and even if there was one, he would not support something that he did not know whether it was a lie or a truth.

Campos did not show marks of annoyance, talked a little about banal things and said farewell with a lovable air, with his joviality surpassing possibility.

This took place on Tuesday, that day of the dull and irritating light. In the afternoon, there was lightning. It rained a lot. The weather only improved on Thursday, the day when the Major was surprised with the visit of a subject in a lamentable and old uniform, carrier of an official paper to him, the owner of Tranquility, as the uniformed man said.

In virtue of the orders and municipal laws, the paper read, Mr. Policarpo Quaresma, owner of the Tranquility ranch, was urged, under penalties of the same orders and laws, to clear and keep the throughways that abutted on public ways of the aforementioned ranch clean.

The Major remained for a while thinking. He judged such a citation to be impossible. Could it be? A joke... He read the paper again, saw Doctor Campos' signature. It was certain... But what an absurd citation this of cutting and cleaning the roads in an extension of a thousand two-hundred meters, since his ranch faced a path and in another side followed another extension of eight-hundred meters—was it possible!?

The former *corvée*²⁰²! ... An absurdity! Better that they confiscate his ranch. Consulting with his sister, she counseled him to speak with Doctor Campos. Quaresma then told her of the conversation that he had had with him days before.

—But it is foolish, Policarpo. It was he himself...

A light lit up in his thoughts... That network of laws, municipal orders, codes, and precepts, in the hands of these little regulators, these Indian chiefs²⁰³, were transformed into racks and strappadoes, into instruments of torture to torment their enemies, oppress the populations, pillage their initiative and independence, lessening them, demoralizing them.

By his eyes passed, in an instant, those yellowed and lean faces that leaned lazily against the gates of the stores; he saw those tattered and dirty urchins as well, with lowered eyes, disguisedly begging throughout the roads²⁰⁴; he saw those abandoned plots, unproductive, given to weeds and insects; he saw the desperation of Felizardo, a good man, active, and hard-working, without the spirit to plant a grain of corn at his home and drinking all the money that passed through his hands—this picture passed by his eyes with the sinister rapidity and brilliancy of a

²⁰² Unpaid labor done for a feudal lord.

²⁰³ The word used here is *cacique*.

²⁰⁴ This is still a real problem in Brazil, now mainly in large urban centers.

thunderbolt; and it only went out altogether when he had to read the letter that his goddaughter had sent him.

She was lively and cheerful. She told small stories about her life, her father's upcoming travel to Europe, the desperation of her husband the day she went out without her ring, asked for news concerning her godfather, Dona Adelaide, and, without disrespect, recommended that Quaresma's sister be very careful with the Duchesses' ermine mantle.

The Duchess was a great white duck, with snowy feathers that were soft to the eyes, who by her slow and majestic way of walking, with a tall neck and a firm step, earned Olga's noble nickname. The animal had died days ago. And what a death! A plague that had taken two dozen ducks, had also taken Duchess. It was a type of paralysis that began at the legs, then moved to the rest of the body. She agonized for three days. Lying on her chest, with the beak glued to the ground, attacked by ants, the animal only gave a sign of life through a slow oscillation of the neck around the beak, driving away the flies that were importuning her during her last hour.

It was something to behold, how that life, so alien to us, penetrates us in that instant and we feel its suffering, agony, and pain.

The chicken coop became like a devastated Indian settlement; the plague struck the chickens, turkeys, ducks; now in one way, then in another, it went cutting down, killing, until it reduced the population to less than half. And no one knew a cure. In a land whose government had so many schools producing so many wise men, there was not a single man who could reduce, with their drugs or prescriptions, that considerable loss.

These contretemps, setbacks, prostrated quite a bit that enthusiastic cultivator of the earlier months. However, it did not occur to Quaresma to abandon his intents. He acquired

veterinary compendiums and he was even about to purchase the agricultural machines described by the catalogs.

During an afternoon, however, when he was waiting for the ox yokes he had ordered for plowing, a police officer appeared at his door with an official paper. He remembered the municipal intimation. He was disposed to resist, he was not very bothered by it.

He received the paper and read it. It did not come from the municipality this time, but from the tax collector's office, whose secretary, Antonino Dutra, in accordance with the paper, ordered Mr. Policarpo Quaresma to pay five-hundred *mil-réis* in fine, for having sent the products of his harvest without paying the respective taxes²⁰⁵.

He well saw that this was petty vengeance; but his thoughts soon flew over to general things, taken by his profound patriotism.

Forty kilometers away from Rio, one would have to pay taxes to send some potatoes to the market? After Turgot, of the Revolution, still to have internal customs? How was it possible to make agriculture prosperous with so many barriers and taxes? If to the monopoly of the Rio middlemen were united the demands of the State, then how was it possible to remove any consolatory remuneration from the soil?

And the picture that had already passed by his eyes when he received the order from the municipality came back to him once more, gloomier, more somber, more lugubrious; and he foresaw the time when that people would have to eat frogs, snakes, dead animals, as the peasants did in France during the time of great kings.

Quaresma was recalling his Tupi, his folklore, the *modinhas*, his agricultural attempts—all this seemed to him insignificant, puerile, infantile.

²⁰⁵ Brazil's taxes are, to this day, notoriously steep and complicated to compute.

Bigger efforts were called for, more profound ones; it was becoming necessary to remake the administration. He imagined a strong government, respected, intelligent, removing all these obstacles, these fetters, Sully and Henry IV, spreading wise agricultural laws, elevating the cultivator... Then, yes! the granary would overflow and the homeland would be happy.

Felizardo handed him the newspaper that he asked him to buy at the station every morning, and said to him:

—Mistah Boss, tomorrow I won't be workin'.

—Certainly; it is a holiday... Independence Day²⁰⁶.

—It's not because of that.

—Why, then?

—There's a ruckus in de Court and they's sayin' they'll be a-recruitin'. I'm goin' to the bush... Nothin'!

—What noise?

—In de papuhs, yessir.

He opened the paper and was soon faced with the news that navy ships had insurrected and ordered the President to be removed from power²⁰⁷. He recalled his reflections of moments ago; a strong government, even tyrannical... Agrarian measures... Sully and Henry IV.

²⁰⁶ Celebrated on September 7.

²⁰⁷ The Revolt of the Armada went from 1893-1894. Thirteen generals sent a manifesto on September 6, 1893, to the President, Marshal Floriano Peixoto. I present some translated excerpts below:

“Citizens:

The Chief Executive, against the Constitution and the integrity of the Nation, mobilized the Army without discretion, put it in a war-footing, and poured them upon the unhappy states of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. Against whom? Against exterior enemies, foreigners? No. The vice-president armed Brazilians against Brazilians; raised up legions of supposed patriots, bringing mourning, desolation, and misery to all the corners of the Republic [...]

The Sentinel of the National Treasury, as it promised, the Chief Executive perjured, lied to the Nation, opening with sacrilegious hands the coffers of the public treasure for the politics of subordination and corruption [...]

Hail the Brazilian Nation! Hail the Republic! Hail the Constitution!

His eyes shone with hope. He said farewell to the employee. He went into the house, saying nothing to his sister, took his hat, and directed himself to the station.

He arrived at the telegraph office and wrote:

“Marshal Floriano, Rio. I ask for strength. Depart now—Quaresma.”

Chapter V: The Troubadour

—Certainly, Albernaz, it is not possible for it go on like this... Then someone puts himself in a ship, aims the cannons land-wards, and says: get out of there “Mr.” President; and the man leaves ? ... No! An example is needed...

—I, too, think in the same manner, Caldas. The Republic needs to remain strong, consolidated... This land needs a government that makes it respectable... It’s incredible! A country like this, so rich, perhaps the richest in the world, is, despite all this, poor and owes to the whole world... Why? Because of the governments we’ve been having, that have no prestige, strength... It’s because of this.

They went along walking under the shade of the great and majestic trees of the abandoned park; both in uniform and with their swords. Albernaz, after a short interval, continued:

—You saw the Emperor, Peter II... There was not a single cheap paper, pasquinades going around, that did not call him a ninny²⁰⁸ and other things... He went to Carnival... An unnamable disrespect! What happened? He left as if he was an intruder.

Capital of the Republic, 6 September 1893,
Custodian Rear-Admiral José de Melo”

²⁰⁸ The term used here is *banana*, the same term for the fruit. A *banana* is a stupid, weak-willed, and soft person.

—And he was a good man, observed the admiral. He loved his country... Deodoro never knew what he was doing.

They kept walking. The Admiral scratched his sideburns and Albernaz looked for an instant at all sides, lit a cornhusk cigarette²⁰⁹, and took up the conversation again:

—He died full of regret... He didn't even want to go to the grave with his uniform! ... Here, only between the two of us where no one will hear us: he was an ingrate. The Emperor had done so much for the whole family, don't you think?

—Without a doubt! ... Albernaz, you want to know something: we would've been better off during those times, say what they will...

—Who would say to the contrary? There were more morals... Where is a Caxias? a Rio Branco?

—And even more justice, the Admiral said firmly. What I suffered, it was not because of the "old man," it was that scoundrel... And everything was cheaper...

—I don't know, said Albernaz with a particular accent, why some people still want to get married... Everything's going down the drain!²¹⁰

They looked for an instant at the old trees of the Imperial Palace, through where they had crossed. They had never contemplated them; and it now seemed to them that they had never before laid eyes upon such proud, beautiful, tranquil, and self-assured trees as those that spread a vast, delicious, and soft shade under their great branches. It seemed as if they prospered because they felt the soil belonged to them; it was theirs, from where they would never be dislodged by the axe for the construction of hovels; and this sentiment had given them much strength to vegetate and an ample will to expand. The soil over which they grew, it was theirs, and they

²⁰⁹ Such cigarettes are now mostly popular in the countryside. They have a notorious strong flavor, and are sometimes called *estoura-peito*, or "chest burster."

²¹⁰ The idiom used here is *andar pela hora da morte*, which literally translates as "walking along the hour of death."

thanked the soil by extending their branches, serrating, and tessellating the foliage, providing good mother earth with coolness and protection against the sun's inclemency.

The mango trees were the most thankful: their long boughs, full of leaves, almost kissed the ground. The jackfruit trees stretched themselves; the bamboos bent down, from one side of the alley to the other, and covered the earth with green vaults.

The old imperial edifice raised itself upon a small hill. They were looking at its back, the oldest part of the building, in the style of King John²¹¹, with the clock tower a little distanced and separated from the body of the building.

It was not a beautiful palace, it did not have a single trace of beauty, it was even poor and monotonous. The narrow windows of that old façade, the low-ceilinged stories all made a bad impression; all of it, however, had some kind of security in itself, an air of confidence that is uncommon in these habitations, a certain dignity, something belonging to one who feels alive, not for an instant, but for years, for centuries... The palm trees surrounded it, erect, firm, with their grand green plumage, very tall, elongated towards the sky...

They were like the former guard of the imperial residence, a proud guard of their master and his function.

Albernaz broke the silence:

—Where will all this end up, Caldas?

—No clue.

—The “man” must be in trouble... He already had Rio Grande, now Custódio... Huhn!

—Power is power, Albernaz.

²¹¹ A style of baroque architecture originated at the time of John V (1689-1750). The baroque style reached its zenith in Brazil with Aleijadinho (1738-1814), literally, Little Cripple, whose real name was Antonio Francisco Lisboa, a mulatto sculptor and architect. The Quinta da Boa Vista is now a park, natural history museum, and home to the Zoological Garden of Rio de Janeiro.

They were walking towards São Cristovão Station. They crossed the old imperial park transversely, from the gate of the Chancel up to the railway line. It was morning, the day was limpid and fresh.

They walked with small safe steps, but with no hurry. Soon after they had left the Quinta, they came up to a soldier sleeping under a bush. Albernaz had the desire to wake him up: comrade! comrade! The soldier stood up, startled out of sleep, and, faced with those two superior officers, quickly righted himself, gave them the proper salute, and stayed with a hand on his cap, firm for a while, but soon it slackened.

—Lower your hand, said the General. What are you doing here?

Albernaz spoke in a rough and commanding voice. The soldier, speaking in a frightened tone, explained that he was doing his rounds around the beaches all night. His unit had retired to the barracks; he had obtained license to go home, but sleep was too much with him, and he was resting there for a while.

—So, how goes things? asked the General.

—I don't know, nossir.

—The "men," have they desisted or not?

The General was for an instant examining the soldier. He was white, and had blondish hair, a dirty and degraded blonde; his features were ugly: his cheekbones salient, he had a bony forehead, and the rest of him was clumsy and all angles.

—Where are you from? Albernaz went on asking him.

—From Piauí, yessir²¹².

—From the capital?

²¹² A state in the Northeast of Brazil. The state is notoriously poor, as is the whole region, one of the reasons for the terrified soldier's dialect.

—From the badlands²¹³ of Paranaguá, yesssir.

The Admiral, up until then, had not interrogated the soldier, who remained afraid, stuttering his answers. Caldas, to calm him down, decided to speak softly to him.

—You don't know, comrade, which are the ships that "they" have?

—The *Aquidabã*... The *Luci*.

—The *Luci* is not a ship.

—It's true, yesssir. But the *Aquidabã*... a big bunch of 'em, yesssir.

The General then intervened. He spoke to him with kindness, almost paternally, and changed his addresses from formal to informal²¹⁴, which seems softer and more intimate when one speaks to inferiors:

—Well, relax, son. It's best that you get home... Somebody can steal your saber and you're on duty²¹⁵.

The two generals continued on their way and, soon, were at the station's platform. The small station had reasonable movement. A great number of officials, active, reformed, honorary, were all in the vicinity, and the posters called them all to report to the appropriate authorities. Albernaz and Caldas crossed the platform surrounded by salutes. The General was better known, by reason of his station, but not the Admiral. When they went by, they heard someone asking: "Who is this Admiral?" This made Caldas happy, and a little proud of his post and incognizance.

²¹³ The *sertão* is the highland areas in the Northern and Northeastern part of Brazil, away from the coastline. The region is very arid and poor, and from the mid 19th to the early 20th century, the area was ridden with criminals called *cangaceiros*, a bit like the American West in the late 19th century.

²¹⁴ The change is from *você* to *tu*. In contemporary Brazilian Portuguese, most people do not make the distinction between *você* and *tu* any longer, and both addresses are used interchangeably, with some dialects preferring one or the other—for example, the *Paulistano* dialect of São Paulo uses *você*, while *Cariocas* of Rio use *tu* more often. In fact the frequent use of *tu* is more often seen in formal writing. When such changes occur, I add more contractions and looser constructions.

²¹⁵ The term used here is *inácia*, which is military slang for "duty."

There was a solitary woman at the station, a young lady. Albernaz looked at her and remembered his daughter Ismênia in an instant ... Poor thing! ... Would she ever get well?

Those obsessions? When would she stop? Tears came to him, but he retained them with force.

He had already taken her to half a dozen doctors and none of them could end that flight of her reason, which seemed to be leaving little by little the young lady's brain.

The racket of an express train, shaking its iron fittings with great crashes, whistling furiously and leaving the heavy smoke hanging over the air it ripped through, drove him away from thinking about his daughter. The monster passed by, laden with soldiers in uniforms, and the rails, after its passing, still shook.

Bustamante appeared; he lived in the surrounding area and had come to take a train, to present himself for duty. He brought his old uniform from Paraguay, tailored in the manner of Crimean warriors. The cap was coned and advanced forwards; and, with that purple band and short little tailed coat, he appeared to have left, escaped, jumped out of a Vitor Meirelles²¹⁶ canvas.

—So, you're here? ... What is this? inquired the honorary.

—We came through the Quinta, said the Admiral.

—Nothing, my friends, these trams run very close to the sea... Death does not matter to me, but I would like to die fighting; this thing of dying about, doing nothing, without knowing how, doesn't fit me...

The General had spoken a bit loudly and the young officers, who were nearby, looked at him with badly disguised censure. Albernaz perceived this and immediately added:

²¹⁶ Vitor Meirelles de Lima (1832-1903), was a Brazilian historical painter. His most famous piece is "The First Mass in Brazil" (1861).

—I know this business of bullets well ... I already saw much gunfire... You know, Bustamante, that in Curuzu...

—It was a terrible thing, added Bustamante.

The train was mooring at the station. It was coming in tamely, slowly; the locomotive, very black, puffing, unctuously sweating, with its great lantern up front, a cyclops' eye, advancing like a supernatural apparition. It was arriving; the whole caboose shook and it stopped at last.

It was full, many officer's uniforms; at that time Rio must have had a garrison of a hundred thousand men. The military men chattered happily, and the civilians came shut up and abated, and even frightened. If they spoke, it was in whispers, looking carefully at the rows behind them. The city was laden with secret police agents, "members" of the Holy Republican Office, and accusations were the currency to obtain posts and rewards.

The least complaint was needed to lose a job, liberty, and—who knew?—life as well. We were still at the beginning of the revolt, but the regime had already published its prologue and everybody was warned. The chief of police had organized his list of suspects. No distinction was made between positions and talents. A poor office servant and the influential senator; a lecturer and a simple office employee deserved the same persecutions by the government. It was a time when petty revenges surged, retaliations against minor infringements... Everyone commanded; authority was in all hands.

In the name of Marshal Floriano, any officer, or even citizen, without any public function whatsoever, had the power to arrest, and woe to whoever fell into the prisons, for there he remained forgotten, suffering the anguishing tortures arising out of an Inquisition-like imagination. The functionaries competed in flattery, sycophantism... It was a terror, a splenetic

terror, without any courage, bloody, cloak-and-dagger, without grandeur, without apology, without reason, and without responsibilities... There were executions; but there never was a Fouquier-Tinville²¹⁷.

The military men were content, especially the little ones, the ensigns, and the captains. To the majority of them satisfaction came from the conviction that they would extend their authority over the platoon and the company to the whole herd of civilians; but, in others, there was a much more pure sentiment, disinterest, and sincerity. They were the adepts of this nefarious and hypocritical positivism, a tyrannical pedantism, limited and narrow, that justified all violence, all assassinations, all ferocities in the name of the maintenance of order, the necessary condition, so it says, for progress and also for the advent of the normal regime, the religion of humanity, the adoration of the grand fetish, with the nasal music of cornets and detestable verses, paradise, finally, with inscriptions in phonetic writing and the electorate shoed with rubber-soled shoes!

...²¹⁸

The positivists discussed and cited mechanical theorems to justify their ideas of government, alike in everything to an oriental emirate.

The mathematics of positivism was always pure jabbering, which at that time frightened everyone. There were even those who were convinced that this mathematics had been made and created for positivism itself, as if the Bible had been created uniquely for the Catholic Church, and not for the Anglican as well. Its prestige was, however, enormous.

The train ran on, still stopping at a station, and went up to Republic Square. The Admiral, leaning against the walls, next went to the Marine Arsenal; Albernaz and Bustamante went into

²¹⁷ Antoine Quentin Fouquier-Tinville (1746–1795), was a French lawyer during the Revolution, and its Reign of Terror. He was appointed to the office of public prosecutor.

²¹⁸ The positivist ideology referred to here is reflected, as was said in a previous footnote (Part 1, ft note 100), in the Brazilian flag, whence the words *Ordem e Progresso*, “Order and Progress,” are inscribed.

the Headquarters. They penetrated into the great house, amidst the clinking of swords, the playing of cornets. The great courtyard was full of soldiers, flags, cannons, bundles of upright guns, bayonets gleaming in the oblique sun...

In the upper floor, within the proximity of the minister's cabinet, there was a come and go of uniforms, medals, varicolored fabrics, uniforms of various companies and militias, among which the dark costumes of the civilians was as importune as flies. Among them mixed officers from the National Guard, the police, the navy, the army, firemen, and newly surging patriotic battalions.

They presented themselves and, after having done so to the Assistant General and Minister of War, all in one instant, they went on talking in the hallways, with much pleasure, since they had met with Lieutenant Fontes, and both enjoyed listening to him.

The General did so because he was already engaged to his daughter, Lalá, and Bustamante because he was learning something about the nomenclature of modern armaments. Fontes was indignant, all of his being was a horror, a malediction against the insurgents, and he proposed worse punishments.

—They ought to see the result... Pirates! Bandits! I, if I were in the Marshal's place, if I caught them... Woe to them!

The Lieutenant was not ferocious nor bad, he was even good and generous, but he was a positivist and had a transcendent and religious idea of his Republic. He laid down all human happiness upon it, and would not admit that people would want it any other way that was not his. Outside of it, there was no good faith, sincerity; they were selfish heretics and, being the Inquisitor in his frigid cap, he became full of rage at not being able to burn them in autos-da-fé. Congested, he saw passing by his eyes an enormous series of confessing culprits, relapses,

contumelies, false men, dissimulators, feigners, and confessors without a priest, walking around freely...

Albernaz did not have so much rage against his adversaries. At the bottom of his soul, he even wished them well, had friends among them, and these divergences did not mean anything to his age and experience.

He deposited, however, a certain hope in the Marshal's actions. Being in financial trouble, not having given him enough to his reform and for the gratification of the organizer of the archives of Moura Square, he hoped to obtain another commission, one which would allow him to more freely acquire a trousseau for Lalá.

The Admiral, too, had great confidence in the warlike and statesmanlike talents of Floriano. His cause was not going very well. He had lost it right at the start, was spending too much money... The government needed officers for the Navy, almost all of them were in the revolt; perhaps he would give him a fleet to command... It is true that... But, what the devil! If it was a ship, then yes: but a fleet was not difficult: courage to fight was enough.

Bustamante believed strongly in the capacity of General Peixoto, so much so, that, to support him and defend his government, he imagined organizing a patriotic battalion, which already had the name of "The Southern Cross" and, naturally, he would be its commander, with all the advantages of the rank of colonel.

Genelício, whose activity had nothing warlike in it, put a lot of hope in the energy and decisions of the Floriano administration: he hoped to be subdirector and there was nothing else that a serious, honest, and energetic government could do, since he desired to put his division in order.

These secret hopes were more prevalent than one could suppose. We live off the government and the revolt represented a confusion among employments, honors, and the positions that the State spreads. The suspects would open stations and the dedications would supply the titles and habilitations to occupy them; furthermore, the government, in need of the sympathy of men, had to name, spread, squander, invent, create, and distribute employments, stipends, promotions, and gratifications.

Doctor Armando Borges himself, Olga's husband, in his student days the serene and dedicated scholar, saw in the revolt the realization of his smiling aspirations.

A doctor and rich, due to his wife's fortune, he was not satisfied. The ambition of money and the desire for a nomination spurred him. He was already a doctor at the Syrian Hospital²¹⁹, where he went three times a week and, in half an hour, saw thirty or more sick people. The nurse would come and give him the charts, the doctor would go, from bed to bed, asking: "How goes it?" "I'm better, Mr. Doctor," the Syrian would respond in a guttural voice. Next, he would inquire: "Are you better already?" And on he would go with his rounds; arriving at the cabinet, he would prescribe: "Patient no.1, repeat the prescription; patient 5... who is it? ... "It's that bearded man" ... "Ah!" And he prescribed.

But being the doctor of a particular hospital did not give fame to anybody: the indispensable way was to be of the government, otherwise he would not pass for anything but a simple practitioner. He wanted to have an official post, doctor, director, or even lecturer at the university. And this was not difficult, because he had arranged for good recommendations, since he already had a name, thanks to his activities and the fertility of his resources.

²¹⁹ Syrians represent a large swath of immigrants that came to Brazil during the late 19th century. One of the most eminent hospitals of the country is named *Hospital Sírio Libanês*, or Syrian-Lebanese Hospital, and is located in São Paulo.

From time to time he would publish in a pamphlet, *The Shingles: Etiology, Prophylaxis, and Treatment*, or, *A Contribution to the Study of Scabies in Brazil*; and he would send the pamphlet, forty and seventy pages, to the journals that would busy themselves with them for two or three times a year; the “industrious Doctor Armando Borges, the illustrious clinician, the proficient physician of our hospitals,” etc, etc.

He had obtained all this thanks to the precautions he had taken as a student in befriending the young men of the press.

Not content with this, he would write articles, prolix compilations, in which there was nothing proper, but it was rich in citations in French, English, and German.

The position of lecturer was what tempted him the most; the examination, however, scared him. He had the basics, was well connected and respected in the congregation, but that examination was a whole other story.

There was not a day in which he did not buy books, in French, English, and Italian, had even hired a German teacher, to enter into Germanic science; but he lacked the energy for prolonged study, and his personal happiness made the little he had acquired as a student take flight.

The front room on the high foundation had been transformed into a library. The walls were lined with bookshelves that groaned under the weight of the great treatises. At night, he would open the Venetian blinds, light all the gas lamps, and put himself at the desk, all in white, with a book opened under his eyes.

Sleep would not delay in coming to him at the end of the fifth page... That was the devil! He went searching in his wife’s books. They were French romances, Goncourt, Anatole France, Daudet, Maupassant, who would put him to sleep in the same way as the treatises. He did not

comprehend the grandeur of those analyses, those descriptions, the interest or the value in them, revealing to all the society, the life, the sentiments, the pains of those characters, a world! His pedantic nature, his false science, and the poverty of his general learning made him see toys, pastimes, chit-chat, in all this, so much so that he slept while reading such books.

He needed, however, to delude himself, for himself and his wife. Of the rest, from the streets, they saw him and what if they saw him sleeping over books?! ... He had to order some Paul de Kock novels²²⁰, their spines with different book titles, and he drove away sleep.

His clinic, on the other hand, prospered. With a limited partnership with his tutor, he was earning some six thousand, only treating the great fever of a rich orphan girl.

For some time already, his wife had known about his simulated intelligence, but that indecorous maneuver enraged her. Why would he need such a thing? Was he not already rich? Was he not young? Had he not the privilege of a university degree? Such an act seemed to the young lady more vile, more low, than the usury of a Jew, than the rent for punishment...

It was not contempt, disgust, that she had towards her husband; it was a more calm and less active sentiment; she became disinterested in him, detached herself from his person. She also felt cut away from all links of affection, sympathy, that had fastened both of them, in short, all moral connection.

Even when she was engaged, she had verified that the love for studies, the interest in science, the ambition for discovery, were, in him, superficial, only skin-deep; but she forgave him. Often, we are deceived about our own strengths and capacities; we dream of being Shakespeare, and end up as powdery mildew. It was forgivable, but to be a charlatan? It was too much!

²²⁰ Charles Paul de Kock (1793–1871) was a minor French novelist.

A bad thought passed by her, but what would this near indignation be worth? ... All men must be equal; it was useless to change from this to that one... When she came to that conclusion, she felt a great relief, and her visage illuminated anew as if all the clouds that had blocked the sun of her eyes were gone.

In that clumsy career towards an easy name, he did not see his wife's changes. She dissimulated her sentiments, but with dignity and delicacy, in a way that seemed to be for another reason; and he lacked the sagacity and finesse necessary to uncover them from their hiding place.

They continued to live as if nothing had happened, but how far they were from each other! ...

The revolt found them like that; and the Doctor, for three days, for it had been for that amount of time that she had broken, meditated upon his social and monetary ascension.

His father-in-law had suspended his travel to Europe and, in that morning, after lunch, according to his habits, he read reclining on a wheelchair [*cadeira de viagem*] the papers of the day. The son-in-law would get dressed and the daughter would busy herself with her correspondence, writing at the head of the dining table. She had a cabinet, with all its luxuries, books, a secretary, shelves, but she liked, in the morning, to write there, close by her father. The living room seemed, to her, to have more light, with a view of a mountain, ugly and crushing, giving her more seriousness of thought, and the vastness of the living room more freedom in her writing.

She was writing and her father was reading; then, he said:

—Do you know who is coming here, my daughter?

—Who is it?

—Your godfather. He telegraphed Floriano, saying he would come... It's here, in *The Country*.

The young lady soon guessed the motive, the way of action and reaction to facts regarding Quaresma's ideas and sentiments. She wanted to disapprove of this, to censure it; she felt, however, so in line with him, so in accord with the substance of life that he himself had fabricated, that she limited herself to smile complacently:

—The godfather...

—He's crazy, said Coleoni. *Per la madonna*²²¹! For a man that's quiet, tranquil, to go shoving himself into this throng, this hell...

The doctor had come back, already totally dressed, with his funereal overcoat and the resplendent top hat in his hand. He entered radiant and his round face glowed, except where the great mustache shadowed over. He still heard his father-in-law's last words, pronounced in his hoarse Portuguese:

—What's the matter? he asked.

Coleoni explained and repeated the comments he had made:

—But that's not an issue, said the Doctor. It is the duty of every patriot... What matters the age? Forty some years is not so old... He can still fight for the Republic...

—But there's no interest in this, objected the old man.

—And ought there to be only those who have an interest to fight for the Republic?
inquired the Doctor.

The young lady had just finished reading the letter she had written. Even without raising her head, she said:

—Certainly.

²²¹ Italian: "By the Virgin!"

—And here you come with your theories, darling²²². Patriotism is not in the guts...

And he smiled with a false smile, the dead shine of his false teeth falsifying it even more.

—But all of you only talk about patriotism? And the others? Is patriotism your monopoly? said Olga.

—Certainly. If they were patriots they would not be raining down bullets on the city, paralyzing, demoralizing the action of the constituted authority.

—Should they continue presenting people for prisons, deportations, firing squads, all sorts of violence that we see being committed, here and in the South?

—You are, at bottom, an insurgent, said the Doctor, closing the discussion.

She did not stop being so. The sympathy of the disinterested, of the whole population, was for the insurgents. Not only that happens in every part, particularly, in Brazil, due to multiple factors, but it ought to be normally like this.

The governments, with their inevitable processes of violence and hypocrisy, remain allied with the sympathy of those who believe in it; and, forgetting their vital importance and uselessness, they go on to promise what they cannot fulfill, in such a way that they create desperadoes, who always ask for change and more change.

It was not, then, admirable that the young lady tended towards the revolting party; Coleoni, a foreigner and knowing our authorities—thanks to his life experiences—shut up his sympathies within a prudent muteness.

—You will not compromise me, eh, Olga?

She had stood up to accompany her husband. She stopped for a while, laid upon him her great luminous look, and with her fine lips a little puckered:

²²² The Doctor uses the term *filhinha*, which is, literally, the diminutive of *filha*, or daughter. In this context, this can be considered as extremely condescending.

—You know very well that I do not compromise you.

The doctor went down the veranda's stairs, crossed the garden, and, still at the gate, said farewell to his wife, who followed him up to the exit, leaning on the veranda, in accordance with the ritual of the well or badly married.

At this time, Coração dos Outros was dreaming, disconnected from terrestrial contingencies.

Ricardo was still living in his sublet in the suburbs, whose view was Todos Os Santos up to Piedade, embracing a great tract of developed land, a panorama of houses and trees.

He was no longer speaking of his rival and his sorrow had settled.

During these days, his triumph paraded without any contest. The entire city held him in proper consideration and he almost judged himself to be at the limits of his career. The assent of Botafogo was needed, but he was certain he could get it.

He had already published more than a volume of songs; and he was now thinking about publishing another.

There had been days that he stayed at home, not going out much, organizing his book. He passed his time confined to his room, where he would lunch on coffee, that he himself would make, and bread, going to dine in a tavern near the station in the afternoon.

He noticed that whenever he arrived there, the cart-drivers and workers, who dined at the dirty tables, lowered their voices and looked at him with distrust; but he did not give any importance to that...

Despite being a regular of the place, he did not meet any known person for the last three days; he himself avoided talking and, in his home, he limited himself to a “good morning” and “good afternoon,” exchanged with the neighbors.

He liked to pass his days like this, submerged into himself and listening to his heart. He did not read the papers so he would not distract himself from his work. He lived thinking about his *modinhas* and in the book that would have to be another victory to himself and the shaken guitar.

During that afternoon he was seated at the table, correcting one of his works, one of the latest, one he had composed in Quaresma's ranch— "Carola's Lips."

First, he read the whole production, humming along; he turned to reading it again, grabbed the guitar to better grasp the effect, and was stuck on these lines:

*She is prettier than Helen and Marguerite,
When she smiles flourishing her fan.
Only the illusion that sweetens life
Is found in Carola's Lips*

During this, he heard a shot, then another, another... What the devil? he thought. Those must be salvos from some foreign ship. He returned his guitar and continued to sing about Carola's lips, where the illusion that sweetens life is found...

Part Three

Chapter I: Patriots

He had been there for more than an hour, in a great hall of the palace, watching the Marshal, but unable to speak to him. There were almost no difficulties in entering his presence, but speaking to him was not so easy.

The palace had an air of intimacy, almost relaxation, representative, and eloquent. It was not rare to see aides, messengers, and attendants on the divans, in other rooms, napping, half-lying-down, and unbuttoned. Everything in it was negligence and softness. The corners of the ceilings had spider webs; the rugs, when one stepped on them with a bit more force, raised dust like that of a badly-swept road.

Quaresma could not come soon, as he had announced in the telegram. He needed to put his affairs in order, to arrange who would keep company with his sister. Dona Adelaide had come up with a thousand objections for his departure. She showed him the risks of fighting, of war, incompatible with his age and superior to his strength; he, however, did not allow himself to be abated, he kept his feet firmly planted, since he felt it indispensable, necessary, that all his will, all his intelligence, that all he had in life and activity was put at the disposal of the government, so that then! ... Oh!

He had used these days to write down a petition that he would give to Floriano. In it, he exposed the necessary measures for the elevation of agriculture and showed all its problems, arising from the plantation system, fiscal demands, the high cost of freight, the narrowness of the markets, and political violence.

The Major squeezed the manuscript in his hand and thought of his home, far away, on the corner of that ugly plain, looking at the sunset, the mountains that stretched, that tapered down on clear and transparent days; he thought of his sister, of her green placid eyes that saw him depart with an impassibility that was not natural; but who he thought of the most at that moment was of Anastácio, the old black man with his long look, no longer with that passive tenderness of the domesticated animal, but full of fright, terror, and pity, his eyes rolling in their sclerotic and very white orbits, when he saw him penetrate into the railway car. It seemed he smelled disaster... Such an attitude was not common with him and how he took in having discovered the signs of painful happenings to come... Well, then! ...

Quaresma remained at a corner waiting for the president to call him, seeing this one and that one come and enter. It was early, almost noon, and Floriano still had, as a sign of lunch, a toothpick in his mouth.

He spoke first to a commission of ladies that came to offer their arms and blood in defense of the institutions of the homeland. The orator was a short, fat woman with a curt bust, and great high breasts, who spoke shaking her closed fan on her right hand. One could not in the least tell what her color, her race, was: there were so many that one hid the other, robbing her of any accurate classification.

While she spoke, the little woman laid down upon the Marshal her great eyes that shot sparks. Floriano appeared bothered with that flame; it was as if he feared melting under the heat of that look that burned more on seduction than it did on patriotism. He pretended to face her, lowered his face as an adolescent, drummed his fingers on the table... When it was his turn to speak, he raised his face a bit, but without facing the woman, and, with a farmer's thick difficult smile, declined her offer, given that the Republic still possessed sufficient strength for victory.

He said the last phrase more slowly, and almost ironically. The dames said their farewells; the Marshal turned his look in the direction of the great hall and met with Quaresma.

—So, Quaresma? he said, familiarly.

The Major was about to go to him, but he soon stopped short where he was. A whole crew of subaltern officers and cadets surrounded the dictator, and his attention converged upon them. There was no way of hearing what they were saying. They spoke into Floriano's ear, whispering, patting his shoulders. The Marshal almost did not speak: he moved his head or spoke monosyllabically, something that Quaresma noticed from the articulation of his lips.

They began to leave. They shook the dictator's hand and, one of them, more jovial, more familiar, strongly shook the limp hand on saying farewell, patted him on the shoulder with intimacy, and said loudly and emphatically:

—Strength, Marshal!

All that seemed so natural, normal, having entered into the new etiquette of the Republic, that nobody, not even Floriano himself, was surprised in the least. On the contrary, some even smiled happily at seeing the caliph, the khan, the emir, transmitting the little that he had of the sacred to the impudent subaltern. Not all of them left immediately. One of them took his time to confide further in things of supreme importance for the country. It was a cadet from the Military School, in his turquoise-blue uniform, sheath, and private's saber.

The cadets of the Military School formed the sacred phalanx. They had all the privileges and all the rights; they preceded ministers in the interviews with the dictator and they abused that position of support from the dictator to oppress and vex the whole city.

Some rags of positivism had glued themselves into those minds and a special religiosity had sprouted in their emotions, transforming authority, especially Floriano's and, vaguely, the

Republic, into an article of faith, into a fetish, into a Mexican idol, in whose altar all violence and crime was a dignified oblation and useful offering for its satisfaction and perpetuity.

There was the cadet...

Quaresma could then better see the countenance of the man who was about to gather in his hands, for almost a whole year, such strong powers, powers of a Roman emperor, looming over all, limiting all, without meeting any resistance to his caprices, to his weaknesses and desires, not even in laws, not even in customs, not even in universal and human pity.

It was vulgar and desolating. The drooping mustache; the lower lip, pendant and soft, where a great “fly” grasped onto²²³, the flaccid and coarse features; there was not even an outline of a chin or a look that was proper, that revealed any superior gift. It was a lifeless look, round, poor of expressions, if not for sadness, which was not particular to him, but native of the race; and everything in him was gelatinous—it looked like he had no nerves.

The Major did not want to see in such signs anything that would denote character, intelligence, and temperament. These things do not matter, he said to himself.

His enthusiasm in that political idol was strong, sincere, and disinterested. He held him as being energetic, fine, a superior visionary, tenacious, and knowledgeable of the needs of the country, a bit cunning perhaps, a type of Louis XI lined with Bismarck. However, it was not so. With the total absence of intellectual qualities, there was one dominant trait in the character of Marshal Floriano: tepid vitality, and, in his temperament, much laziness. Not just common laziness, the laziness we all have; it was a morbid laziness, like a poverty of nervous irrigation, proceeding from an insufficient amount of fluid in his body. In all the places he went, he became notable for his indolence, and disaffection towards his obligations and duties.

²²³ Floriano had a large mole on his lower lip.

When he was the director of the arsenal at Pernambuco, he did not even have the energy to sign the proper expedient; and, when he was Minister of War, he would spend months and months without going to the Ministry, leaving everything to be signed by his successor, to whom he bequeathed an enormous bulk of work.

Whoever is familiar with the paper-pushing activities of a Colbert, of a Napoleon, of a Philip II, of a William I of Germany—in general of all great men of state—does not comprehend the Florianesque negligence of the expedition of orders, explanations to subalterns, his desires, his vistas. Such transmissions should be necessary so that his superior sense make itself felt and influence in the march of governmental and administrative things

His silence, his mysterious monosyllables which were taken to the heights of sibylline oracles, the famous “crossroads of perhaps” that had quite agitated the national intelligence and imagination, begging for heroes and great men.,

This sick sloth made him walk in sandals and gave him that aspect of superior calm, the calm of the great Statesman or of the extraordinary warrior.

Everybody still remembers his first months in the government. At arms against the insurrection of prisoners, soldiers, and subalterns from the fortress of Santa Cruz, having ordered an inquiry, he choked it with the fear that the people who were demonstrated to be instigators would not make secede again, and, not satisfied with this, he gave those people the best and highest rewards.

Furthermore, nobody could accept a strong man, a Caesar, a Napoleon, who allows his subalterns to have those depressing intimacies and condescended to them as he did, consenting that his name serve as a standard for a vast series of crimes.

A recollection suffices. It is well known under what atmosphere of ill will Napoleon assumed the command of the army of Italy. Augereau, who called him the “general of the street,” said after having spoken with him, said to someone: “The man put fear in me.” The Corsican was then lord of the army, without any pats on the shoulder, without delegating implicitly or explicitly his authority to irresponsible subalterns.

Besides, the slowness with which he suffocated the revolt in September 6 showed well his uncertainty, the vacillation of the will of a man who had such extraordinary resources at his disposal.

There is another side to Marshal Floriano that very much explains his movements, acts, and gestures. It was his love of the family, a deeply rooted love, something patriarchal, of an ancient who is already vanishing with the march of civilization.

In virtue of the failure of the agricultural trials in two of his properties, his particular situation was precarious, and he did not want to die without leaving his properties to his family unencumbered by debts.

Honest and trustworthy as he was, the only hope that remained to him rested in the savings of his wages. Hence his caution, his stealthiness, an indispensable play to keep his lucrative properties, and he fastened himself tenaciously to the presidency of the Republic. The mortgage of the “Big Marsh” and of “Duarte” was his Cleopatra’s nose...

His sloth, his tepid spirit, and his fervid love for the home resulted in him being this “maybe-man,” who, refracted in the mental and social necessities of men of that time, was transformed into a statesman, into a Richelieu, and he could resist a serious revolt with more stubbornness than vigor, obtaining lives, money, and even awakening enthusiasm and fanaticism.

This enthusiasm and fanaticism, which sustained him, animated him, and supported him, had only been possible after he'd been Assistant General of the Empire, senator, minister, that is, after he had "manufactured" himself in the view of all and crystallized the legend in the minds of all.

His concept of government was not despotism, nor democracy, nor aristocracy; it was of a domestic tyranny. The baby behaved badly: he was punished. Taking the thing into large proportions, the "bad behavior" was opposing him and having opinions contrary to his opinions. The punishment was no longer thrashings, no, but prison and death. There was no money in the Treasury: put the collected bank notes back into circulation. Just like when there is a visitor at home and there is not much soup: one adds more water.

Furthermore, his military education and his weak education enhanced this infantile concept, taking it to extremes with violence, not so much because of himself, by his natural perversity, by his contempt towards human life, but for the weakness with which he covered it up and restrained the ferocity of his auxiliaries and partisans.

Quaresma was far from thinking of all this; he, along with many honest and sincere men of the time, were taken by the contagious enthusiasm that Floriano had managed to awaken. He thought of the great place that Destiny reserved for that placid and sad figure, of the radical reform he would drive into the annihilated organism of the homeland, one that the Major had habituated himself into believing was the richest in the world—albeit, from time to time, he already had doubts concerning certain things.

Certainly, he would not negate such hopes and his powerful action would have to make itself felt throughout the eight million square kilometers of Brazil, taking into them roads, security, protection for the weak, assuring work, and promoting wealth.

He did not stay for long in that train of thought. One of his waiting companions, since the time the Marshal had spoken so familiarly to him, began to regard that small, taciturn man with a pince-nez, and began approaching him, getting closer, and, when already close, said to Quaresma, almost as if it was a terrible secret.

—They'll see the *caboclo*. Have you known him for long, Major?

The major answered him and the other asked him another question. The President, however, remained alone, and Quaresma advanced.

—So, Quaresma? said Floriano.

—I come to offer Your Excellency my humblest assistance.

The President considered for an instant that smallness of a man, smiled with difficulty, but, lightly, with a little satisfaction. He felt in him the strength of his popularity, or else the reason of his good cause.

—I'm very grateful... Where have you been? I know you've left the arsenal.²²⁴

Floriano had that capacity for remembering looks, names, employments, and the situations of the subalterns he dealt with. He had something Asiatic in him: he was cruel and paternal at the same time.

Quaresma explained his life to him and he took advantage of the occasion to speak to him about agrarian laws, measures apt to relieve and to give new foundations to our agricultural life. The Marshal heard him distractedly, with a crease of annoyance at the edge of his lips.

—I also brought this memorandum to Your Excellency...

The President made an ill-humored gesture, almost a “don't bother me,” and said lazily to Quaresma:

—Leave it there...

²²⁴ Floriano speaks to Quaresma very informally, using the *tu* form of address instead of *você*.

The dictator deposited the manuscript on the table and soon addressed himself to the interlocutor of a while ago:

—How goes it, Bustamante? And the battalion, how's it going?

The man drew closer, a little frightened:

—It goes well, Marshall. We need a headquarters! ... If Your Excellency would give the order...

—That's right. Talk with Rufino in my name and he'll arrange it... Or, rather, take this note to him.

He ripped a piece from one of the first pages of Quaresma's manuscript, and, even then, over that same piece of paper, with a blue pencil, wrote down some words to his Minister of War. He only saw this lack of consideration when he was done:

—Well, Quaresma! I ripped your papers... Not a problem... It was the upper part, there was nothing written there.

The Major agreed and the President turned straightaway to Bustamante:

—Make good use of Quaresma in your battalion. What post do you want?

—Me! Quaresma said, stupidly.

—Well, you figure it out among yourselves.

The two took their leave of the President and slowly descended the staircases of Itamaraty²²⁵. They said nothing to one another up until the street. Quaresma was a little bit cold. The day was clear and hot; the movement of the city seemed not to have suffered any noticeable change. There was the same movement of trams, cars, and carts; but in the faces, a terror, a fright, something tremendous threatening everyone, and it seemed to hang suspended in the air.

²²⁵ This is the name of the presidential palace, and, later, of the seat of the Ministry of External Relations in Rio.

Bustamante introduced himself. It was Major Bustamante, now Lieutenant Colonel, an old friend of the Marshal, his companion in Paraguay.

—But we know each other! he exclaimed.

Quaresma looked at that old dark mulatto, with a great mosaic beard and smart eyes, but he did not remember having met him at all.

—I do not remember... From where?

—In General Albernaz's house... Don't you remember?

Policarpo then had a vague remembrance and the other explained to him the formation of his patriotic battalion, the "Southern Cross."

—Would you like to be part of it, sir?

—Why, yes, said Quaresma.

—We are having difficulties... The uniforms, shoes for the soldiers... We ought to help the government with the first expenses... It would be inconvenient to bleed the Treasury, don't you think?

—Certainly, Quaresma said with enthusiasm.

—I like that you agree with me, sir... I see that you are a patriot... I have decided to make an apportionment for the officers, in proportion to their posts: an ensign can apply for a hundred *mil-réis*, a lieutenant for two-hundred... Which rank would you like? Ah, it's true! You're a major, aren't you?

Quaresma then explained why he was called a major. A friend, an influential man in the Minister of the Interior, had put his name in a list of national guardsmen, with that post. He had never paid the emoluments, so he then saw himself referred to as major, and the whole thing stuck. He protested at first, but they were so stubborn that he let it be.

—Well, said Bustamante. You'll remain a major.

—What is my allotment?

—Four-hundred *mil-réis*. A little expensive, but... You know, it is an important post...

Do you accept?

—Why, yes.

Bustamante removed his wallet, took down a note with a pencil stub, and jovially said farewell.

—Until six, then, Major, at the provisional headquarters.

The conversation had taken place at the corner of Larga Street and Sant' Ana Field. Quaresma intended to take the tram downtown. He planned on visiting his friend in Botafogo, spending his time before his military initiation.

The square had little traffic; the trams passed by the measured trot of mules; from time to time he heard the sounding of a trumpet, the rumbling of drums, and from the main gate of the headquarters exited a detachment of soldiers, weapons at their shoulders, silent bayonets dancing on the shoulders of the recruits, glittering with a hard, evil shine.

He was going to take the tram when he heard some artillery fire and the dry popping of rifles. It did not last long; before the tram reached Constitution Street, all the warlike murmurs had ceased, and whoever had not been warned would have supposed himself to be in peacetime.

Quaresma went to the middle of the plaza and was going to read the paper he had just bought. He unfolded it slowly, but was soon interrupted. Someone patted him on the shoulder. He turned.

—Oh, General!

The encounter was cordial. General Albernaz liked these ceremonies and even took pleasure, a delicious emotion in renewing acquaintances that had weakened by any separation. He was in uniform, with his ill-treated uniform. He had not brought his sword and the *pince-nez* was still held by a small gold chain that passed behind his left ear.

—So, have you come to see this thing?

—I have. I already presented myself to the Marshal.

—“They” will see with whom they’re dealing with. They think they’re dealing with Deodoro, they’re mistaken! ... The Republic, thank God, now has a man leading it... *This caboclo* is made of iron... In Paraguay...

—You met him there, right, General?

—That is... We did not get to meet each other, but Camisão... He’s tough, the man is. I’m in charge of munitions... This *caboclo* is a fine man. He did not want me at the shore. He knows very well who I am and that the munitions that leave my hands are munitions that... There, in the warehouse, not a single box leaves without my inspection... It is necessary... In Paraguay, there was much disorder and gluttony: they put too much lime in the powder—didn’t you know?

—No.

—So they did. My taste would have been to go to the beaches, to combat; but the “man” wanted me to stay with the munitions... The captain orders, the sailor obeys... He knows what he’s doing...

He shrugged, fixed the little gold chain that was already falling off his ear and was quiet for an instant. Quaresma asked:

—How goes the family?

—Good. Did you know that Quinota got married?

—I knew, Ricardo told me. And *Dona* Ismênia, how is she?

The General's visage darkened and he answered as if against his will:

—She is the same way.

The propriety of the father had prevented him from telling the whole truth. The daughter had gone mad with a gentle and childish madness. She would go whole days shut up in a corner, looking stupidly at everything, with the dead look of a statue, with an inanimate paralysis, as if she had fallen into imbecility; but there came a time, however, when she brushed her hair, adorned herself, and would run to her mother, saying: "Get me ready, mamma. My fiancée will not be late... today is the day of my marriage." At other times she would cut papers, in the form of notes, and would write: Ismênia de Albernaz and So-and-So (it varied) are to be married.

The General had already consulted with a dozen doctors, spiritualists, and now he was giving a chance to a miraculous magician. The daughter, however, would not heal, would not lose her obsession with marriage, the target they had made her life to be, towards which she had not struck, annihilating, therefore, her spirit and her youth while in its full verdure.

Her state had saddened that otherwise happy, festive household. The balls became less frequent; and, when they were obliged to give one, in the main holidays, the young lady, with all her cares, at the cost of all promises, was taken to the house of her married sister, and there she would stay, while the others danced, forgetting a while the sister that suffered.

Albernaz did not want to reveal that pain of his old age; he repressed the emotion and continued in a more natural tone, in that natural and intimate tone that he used with everyone:

—This is an infamy, Mr. Quaresma. What delay to our country! And the damages? One of those ports barred to national commerce, how many years of delay does this represent!

The Major agreed and demonstrated the necessity of esteeming the Government in such a way as to render impossible the reproduction of levies and insurrections.

—Certainly, added the General. This way we will not progress, we will not go further. And what a bad impression abroad!

The tram had arrived at São Francisco Square and the two parted ways. Quaresma went straight to Carioca Square and Albernaz went to Rosário Street.

Olga saw her godfather come in without that characteristic expansive happiness. She did not feel indifference; it was surprise, astonishment, almost fear, although she knew perfectly well that he was visiting. Nevertheless, there was no change to Quaresma's looks, on his body, on all of him. He was the same short, pale man, with that same pointed goatee and sharp look behind his pince-nez... He was not even sunburnt anymore, and the way he pursed his lips was the same that she had known for many years. But, he seemed changed, and to have entered impelled, shoved in by a strange force, by a whirlwind. After examining him well, however, she verified that he had entered naturally, with his firm and small steps. From where, then, did this thing that intimidated her, that had taken away her happiness in seeing such a beloved person, come from? She could not guess. She was reading in the dining room and Quaresma did not announce his arrival; he was coming in according to his old habit. She responded to her godfather, still under that painful impression of his entrance.

—Papa left; and Armando is down there writing.

In fact, he was writing, or more specifically: he was translating into the “classical style” a great article on “Firearm Wounds.” His last intellectual *truc* was this, of the classical style. He searched in this for an intellectual separation from these boys who were around, who wrote tales and romances for the newspapers. He, a sage, and, above all, a doctor, could not write in the

same way that they did. His superior wisdom and his title of “academic” forbade the use of the same language, the same idioms, the same syntax of these poetasters and litterateurs. The idea came to him, then, of the classical style. The process was simple: he would write in the common mode, with the same words and idioms; then he would invert the clauses, tear the periods into commas, and substitute “bother” for “molestation,” “around” for “round,” “this” for “because of this,” “as large” for “as large as such,” dotting everything with “on the contrary” and “nevertheless,” and so form his classical style, which was beginning to rouse the admiration of his peers and of the public in general.

He liked very much the expression, “at odds with each other²²⁶,” he would use it at all times and, when he wrote it on the blank paper, he imagined that he had given to his style a Pascalian force and shine, and a transcendental quality to his ideas.

At night, he would read Father Vieira²²⁷, but soon after the first lines sleep would come and he would sleep dreaming of himself as a “physician,”²²⁸ regarded as a master, at the height of the 17th century, prescribing sangria and hot water, just like Doctor Sangrado²²⁹.

His translation was almost finished. He was already quite proficient, since with time he had acquired a sufficient vocabulary and the version was made mentally, almost half of it right at the first writing session. He received the note from his wife announcing the visit with some annoyance, but, as he persisted in being unable to find a classic equivalent for “orifice,” he judged the interruption a useful one. He wanted to put “hole,” but it was plebeian; “orifice,” even if it was used often, was, however, more dignified. When he returned he would, perhaps, find it,

²²⁶ The expression used here is, *às rebatinhas*. *Rebatinhas* are any child’s toy, or anything much sought after.

²²⁷ Father Antônio Vieira (1608-1697), was a Portuguese Jesuit priest, who was born in Bahia. He represents the apex of the Portuguese Baroque style, an author perfect for Doctor Campos.

²²⁸ The term “physician,” or *físico*, is not widely used in Brazil, hence the presumptuous Doctor’s dream of being a “physician” rather than a plain “doctor.”

²²⁹ This name literally means Dr. Bled, or Bleeding

he thought. He went up to the dining room. He entered with pleasantries, with his great crumbling moustache, his round face, and found the godfather and goddaughter engaged in a discussion on authority.

She was saying:

—I cannot comprehend this divine tone with which all of you speak of authority. We do not govern in the name of God any more, why then this respect, this veneration with which they want to surround governors?

The Doctor, who had heard the whole phrase, could not but object:

—But it is needed, indispensable... We know well that they are men like us, but, if it's not like this everything goes down the drain.

Quaresma added:

—It is by virtue of our society's internal and external necessities that this exists... In ants, in bees...

—I accept that. But do bees and ants revolt, and is the authority kept there at the cost of assassinations, exactions, and violence?

—We do not know... Who knows? Maybe... Quaresma said, evasively.

The Doctor had no doubts and soon said:

—What have we to do with bees? Will we, men, the pinnacle of the zoological scale, look for the rules of life among insects?

—It is not that, my dear doctor; we seek in their examples the certainty of the generality of the phenomenon, of immanence, so to speak, Quaresma said sweetly.

He had not finished his explanation when Olga was already reflecting:

—Even if this authority were to bring happiness, it goes. But no, what is it worth?

—It has to bring it, Quaresma affirmed categorically. The question is consolidating it.

They talked for a very long time afterwards. The Major spoke of his visit to Floriano, his quick incorporation into the Southern Cross battalion. The Doctor had a stab of envy, when he alluded to the familiar way in which Floriano had treated him. They had a light snack²³⁰ and Quaresma left.

He felt the need to revisit those narrow streets, with their deep, dark stores, where the employees moved as if underground. He missed²³¹ the tortuous Ourives Street, the tattered Assembléia Street, and the elegant Ouvidor Street.

Life continued the same. There were halted groups and strolling young ladies; a multitude in Rio Café. These were the avant-garde, the “Jacobins,” the selfless defenders of the Republic, the intransigents in whose eyes moderation, tolerance, and respect for the life and liberty of others were crimes of a crippled homeland, symptoms of a criminal monarchy and dishonest capitulation in the face of foreigners. The foreigner was, above all, the Portuguese, which did not impede the existence of super-Jacobin papers edited by Portuguese men from the finest waters.

Besides that gesticulating and passionate group, Ouvidor Street was the same. The lovers made love and young ladies came and went. If a shell whizzed in the high, luminous, blue sky, the young ladies would give out little cat-like screams, run inside the stores, wait a while, and soon return smiling, the blood returning to their faces little by little, after the pallor of fear.

Quaresma dined in a restaurant and headed to the headquarters, which temporarily operated in an old tenement condemned by Sanitation, there around the Cidade Nova. The aforementioned tenement had a ground and an upper floor; both divided into cubicles the size of ship cabins. On the upper floor, there was a balcony with a grate made of sticks and a wooden

²³⁰ Barreto actually uses the word “lunch” here. The Portuguese word for “snack” or “small meal,” which is *lanche*, is actually an Anglicism of the word “lunch.”

²³¹ The word used here is *saudades*.

staircase leading up to the balcony, a flimsy swaying staircase that groaned under the lightest step. The house of orders was in the first little room of the upper floor. The recruits were instructed at the yard, already without its clotheslines, but with its stones still stained with lye and soapy water. The instructor was a somewhat lame retired sergeant, admitted into the battalion under the rank of second-lieutenant, who bawled with majestic deliberation: shoul-der! Arms!

The Major handed in his allotment to the Colonel and this man was soon showing him the uniform's models.

This outfit was very singular: the jacket was bottle-green and had some lively iron-blues, golden braids, and four silver stars, in a cross, at the collar.

Some screaming made them go up to the veranda. Between the soldiers entered a man, flailing about, crying, and begging, and at the same time taking, from time to time, blows from rifle butts.

—It's Ricardo! Quaresma exclaimed. You do not know him, Colonel? he continued with interest and pity.

Bustamante was unperturbed in the veranda and only answered after some time:

—I know him... He is a recalcitrant volunteer, a rebellious patriot.

The soldiers raised the "volunteer" up and Ricardo, as soon as he saw the Major, begged him:

—Save me, Major!

Quaresma called the Colonel aside, imploring and begging him, but it was useless...

There was the need of other people... At last, he made him into a corporal.

Ricardo, from afar, followed the conversation of the two: he guessed the refusal and exclaimed:

—I will serve, yes, but give me my guitar.

Bustamante stood up straight and yelled at the soldiers:

—Return the guitar to Corporal Ricardo!

Chapter II: You, Quaresma, Are a Visionary

Eight o'clock in the morning. The fog still covers everything. On the land's side, one could barely see the low parts of the nearby buildings; to the sea's side, the eye was impotent against that floating white darkness, against that great wall of vapor and opaqueness that condenses here and there into apparitions, into semblances of things. The sea was silent: there are large intervals between its weak tossings. One sees the beach as a small section, dirty, covered with seaweed, and the smell of the sea seemed stronger with the fog. To the left and to the right, it was the unknown, the Mystery. However, that thick paste of a diffuse clarity was peopled with noises. The whirring of the nearby saws, the whistling of factories and locomotives, and ships' cranes filling that indecipherable and taciturn morning; and one can even hear the timed noise of oars wounding the sea—believed to be Charon bringing his barge to the banks of the Styx...

Attention! All search the curtain of pasty fog. The faces alter; it seems that demons will arise from the bosom of the fog ...

The noises could no longer be heard: the sloop distanced itself. The faces breathe, relieved.

It is not night, it is not day; it is not dawn, it is not dusk; it is the hour of anguish, it is the light of uncertainty. At sea, there are no stars nor sun that guide; on land, birds crash onto the houses' white walls and die. Our misery is more complete and the lack of those silent marks of our activity gives us a stronger perception of our isolation within nature's grandiose bosom.

The noises continue, and, as nothing could be seen, it appears to come from the depths of the earth, or that they are auditory hallucinations. Reality only comes to us in pieces: from the sea we can see, tossing in great intervals, weakly, tenuously, afraid, meeting the strip of beach, dirty with masses of plants, seaweed, and sargassum.

In groups, after the murmur of the oars, the soldiers lie down on the turf that runs beyond the beach. Some already nap; others search the sky through the fog that dampens their faces.

Corporal Ricardo Coração dos Outros, a short saber at his waist and cap on his head, seated on a rock, is, in part, alone, and he looks out at that anguishing morning.

It was the first time that he saw the haze so close to the sea, where she makes her whole despairing force felt. Usually, he only had eyes for the bright and purplish daybreak, soft and fragrant; that foggy and ugly morning was new to him.

The minstrel is not unhappy in his corporal's uniform. The free life of the barracks do good to his soul; the guitar is in there and, during his free hours, he experiments, he hums in a low voice. It is essential that his fingers do not rust... His small grievance is not being able, from time to time, to sing to his heart's content²³². The commander of the detachment was Quaresma, so he might consent...

The Major was inside the house that served as headquarters, reading. His preferred study is now artillery. He bought compendiums; but, as his instruction was insufficient, from artillery he went to ballistics, from ballistics to mechanics, from mechanics to calculus and to analytic

²³² The expression used here is *soltar o peito*. Literally, it means: "to release the chest."

geometry; he further descends the rungs and goes on to trigonometry, to geometry, and to algebra and arithmetic. He runs through this chain of interlaced sciences with the faith of an inventor. He learns a very basic notion after a rosary of consultations, from compendium to compendium; and he goes through his days of warrior's leisure submerged in mathematics, in this subject that is coarse and hostile to the brains of those who are no longer young men.

There is a Krupp cannon in the detachment, but he has nothing to do with the deadly device; nevertheless, he studies artillery. Lieutenant Fontes, who does not obey the patriotic Major at all, is in charge of it. This doesn't bother Quaresma very much; he goes on slowly learning to service the artillery piece and submits himself to the arrogance of the subaltern.

The commander of the Southern Cross, Bustamante of the mosaic beard, remained in the headquarters, superintending the life of the battalion. The unit has few officers and even fewer soldiers, but the State pays the daily pay of four hundred. It lacks captains, the number of second-lieutenants is sufficient, and almost enough lieutenants, but there already is a major, who is Quaresma, and the captain, Bustamante, who, because of modesty, just made himself a lieutenant-colonel.

There are forty soldiers in Quaresma's detachment, three second-lieutenants, two lieutenants; but the officials rarely show up. They are sick or on leave. It is only him, the former agricultural worker of Tranquility, and a second-lieutenant, Polidoro, who only appears at night, who are in their posts. A soldier entered:

—Sir, may I go to lunch?

—You may. Call Corporal Ricardo for me.

The soldier left limping in his large boots; the poor man used that protective piece like a punishment. As soon as he was in the brush, which led to his home, he removed them and felt the breath of freedom on his face.

The commander went to the window. The fog was dissipating. One could already see the sun shining like a disk of tarnished gold.

Ricardo Coração dos Outros appeared. He looked funny in his corporal's uniform. The jacket was extremely short, hitched up; his wrists showed completely; and the pants were extremely long and dragged on the floor.

—How goes it, Ricardo?

—Good, and you, Major?

—The same.

Quaresma laid on the inferior and friend that sharp and leisurely look of his:

—You are unhappy, aren't you?

The troubadour felt happy with the commander's interest:

—No... That is to say, Major, that yes... If the thing goes like this until the end, it's not bad... It's hell when there are shots... There is one thing, Major; could I not, perhaps, around the hours where there is nothing to do, go under the mango trees, to sing a little...

The Major scratched his head, smoothed his goatee, and said:

—I don't know... It's...

—You know that singing in a low voice is like rowing on dry land... They say that in Paraguay...

—Alright. Go sing, but don't scream, eh?

They shut up for a while; Ricardo was going to leave when the Major ordered:

—Tell them to send me lunch.

Quaresma dined and lunched in the same place. It was not rare for him to sleep there, too. His meals were furnished by a greasy spoon nearby and he would sleep in a room in that imperial building. Because the detachment's house was the emperor's pavilion, situated in the old Quinta da Ponta do Caju. The Rio Douro railway station and a large and noisy lumber-mill was also there. Quaresma went up to the door, looked at the dirty beach, and was astonished at the fact that the emperor had wanted it for bathing. The fog was dissipating entirely.

The shapes of things left modeled from the bosom of the mass of heavy fog; and, satisfied, as if the nightmare had passed. The low parts appeared first, slowly; and at last, almost suddenly, the high ones.

To the right, there was Saúde, Gamboa, the ships of commerce: three-masted galleys, steam cargo boats, haughty sail ships—they were leaving the haze, and, in an instant all had the air of a Dutch vista. To the left, there was Raposa Bay, the Retiro Saudoso, the horrendous Sapucaia, Governador Island, the blue Orgãos, so tall they touched the sky; up front, Ferreiros Island, with its coal deposits; and further up the vista of the tranquil sea, Niterói, whose mountains had just cut themselves out of the blue sky, in the light of that late morning.

The fog left and a cock crowed. It was as if happiness had come back to the earth; it was a hallelujah. That squeaking, those whistles, the cranes, now had a festive accent of contentment.

Lunch arrived and the sergeant came up to tell Quaresma that there had been two desertions.

—Two more? said the astonished Major.

—Yes, sir. Number one hundred twenty-five and three hundred twenty did not answer today's review.

—Register it.

Quaresma had lunch. Lieutenant Fontes, the cannon man, arrived. He almost never slept there; he stayed overnight at home and, during the day, he came in to see how things were going.

One late night, he was not there. The darkness was still profound. The soldier at the watch saw a faraway shape moving inside the shadows, slithering over the waters of the sea. It emitted no light: only the movement of the dark blotch and the slight phosphorescence of the waters revealed a ship. The soldier raised the alarm; the small detachment put themselves in their posts and Quaresma appeared.

—The cannon! Now! Onward! ordered the commander. And, nervously, he recommended:

—Wait a little.

He ran into the house and consulted his compendiums and tables. He took some time and the barge was advancing, the soldiers were giddy, and one of them took the initiative, loaded the piece, and fired it.

Quaresma reappeared running, scared, and said, gasping:

—You well saw... The distance... the handle... the angle... it is always necessary to consider the efficiency of the shot.

Fontes arrived, and learning of the case the next day, laughed much:

—Well, Major, you think you are in the training grounds doing practical exercises... fire ahead!

And so it was. There were bombardments almost every afternoon, from the sea to the fortresses, and from the fortresses to the sea; and the ships and the forts remained equally untouched after the terrible tests.

There came an occasion, however, in which they hit. Then, the newspapers would write: “Yesterday, Fort *Acadêmico* made a wonderful shot. With such-and-such a cannon, they put a bullet into the Guanabara²³³.” The following day, the same newspaper would correct itself, at the request of the battery at Pharoux quay, which was the one that had landed the right shot. Days would pass and the thing was already forgotten, when a letter would come from Niterói, reclaiming the honor of the shot to the fortress at Santa Cruz.

Lieutenant Fontes arrived and examined the cannon with the air of a connoisseur. There was a trench with bales of alfalfa and the mouth of the piece exited among strands of straw, like the maw of a ferocious and occult animal among the weeds.

He would look at the horizon, after the attentive examination of the cannon, and would consider the Isle of Cobras²³⁴, when he heard the groaning of a guitar, and a voice that said:

I promise by the Holiest Sacrament

He steered himself towards the place where the sounds were coming from and he was faced with this most beautiful picture: under the shade of a great tree, the soldiers lying down or seated in a circle, around Ricardo Coração dos Outros, who intoned woeful dirges.

The soldiers had just finished having lunch and drinking cachaça²³⁵, and they were so enraptured by Ricardo’s song that they did not notice the arrival of the young officer.

—What is this? he said severely.

The soldiers all stood up, saluting; and Ricardo, with his right hand on his hat, in profile, and to the left, holding his guitar, which rested on the ground, apologized:

²³³ The Bay of Guanabara. Rio de Janeiro lies on its western shore, while Niterói lies on its eastern shore.

²³⁴ *Cobra* in Portuguese simply means “snake” and not “cobra.”

²³⁵ The term used here is *pinga*—literally, “drop”—slang for cachaça. Cachaça is a type of rum made from sugar cane, and it is an extremely cheap liquor. The drink is so ubiquitous and accessible, that drunkards are often referred to as *pinguço*.

—Mr. Lieutenant, it was the Major who gave permission. Your honor well knows that if we did not have an order, we would not play.

—Well, I do not want any more of this, said the officer.

—But, objected Ricardo, Mr. Major Quaresma...

—We don't have a Major Quaresma here. I do not want it, and that's it!

The soldiers disbanded and Lieutenant Fontes went next to the old imperial house, to find the Major of the Southern Cross. Quaresma continued in his studies, the rolling of a Sisyphus, but voluntary, to the grandeur of the Homeland. Fontes was entering and saying:

—What's this, *Mr. Quaresma*? Then, you're the one allowing this warbling in the detachment?

The Major did not remember the whole thing and was amazed by the severe and harsh airs of the young man. He repeated:

—Then, you allow the inferiors to go sing *modinhas* and play the guitar, in plain service?

—But what harm does that do? I heard say that in a campaign...

—And the discipline? And the respect?

—Well, I will prohibit it, said Quaresma.

—That is not needed. I already prohibited it.

Quaresma did not find himself vexed, nor did he find a motive for vexation, and said sweetly:

—You did well.

Next he asked the officer how to extract the square root from a decimal fraction; the young man taught him and they remained talking cordially about common things. Fontes was engaged to Lalá, the third daughter of General Albernaz, and he hoped to finish the revolt so that

he could complete the marriage. For an hour the conversation between the two turned around this little familiar fact to which was connected that thundering, those shots, that solemn dispute between two ambitions. Subtly, the trumpet wounded the air with its metallic voice. Fontes pricked his ears; the Major asked:

—What call is that?

—Attention.

The two left: Fontes, perfectly uniformed; the Major, tightening his sword-belt, unable to do so properly, and tripping on the venerable sword that persisted in intruding itself between his short legs. The soldiers were already in the trenches, weapons at hand; the cannon had the necessary munitions by its side. A barge was slowly advancing, with its high prow pointing towards their post. Suddenly, thick smoke spurted from its gunwale: it fired!—a voice yelled. Everyone lowered themselves, the ball passed high, zooming, singing, harmless. The barge kept advancing undaunted. Besides the soldiers, there were curious ones, boys, watching the firefight, and the one who had screamed: it fired!

And it was always like this. Sometimes they came quite near the troops, the trenches, upsetting the service. At other times, some citizen would go up to the officer and very delicately ask: Sir, would you allow me to fire a shot? The officer would allow it, the attendants would load the piece, and the man would aim, and fire.

With time, the revolt became a party, a distraction for the city... When a bombardment was announced, in a second, the terrace of the Public Promenade would fill up. It was as a moonlit night during the times when it was proper to appreciate the night in the old garden of Don Luís de Vasconcelos, watching the solitary heavenly body silver the water and fill the sky.

Binoculars were rented and the old men as the young ladies, the young men as the old women, would follow the bombardment as if it was a theatrical presentation: “Santa Cruz fires! Now it is *Aquidabã*! There it goes!” And in this manner the revolt went on familiarly, entering into the habits and customs of the city.

The little boys in the Pharoux Dock—newspaper sellers, shoe shiners, and greengrocers—sheltered behind the doorways, urinals, trees, to see, to wait for the fall of bullets; and when one did fall, they would run all in a mass, to catch it as if it was a coin or candy.

The bullets became fashionable. There were tie pins, watch decorations, pencil cases, made with the small bullets of rifles—the medium ones were also collected, and their metal casings, sanded, polished, smoothed out, ornamented the console tables, the side-tables of middle-class houses; while the great ones, the “melons” and “pumpkins,” as they were called, furnished the gardens, like glazed earthenware vases or statues.

The barge kept firing. Fontes shot back. The cannon vomited the projectile, recoiled a little, and was soon retuned to position. The embarkation responded and the youth yelled: it fired!

These boys always announced enemy fire. They would barely see the brief fusillade and the smoke, far away, in the ship, slowly rising, very heavily, and they would scream: it fired! There was one in Niterói who had his fifteen minutes of fame. They called him *Thirty-Réis*. The newspapers of the time busied themselves with him, ran subscriptions for him. A hero! The revolt passed and he was forgotten, just like the *Luci*, a beautiful barge that captivated the city’s imagination and interest, to the point of creating enemies and admirers.

The embarkation gave up on provoking the fury of the Caju garrison. Fontes gave instructions to his artillery chief and went away.

Quaresma withdrew to his room and continued his warrior-like studies. The other days he passed in that extreme of the city were not different from that one. The happenings were the same and the war was falling into the banality of repeating the same episodes.

In spaces, when weariness would overcome him, he would leave. He would descend into the city and leave his post to Polidoro or Fontes, if they were there.

He would rarely go during the day, because Polidoro, the most assiduous one, a professional joiner who worked in a furniture factory, only came at night.

In the center of the city, the night was happy and jovial. There was much money. The government paid the soldiers in double, and, sometimes there were recompenses; all beyond the fact that death was always present, and all this stimulated entertainment. The theatres were full and so were the nocturnal restaurants.

Quaresma, however, did not intrude upon that noise of a semi-besieged square. He would sometimes go to the theatre, in civilian clothes, and, soon after the spectacle was over, would return to his room in the city or to his post.

In other afternoons, as soon as Polidoro had arrived, he would go on foot through the streets of the surrounding area, through the beaches up to the Field of São Cristovão.

He would see the succession of cemeteries, with their limpid gravestones climbing the mountains, like clean shorn sheep put to pasture; the meditative cypresses watching over them; and it was as if they represented that part of the city as a vassal and a dominion of death.

The houses had a funereal aspect, secluded, and concentrated; the sea tossed lugubriously on the swampy banks; the palms murmured painfully; and even the tinkling of the tram's bells was sad and lugubrious.

The landscape was impregnated with Death, and, even more so, the mind of the one who passed through it, who felt the strong funereal aspect.

He went up to the field. Then he felt like seeing his former house, but he ended up at General Albernaz's residence. He owed him a visit and he took advantage of that opportunity.

They were just finishing dinner. Besides Lieutenant Fontes and Admiral Caldas, Quaresma's commander, the Lieutenant-Colonel Inocência Bustamante also dined with the General.

Bustamante was an active commander, but inside the headquarters. There was no one as interested as he was with books, good handwriting, whatever was written in the master books, the descriptions of displays, the maps of the company, and other documents. With their help, the organization of his battalion was irreprehensible; and, not to overlook the entries, he would show up from time to time in the detachments of his corps. Quaresma had not shown up for ten days. After greetings, the General asked the Major:

—How many desertions?

—Until today, nine, said Quaresma.

Bustamante scratched his head in desperation and reflected:

—I don't know what's with these people... There's no reason behind it... They lack patriotism!

—Well, and they're right to do so! Admiral.

Caldas was weary and pessimistic lately. His lawsuit went badly and up until now the government had not given him anything. His patriotism weakened with the dilution of his hopes of one day becoming a vice-admiral. It is true that the government had not yet organized his fleet; however, according to current rumors, he would not command a single division. An

iniquity! He was a little old, true; but, for never having commanded, in this subject he could spend all his youthful energy.

—The Admiral ought not to speak like this... The love of our homeland lies just below our love for humanity²³⁶.

—My dear Lieutenant, you are a young man... I know how things go...

—One ought not to be desperate... We do not work only for ourselves, but for others and for those to come, continued Fontes, persuasively.

—What have I to do with them? said Caldas, irritatedly.

Bustamante, the General, and Quaresma quietly watched the little discussion and the first two smiling a bit at Caldas' fury, who would not grow tired of dancing his legs and smoothing out his long white whiskers. The Lieutenant answered:

—A lot, Admiral. We should work so that better epochs may emerge, of order, of happiness, and moral elevation.

—There never was and there never will be such a thing! burst out Caldas.

—I think the same, added Albernaz.

—This will always be the same, Bustamante cynically brought forward.

The Major said nothing; he appeared disinterested in the conversation. Fontes was not vexed in the face of these contestations, contrary to others of his faction. He was thin and sucked in, with a sullen tan, and his oval of a face was wrinkled here and there.

After hearing them he spoke persuasively with his nasal and dragging voice, shaking his left hand in the favorite way of sermonizers:

—There was already a draft: the Middle Ages.

²³⁶ Though this phrase does not include the word "love" in the original, the phrase would sound awkward in English without its inclusion. The literal translation of the phrase above would be: "The homeland is right below humanity."

None could contest that. Quaresma only knew the history of Brazil and the others nothing at all.

And his affirmation made everyone shut up, despite their intimate suspicion. It is a curious Middle Ages, that of moral elevation, one we have no clue where it was, or during which year? If we say: “In the time of Chlothar, he himself, with his own hands, set fire to the hut where he held his son Crame, plus the wife of that one and his sons”—the positivist objects: “The power of the Church was not yet perfectly established.” “Saint Louis,” we will swiftly respond, “wanted to execute a feudal lord because he had ordered the hanging of three children who had killed a rabbit in his woods.” The faithful objects: “Do you not know that the Middle Ages go until the appearance of the Divine Comedy? Saint Louis was already a decadent...” We cite epidemics of nervous illnesses, the misery of the peasants, the armed thievery of the barons, the hallucinations of millennium, the cruel killing of the Saxons by Charlemagne; they answer: a time in which the perfect moral power of the Church was not yet established; at other times it had already gone.

None objected with the above to the objectivist and the conversation slipped back towards the revolt. The Admiral severely critiqued the government.

He had no plan, they were shooting for nothing; in his opinion, they should already have made the effort to occupy the Isle of Snakes, though this would have cost rivers of blood. Bustamante had no firm opinion; but Quaresma and Fontes judged that no, it would be a risky adventure and a patently useless one at that. Albernaz still had not chimed in yet, and said thus:

—But we reconnoitered Humaitá, and for very little!

—Regardless, you did not take it, said Fontes. The natural conditions were others and the reconnoitering was perfectly useless... You well know it, sir, you were there!

—That is... I fell ill and came back to Brazil a little before it, but Camisão told me that it was risky.

Quaresma returned to being silent. He wanted to see Ismênia. Fontes had let him into her state of affairs and the Major felt for some reason joined to the young lady's trouble. He saw everyone: *Dona Maricota*, always active and intelligent; Lalá, tearing away her fiancé from the interminable conversation with her looks, and the others that came from time to time from the drawing room to the dining room where he was. At last, he could not contain himself and asked about her. He learned that she was at the married sister's house and was worse, each time more lost in her obsession, her body weakening. The General told everything to Quaresma with frankness and, when he was done narrating that intimate disaster of his, he said with a long sigh:

—I don't know Quaresma... I don't know.

It was ten o'clock when the Major said farewell. He returned by tram to the Caju Bridge. He jumped off and soon retired to his room. He came in full of that special perturbation that the beautiful, tender, and milky moonlight puts upon us. It is an emotion of bodily relief, of deliquescence; it seems that our material enveloping is removed from us and we remain only a soul, enveloped in a bland atmosphere of dreams and chimeras. The Major did not enjoy the transcendent feeling very well, but he suffered without perceiving the effect of the moonlight's cold pale light. He lay down for a while, dressed, not because of sleep, but because of that sweet drunkenness that the heavenly body had put into his senses.

In a while, Ricardo called him: the Marshal was there. It was his habit to leave at night, sometimes, at midnight, and to go from post to post. The fact spread throughout the public who appreciated him extraordinarily, and thus the president had yet another documented fact to solidify his fame as a consummate statesman.

Quaresma went to meet him. Floriano wore a wide-brimmed soft felt hat and a short worn-out overcoat. He had the air of a malefactor, or of an exemplary family head in an extramarital adventure.

The Major greeted him and was about to give him the news concerning the attack that at his post days ago. The Marshal responded in lazy monosyllables and looked around. When he was about to say farewell, he spoke some more, speaking leisurely, slowly:

—I ought to send for a searchlight.

Quaresma accompanied him up to the tram. They crossed the old site of recreation for emperors. A little far away from the station, a semi-lit locomotive wheezed. It seemed to sleep, to snore; the cars, small, bathed in moonlight, very quiet, tranquil as if they slept. The ancient mango trees, lacking some branches here and there, looked preciously powdered with silver. The moonlight was magnificent. The two walked; the Marshal asked:

—How many men do you have?

—Forty.

The Marshal muttered²³⁷: “it’s not much;” and fell silent again. In a moment, Quaresma saw his face flooded by the moonlight. The dictator’s visage appeared to him more sympathetic. What if he told him...

He prepared his question, but he did not have the courage to utter it. They kept walking. The Major thought: what’s the matter? There is no disrespect whatsoever. They neared the gate. Suddenly, he thought he’d heard a noise behind them. Quaresma glanced back, but Floriano barely turned his head.

²³⁷ Barreto uses the word *mastigou*, which means “chewed.”

The sawmill seemed covered in snow; such was the white of the moonlight. The Major kept chewing his question; he urged himself on, it was indispensable; the gate was two steps away. He took on courage, dared, and spoke:

—Has your Excellency read the petition, Marshal?

Floriano answered slowly, almost without raising his pendent lip:

—Yes²³⁸.

Quaresma was filled with enthusiasm:

—You see, your Excellency, how easy it is to elevate this country. If only the hindrances I pointed out in the petition that your Excellency had the goodness to read were removed; if only the errors of a legislature defective and inflexible to the conditions of the country were to be corrected, your Excellency would see that all these changes, that, instead of tributaries, we will keep our consummate independence... If your Excellency would like to...

As he talked, Quaresma progressively filled himself with enthusiasm. He could not see the visage of the dictator very well, his face covered as it was by the brim of his felt hat; but, if he had seen it, he would have frozen, since he wore a mask with signs of a most mortal annoyance. That chatter of Quaresma's, that appellation to legislation, governmental measures, were moving his thoughts, until he did not want any of it anymore. The President became vexed. Suddenly, he said:

—But, you think, Quaresma, that I ought to put a hoe in the hands of all these vagabonds?! There is no army that could possibly...

Quaresma was frightened, staggered, but retorted:

²³⁸ The original reads, *Li*, which is the verb *ler* in the first person indicative present. The omission of an overt subject makes the statement even more strong, or, in this case, lazy.

—But, that’s not it, Marshall. Your Excellency, with your prestige and power, is capable of facilitating, with energetic and adequate measures, the rise of initiatives, of starting the work, of favoring it, and making it remunerative... It would be enough, for example...

They were crossing the gate of the old Quinta of Pedro I. The moonlight was still gorgeous, plastic, and opalescent, making windowpanes and doors with its light on a great, unfinished building at the street, a palace of dreams.

Floriano heard Quaresma with much displeasure. The tram arrived; he said farewell to the Major, speaking with his customary placidity:

—You, Quaresma, are a visionary...

The tram departed. The moon filled the spaces, gave countenances to things, gave birth to dreams in our souls, filled life, with its borrowed light...

Chapter III: ...And Soon Became Silent...

—I have tried everything, Quaresma, but I don’t know... There’s no way!

—Have you already taken her to a specialist?

—Yes, already. I have run to doctors, spiritualists, even witch-doctors, Quaresma!

And the old man’s eyes bedewed behind his *pince-nez*. The two had met at the pay-office of the Ministry of War and come through the field of Sant’Ana on foot, walking with small steps, and talking. The General was taller than Quaresma, and while the latter had his head on top of a tall neck, the former had it shoved between two prominent shoulders, like the stumps of a bird’s wings. Albernaz spoke again:

—And remedies! Each doctor prescribes something; the spiritualists are the best, they give homeopathy; the sorcerers tisanes, prayers, incense-burning... I don't know, Quaresma!

And he raised his eyes to the sky, which was quite leaden. He did not remain in that posture for a very long time, however; the *pince-nez* did not allow it, it had already begun to fall.

Quaresma lowered his head and walked like this for a while, looking at the granulations of the granite sidewalk. He fixed his gaze ahead for some time, and said:

—Why don't you put her in a nursing home, General?

—My doctor already counseled me to do so... My wife doesn't want it and even now, in the state that the girl is in, it's not worth it...

He was speaking of his daughter, Ismênia, who, during those last few months, had become significantly worse, not so much of her mental disease, but of her common health, bedridden, always febrile, languishing, emaciating, marching with wide steps towards death's cold embrace.

Albernaz spoke truly; to cure her of her madness as well as of her actual current disease, he had made use of all resources, all counsels appointed by whatever person.

It made one reflect: seeing a general, a government man, searching for mediums and witch-doctors to cure his daughter.

Sometimes he would even take them home. The mediums went close to the young lady, trembled, their eyes wild, fixed, and screamed: "Leave, brother!"²³⁹—and they shook their hands quickly and nervously, with their chests to the young lady, attempting to unload miraculous fluids onto her.

²³⁹ This is one of the ways in which practitioners of Umbanda and other Afro-Brazilian religions, call spirits or deities.

The witch-doctors had other conjurations, and the ceremonies to enter into the knowledge of the occult forces that surrounded us were long, slow, and ornate. In general, they were black Africans. They arrived, lit a small stove in the room, removed a stuffed frog or some other strange thing from a basket, beat around sheaves of herbs, practiced the steps of the dance, and pronounced unintelligible words²⁴⁰. The ritual was complicated and had a specified length.

When it was over, the poor *Dona Maricota*, already a bit diminished in her energy and intelligence, looking tenderly at the sorcerer's great black face, made more venerable and grand with his white beard, asked:

—So, uncle?

The black man would consider for an instant, as if he was receiving the last communications of something one does not see nor perceive, and would say with his African majesty:

—I'll be seein' it, missus... I be makin' enchantments²⁴¹.

She and the General had watched the ceremony and the love for their child together with that element of superstition that is in all of us, drove her to look at her with respect, almost with faith.

—So, a spell was cast upon my daughter? the lady asked.

—It was, yes, missus.

—Who did it?

—The saint don't wanna say.

And the obscure black man, an old slave, pulled out from the confines of Africa half a century ago, left dragging his old age and leaving those two hearts a fleeting hope.

²⁴⁰ These “witch-doctors” or “priests” are sometimes known as *pais-de-santo*, literally, fathers of spirits/saints.

²⁴¹ The *pai-de-santo* speaks in an Afro-Portuguese dialect, like other black characters in the novel.

It was a singular situation, that of the black African, certainly still remembering the pains of his long captivity, using all the residues of his indigenous tribal creeds, residues that had strongly resisted his forced transplantation to the lands of other gods—and employing them for the consolation of his masters of another time. How the gods of his infancy and his race, those sanguinary fetishes of indecipherable Africa, were avenging him in the legendary manner of the Christ of the Gospel...

The infirm one watched everything without comprehending it or taking any interest in the paths of those steps of such powerful men that communicated with and took their orders from immaterial beings, the existences above and beyond ours.

Walking beside Quaresma, the General recollected all of this and had a bitter thought against science, against spirits, against spells, against God, who was removing his daughter from him little by little, without mercy and commiseration.

The Major did not know what to say while facing that immense fatherly pain and all his words of consolation seemed silly and idiotic. At last, he said:

—General, would you allow me to bring a doctor to her?

—Who is he?

—He is my goddaughter's husband... you know him... He is a young man, who knows!

Don't you think? It could work, couldn't it?

The General consented and the hope of seeing his daughter cured nourished his wrinkled face. Each doctor that he consulted, each spiritualist, each witch doctor reanimated him, since he expected a miracle from all of them. During that same day, Quaresma went in search of Doctor Armando.

The revolt had already four months of life and the government's victories were problematic. In the South, the insurrection was arriving at the doors of São Paulo, and only Lapa²⁴² was tenaciously resisting, one of the few clean pages in all that torrent of passions. The little city²⁴³ had in its trenches Colonel Gomes Carneiro, who proved himself a true force and will, because he was serene, trustworthy, and just. He did not fall apart into panic-stricken violent fits and he knew how to turn worn grandiloquent phrases into truth: to resist until death.

Governador Island had been occupied and Majé was taken; the insurgents, however, had the vast bay and the sandbanks tight in their grip, from where they left and entered, without fearing the opposition of the fortresses.

The violence, the crimes that had signaled these two marks of war-like activity of the government, arrived at Quaresma's ears and he suffered.

From Governador Island there was a true change of furniture, clothes, and other riches. What could not be transported was destroyed by fire or by ax.

The occupation left there the most execrable memory and until now their inhabitants still painfully remember a captain Ortiz, a volunteer, or a member of the national guard, by his restlessness and ferocious taste for pillaging and other hostilities. A fisherman went by, with a basket of fish, and the captain called the poor man:

—Come here!

The man frightfully approached Ortiz, who asked:

—How much for this?

—Three *mil-réis*, Captain.

²⁴² Lapa is a western district of the city of São Paulo.

²⁴³ During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, São Paulo was, indeed, a small city, relative to other large cities in Europe and North America of the time. Now, in the 21st century, São Paulo is the largest city in South America, and Greater São Paulo is a massive metropolitan area, encompassing an area of 8,500 square kilometers, and with a population of 20,731,917, according to the 2012 census.

He smiled diabolically and casually haggled:

—You would not sell it for less? ... It is expensive... Well now, this is ordinary fish! ...

Carapebas!

—Well, Captain, it can go for twenty five hundred.

—Take that inside.

He was speaking from his doorstep. The fisherman returned and stayed for some time standing there, showing that he was waiting for the money. Ortiz would shake his head and sneer:

—What money? Go charge Floriano!

However, Moreira César left good memories and today one is hard-pressed to find anyone who remembers him, thankful for this or that favor that the famous colonel rendered him.

The revolting forces seemed not to have weakened; they had, however, lost two ships, one of those being the *Javari*, whose reputation in the revolt was one of the highest and most well regarded. The land forces in particular hated it. It was a monitor, flat, even with the water, a type of saurian or chelonian of iron, of French build. Its artillery was feared; but what enraged above all its adversaries was that it had almost nothing outside the water, staying almost level with the sea, and thus escaping from the uncertain shots from the land. Its engines did not work, and the great turtle would put itself into battle with the help of a towboat.

One day, when it was around Villegagnon, it sank. No one knew and until now it was not made clear why it did so. The legalists affirm that it was a cannonball from Gragoatá; but the rebels confirmed that it was an opening in a valve or some other accident like that.

Like its brother, the *Solimões*, which disappeared behind Polônio Cape, the end of the *Javari* was still enveloped in mystery.

Quaresma remained in the garrison in Caju, and came to receive money. He had left Polidoro there, since the other officers were sick or on leave, and Fontes, who, being a type of inspector general, contrary to his habits, had slept that night in the small imperial pavilion and was going to remain there until the afternoon.

Ricardo Coração dos Outros, since the day he was prohibited from playing the guitar, was melancholy. They had taken away his blood, his reason for living. He passed his days taciturn, lying against a tree trunk, cursing in his depths the incomprehension of men and the caprices of destiny. Fontes had noticed his sadness; and, to lessen his grief, ordered Bustamante to make him into a sergeant. It was not without a cost, since the old veteran of Paraguay prized this graduation very much, and only gave it as an exceptional reward or when requested by special people.

The life of the poor minstrel was, thus, the life of a caged blackbird; and, from time to time, he would be alone for a while and practice his voice, to see if he still had it, and had not fled from him like the smoke of the shots.

Quaresma, knowing that in this way the post would be in good hands, resolved to delay his return for a while, and, after saying farewell to Albernaz, set out towards Coleoni's house, with the purpose of fulfilling the promise he had made to the General.

Coleoni had still not decided on his trip to Europe. He hesitated, awaiting the distant end of the rebellion. He had nothing to do with it; up until now, he had not told anyone his opinion; and, if he was forced to do so, he would appeal to his condition as a foreigner, and would put himself into prudent reservation. But, the requirement of a passport, obtained from the police headquarters, made him afraid. During those times, everybody was afraid of dealing with the authorities. There was such ill will towards foreigners, so much arrogance among the officers that he was not encouraged to go and obtain the document, fearing that one word, one look, one

gesture, interpreted by any zealous and dedicated officer, would cause him some bad quarter hours.

It was true that he was an Italian and Italy had already made known to the dictator. But he remembered a case where a sailor, whose life was extinguished by a discharge of legal forces, for which Floriano had paid the quantity of a hundred thousand. He, Coleoni, however, was not a sailor, and did not know, in case he was arrested, if the diplomatic representatives of his country would take interest in his liberty.

Of the rest, not having protested keeping his nationality, when the provisory government issued the famous decree of nationalization, it was possible that one or the other part would actuate themselves upon it, to disinterest themselves of him or to keep him in the famous gallery no. 7 of the Correction House, transformed, in a magic stroke, into a State prison.

The epoch was one of terror and fear, and what he felt he only communicated to his daughter, because his son-in-law was becoming more and more of a Florianist and Jacobin, from whose mouth he often heard hard invectives against foreigners.

And the Doctor had his reasons; he had already obtained a governmental favor. Besides being named the doctor of the Santa Barbara Hospital by taking the slot of a colleague who was fired for the good of public service, he was also suspected of having visited a friend in prison. Since the hospital was, however, in the islet of the same name, inside the bay, in front of the Saude and Guanabara Bay, which was still in rebel hands, he had nothing to do, since until now the government did not accept his offers to help treat the wounded.

The Major arrived and found the father and daughter at home. The Doctor had left, went for a ride around the town, to give pledges to his dedication to the legal cause, speaking with the most exalted Jacobins at the Rio Café, not forgetting as well to stroll through the alleys of

Itamarati, making himself seen by the aides-de-camp, secretaries, and other influential people within Floriano's good will.

The young lady saw Quaresma come in with that strange feeling that her godfather aroused in her lately, and this feeling sharpened when she saw him tell battle tales of his detachment—the flying of bullets, the shots from barges, naturally, simply, as if they were the happenings at a party, competition, or any entertainment where death was not present.

She also noticed him being apprehensive, perceiving this from a despondent or depressing phrase.

In truth, the Major had a thorn in his soul. His enthusiasm and sincerity were not roused by Floriano's reception of his suggested reforms, nor the idea he had had of the dictator. He had left to meet with Henry IV and Sully and had brushed against a president who called him a visionary, who did not analyze the reach of his projects, who did not even bother to examine them, disinterested with these high governmental matters as if they did not exist! ... It was for helping such a man that he had left the tranquility of his home and risked himself in the trenches? Was it, then, for this man that so many people were dying? What right did he have over the life and death of his fellow citizens, if he did not take interest in their fates, in the happiness and wealth of their lives, in the enrichment of the country, in the progress of its crops, and the wellbeing of its rural population?

There were instances in which a mortal despair came upon him when he thought about such things, a self-hatred; but he would then consider: the man is busy, he cannot do it now; but later he will certainly do these things...

He lived inside this painful alternative and it was that which brought him apprehension, despondency, and despair, noted by his goddaughter in his countenance, already a bit downcast.

He did not delay, however, when, abandoning the episodes of his military life, he turned to explain the motive behind his visit:

—But which of them? asked the goddaughter.

—The second, Ismênia.

—That one who was to marry the dentist?

—That one exactly.

—Ah! ...

She pronounced this “ah” very deeply, drawing it out, as if she laid all that she wanted to say about this case into it. She well saw what the young lady’s desperation did, but she saw its cause better, lying in that obligation that was incrusting into the girls’ spirits, that they ought to marry at all costs, making marriage into the sole aim and goal of life, to the point that it became a dishonor, an outrage, to remain single.

Marriage is no longer love, nor maternity, it is none of that: it is simply marriage, something empty, without any foundations neither in our nature nor in our necessities.

Thanks to the lassitude, the intellectual poverty, the weakness of Ismênia’s vital energy, the fact of her husband’s flight transformed itself into the certainty that she would never marry and everything in her foundered under this desperate idea.

Coleoni was very moved and took interest. He was good from his very depths, so even though he became callous and rough when fighting for his fortune, as soon as he saw himself rich, he lost this hardness with which he had reinforced himself, since he well noticed that one can only be good if one is strong in some way.

Lately, the Major had become less interested in the young lady; he went about tormented by his conscience. However, if he did not have a constant and particular thought concerning the

misfortune of Albernaz's daughter, he would still include it within his general, vast, and humane goodness.

He did not stay for long at his friend's house; he wanted, before returning to Caju, to pass by the battalion's barracks. He would see if he could arrange for a small leave to go visit his sister, who he had left in Tranquility, and from whom he had news, by letter, three times a week. The news was, in itself, satisfactory; nevertheless he had the need to see her as well as Anastácio, faces which he had daily encountered for so many years and whose contemplation he missed, and perhaps this would restore his composure and peace of mind.

In the last letter he had received from *Dona Adelaide*, there was a phrase that, in a moment, he recalled smiling: "Do not expose yourself too much, Policarpo. Be very careful." Poor Adelaide! Was she thinking that this business of bullets is like rain?! ...

The barracks were still in the old tenement condemned by the Hygiene, there around Cidade Nova. Quaresma turned the corner, the sentinel yelled loudly and made an immense noise with his gun as Quaresma entered, removing his hat from his low head, since he was in civilian clothes and had abandoned the top hat in the fear that this piece of clothing would injure the republican sensibilities of the Jacobins.

In the courtyard, the lame instructor addressed the new volunteers and his majestic and lengthy screams: shoooooulllders! ... Arms! Aboooout turn! The instructions climbed the skies and echoed lengthily throughout the walls of the old tenements.

Bustamante was in his room, or rather his office, irreprehensible in his bottle-green uniform, and gold lace and blue piping. With help of the sergeant, he was examining the writings of an official book.

—Red ink, sergeant! It's what the instructions of 1864 order.

It concerned an amendment or something of this sort.

As soon as he saw Quaresma come in, the commander radiantly exclaimed:

—The Major guessed!

Quaresma placidly put down his hat, drank a bit of water, and Colonel Inocência explained his satisfaction:

—Did you know we have to march?

—To where?

—I don't know... I received the order from Itamarati.

He would never say that it was from the headquarters, nor even from the Ministry of War; it was from Itamarati, from the President, from the Commander in Chief. It seemed that this gave more importance to himself and his battalion, made him into a type of Presidential Guard, a favorite and beloved of the dictator.

Quaresma was not surprised, nor was he annoyed. He perceived that it would be impossible to obtain a leave and also necessary to change his studies; from artillery, he would have to turn to infantry.

—The Major's the one who will command the corps, did you know?

—No, Colonel. And you, sir, won't you go?

—No, said Bustamante, smoothing his mosaic goatee and opening his mouth on the left side. I have to finish the organization of the unit and I cannot... Do not be frightened, I will join you later on...

The afternoon began as Quaresma left the barracks. The lame instructor continued with strength, majesty, and delay, to shout out: shoooooulllders! ... Arms! The sentinel could not make the noise he made at the entrance, because he only saw the Major when he was far away.

He descended towards the city and went to the post office. There were a few spaced shots; in the Rio Café, the Levites continued to exchange ideas for the definitive consolidation of the Republic.

Before arriving at the post office, Quaresma recalled the march. He ran to a bookstore and bought books about infantry; he needed the regulations as well: he would find one at the headquarters.

Where was he going? To the South, to Majé, to Niterói? He did not know... He did not know... Ah, if this was for the realization of his dreams and desires! But who knows? ... It could be... maybe... Later...

And he passed the day tormented by the doubt of the good use of his life and his energy.

Olga's husband did not object to seeing the General's daughter. He carried with him the intimate conviction that his brand new science could do something; but it did not work that way.

The young lady continued to unravel, and, if her obsession appeared to be a bit attenuated, her body was decaying. She was thin and weak, to the point of almost not being able to sit up in bed. She lived closest to her mother; the sisters were a bit uninterested, since the demands of their youth took them elsewhere.

Dona Maricota, having lost all of that old fervor for parties and balls, was always in her daughter's room, consoling her, stimulating her, and, sometimes, when she looked at her a lot, felt rather guilty of her daughter's infelicity.

The illness had put more firmness in *Ismênia's* traits, had diminished her lassitude, taken away the dullness of her eyes, and her beautiful chestnut hair, with golden reflections, made themselves more beautiful when surrounded by the pallor of her face.

It was rare when she spoke much; but during that day, *Dona Maricota* was quite amazed with the loquacity of her daughter:

—Mama, when does Lalá get married?

—When the revolt is over.

—The revolt is still not over?

The mother responded and *Ismênia* was quiet for an instant, looking at the ceiling. After this contemplation, she said to her mother:

—Mama...I am going to die...

The words left her lips, safely, sweetly, and naturally.

—Do not say this, my daughter, *Dona Maricota* responded. What, to die! You will get well; your father will take you to Minas; you will fatten up, get strong...

The mother said all this slowly, caressing her face with her hand, as if she spoke to a child. She heard everything with patience and said serenely in her turn:

—How, Mama! I know; I will die, and I will ask something of you...

The mother was frightened with the seriousness and firmness of her daughter. She looked around her, saw that the door was semi-closed and stood up to close it. She still wanted to see if she could dissuade her from that thought; *Ismênia*, however, kept repeating it patiently, sweetly, and serenely:

—I know, Mama.

—Well, I suppose it is true: what is it that you want?

—I want, Mama, to go dressed as a bride.

Dona Maricota still wanted to play, to joke; the daughter, however, turned to the other side, positioned herself for sleep, breathing with light spaced breaths. The mother left the room, moved, with tears in her eyes, and the secret certainty that her daughter spoke the truth.

The verification did not take long. Doctor Armando had visited her that morning for the fourth time; she appeared to be better for some days, spoke with discernment, stood up in bed, and talked pleasurably.

Dona Maricota had to make a visit and left the invalid to her sisters. They went to her room several times and she seemed to sleep. They distracted themselves.

Ismênia woke up: she saw, between the half-open doors of the wardrobe, her bride's dress. She wanted to have a closer look at it. She stood up barefooted and laid it out on the bed to contemplate it. The desire to dress herself with it came over her. She put on the skirt; and, at that time, there came upon her remembrances of her failed marriage. She recalled her fiancé, Cavalcânti's firm bony nose and faded eyes; but she did not recall all this with hatred, more as if remembering a place she had seen a very long time ago and had made an impression upon her.

The one she hatefully remembered was the fortuneteller. She eluded her mother one day, accompanied by a servant, and had managed to consult Mme. Sinhá. With what indifference did she answer her: doesn't return! That pained her... What an evil woman! Since that day... Ah! ... She finished buttoning up the skirt up on her little body, since she could not find the corset; and she went to the mirror. She saw her bare shoulders, her very white neck... She was surprised. Was that all hers? She touched herself a little and afterwards put on the crown. The veil affectionately caressed her shoulders, like the fluttering of a butterfly. She felt weak, felt something, she said an "oh" and fell backwards onto her bed, with her legs out... When they

came to see her, she was dead. She still had the crown on her head, and a breast, very white and round, jumped out of her little body.

The burial was the following day and Albernaz's house was full for two days, as during the days of the best parties.

Quaresma went to the burial; he did not like this ceremony very much; but he went, and went to see the poor young lady, in the coffin, covered with flowers, dressed as a bride, with the immaculate air of a picture. Little had changed. She was the same in there; it was Ismênia, with her poor and sorrowful nerves, her minute traits and, her beautiful hair, who was inside those four boards. Death had fixed her small beauty and her childlike aspect; and she was going to the grave with the insignificance, with the innocence, and the lack of strong accents that she had in life.

Contemplating those sad remains, Quaresma saw the coffin of the coach stop at the cemetery door, traversing the streets of gravestones—a multitude that crept, that touched itself, fought for space, in the narrowness of the plains and on the hillsides. Some graves looked as if with affection and wanted to draw near; in others transpired repugnancy for being so close. There was, in that mute labyrinth of decompositions, incomprehensible solicitations, revulsions, sympathies, and antipathies; there were arrogant tombstones, vain, proud, humble, happy, and sad; and through many percolated the effort, an extraordinary effort, to escape the leveling of death, to the extinction that it brings to conditions and to fortunes.

Quaresma was still contemplating the cadaver of the young lady when the cemetery surged to his eyes with its sculptures that piled up on each other, with vases, crosses, and inscriptions in some tombstones; in others, there were pyramids of flimsy stone, portraits,

extravagant bowers, complicated ornaments, delirious baroque things, to escape the anonymity of the grave, the end of all ends.

The inscriptions exuberate: they are long, they are brief; they have names, they have dates, surnames, filiations, all the certainty of the age of the dead that, down there, cannot be known any longer and is putrid mud.

And one feels the desperation in not encountering a known name, not even a celebrity, a notable, one of those names that fill decades and who, sometimes, though already dead, seem to still live. Everything is unknown; all those who want to escape from the grave towards the memory of the living, are happy anodynes and mediocre existences that passed through the world without being noticed.

And there went that young lady, down into that dark hole, to the end, without leaving in life a single deep trace of her person, of her sentiments, of her soul!

Quaresma wanted to distance himself from this sad sight and directed himself to the inside of the house. He was in the drawing room, where *Dona Maricota* also was, surrounded by other female friends, who said nothing to her. Lulu, in his college uniform, with a mourning band on his arm, napped on a chair. The sisters came and went. In the dining room, the General was silent, having at his side Fontes and other friends.

Caldas and Bustamante talked low, distanced; and when Quaresma passed by, he could hear the admiral say:

—What! They'll be here soon... The government is exhausted.

The Major stayed at the window that faced the back yard. The cloth of the sky had worn out: the blue was silky and fine; and everything tranquil, serene, and calm.

Estefânia, the doctor, the one with the malicious and hot eyes, passed by, by Lalá's side, who took, from time to time, a handkerchief to her already dry eyes, to whom that one said:

—I, if I was you, would not buy from there... It's expensive! Go to Bonheur des Dames... They say that they have good things and they're a bargain.

The Major turned again to contemplating the sky that covered the backyard. It had an almost indifferent tranquility. Genelício appeared excessively funereal. All in black, he had buckled onto his face the most profound mask of sadness. His bluish *pince-nez*, too, appeared to be grieving.

It was not possible for him to leave work; a service so urgent made him indispensable at the office.

—It is this, General, he said, if Doctor Genelício is not there, nothing happens... There is no way the Navy will send the right proceedings... It's such a disorder...

The General did not answer; he was downright dejected. Bustamante and Caldas continued to talk low. The rolling of a carriage could be heard on the street. Quinota arrived at the dining room.

—Papa, the coach is here.

The old man stood up with effort and went to the drawing room. He spoke to his wife, who stood up with a contracted face, expressing great effort. Her hairs already had many silver strands. She did not go a step further; she was still for an instant and soon fell back onto the chair, crying. Everyone was watching without knowing what to do; some wept; Genelício took a stand: he went about removing the tapers surrounding the coffin. The mother stood up, went up to the casket, kissed the cadaver: my daughter!

Quaresma went ahead, leaving with his hat in hand. At the hallway, he still heard Estefânia say to someone: the coach is pretty.

He left. On the street, there appeared to be a party. The children of the neighborhood surrounded the funeral car and made innocent comments about the golden braids and decorations. The garlands showed up and were being hung at the extremities of the coach's pillars: "To my dear daughter," "To my sister." The purple and black ribbons, with golden letters, moved slowly to the light wind.

The coffin appeared, all purple, with ornaments of gold lace, very shiny. All of that would go into the ground. The windows became populated, from one side of the street to the other; a boy in the neighboring house yelled from the street and into the house: "Mommy, there goes the lady's burial!"

The coffin was finally tied firmly to the hearse, whose horses, chestnut-colored, covered with a black net, impatiently pawed the ground.

Those who were to accompany it until the cemetery searched for their cars. They all embarked, and the funeral rolled on.

At that time, in the neighborhood, some immaculately white pigeons, the birds of Venus, raised flight, flapping noisily; they turned around above the coach and soon became silent, almost without beating their wings, towards the dove-cot that hid itself in the bourgeois backyards...

*Chapter IV: Boqueirão*²⁴⁴

Quaresma's ranch in Curuzu slowly returned to the state of abandon in which he had found it. The weeds grew back and covered everything. The crops Quaresma had planted disappeared into the invasion of grass, burrs, nettles, and other shrubs. The surroundings of the house offered a desolating sight, despite Anastácio's always vigorous and hard-working efforts, in his vigorous African old age, efforts, however, devoid of initiative, of method, and of continuous effort.

One day he would clear over there, another day here, then another piece, and in this way would jump from section to section, without any visible progress, allowing the lands and the house's surroundings to acquire a look of negligence that did not agree with his arduous work.

The ants returned as well, more terrible and destructive, winning over obstacles, devastating everything, remnants of cornfields, sprouts of fruit trees, even fleecing the guava trees with such energy and bravura that smiled upon the weak efforts of the former slave's limited intelligence, incapable of finding efficacious ways of battling against them or of driving them away.

Nevertheless, he planted. It was his obsession, his vice, a senile stubbornness. He had a vegetable garden that disputed daily with the *saiúvas*; and, as the animals in the neighborhood had invaded it one day, he protected it patiently with a fence of incongruous materials: unfolded kerosene cans, of good thickness, coconut tree leaves, coffin boards—despite the fact that he had as much bamboo as he could want.

²⁴⁴ The small outlet of a river or a beach located in such an outlet. In this case, it refers to the eponymous beach at the end of Guanabara Bay.

In his mind, there was a necessity towards the tortuous, the seemingly easy; and he did everything according to his inclination, as much in speech, with great roundabouts, as in the beds that he outlined, irregular, bigger there, smaller there, escaping from regularity, from parallelism, from symmetry, with an artistic horror.

The revolt had a pacifying effect over the place's local politics. All the parties had made themselves devotedly pro-government, in such a way that, between the contending powers, Doctor Campos and Lieutenant Antonino had a trace of a union that reconciled them and made them understand each other. A stronger contender arrived to dispute with the bone both of them had been fighting for, one that put the security of both of them in danger, and so they put themselves on hold and united for the while.

The candidate was nominated by the central government and the elections arrived. It is a very curious moment, this of countryside elections. No one really knows where so many exotic types come from. They are so strange that one could even expect them to show up dressed in leggings and ruffles, rapiers and jerkins. There were waistcoats, there were bellbottom pants, there were silk hats—all a sartorial museum of what those country people wore and, for that instance, wear daily, in those pot-holed streets and dusty roads of those villages and hamlets. There was no lack of braggarts, as well, in *bombacha*²⁴⁵ pants and great walking sticks of *pequia*²⁴⁶, ready for anything.

For the monotonous life that *Dona Adelaide* was leading, this parade of museum manikins by her gate heading towards the electoral section that was nearby, was entertainment. She would spend long and sad days in isolation. For quite a while, Felizardo's wife kept her

²⁴⁵ While two translations of the book decided to translate this term as “knickerbockers” (Bucleuch) and “baggy trousers” (Carlyon), I have decided to keep the original word in since it refers to a specific type of clothing, namely, the wide baggy pants worn by gauchos, residents of the Brazilian South who are known for being macho.

²⁴⁶ Amazonian tree with a rather strong wood.

company; *Sinhá Chica*, a very dark old mulatto, a type of skeletal Medea whose fame as a faith healer hovered over the entire municipality. There was not one such as she who knew how to pray for pains, end fevers, cure shingles, and was familiar with the effects of medicinal herbs: cow's tongue, sylvite, the lead-vine—that whole pharmacy that grew throughout the fields, the brush, and the trunks of trees.

Besides this knowledge that made her esteemed and respectable, she was also a midwife. In the surroundings, between the poor people, and even the wealthy ones, all births were under her care.

It was something to see how she grabbed a knife and shook the small domestic instrument in a cross, multiple times, over the seat of the pain or the task at hand, praying in a low voice, murmuring prayers that drove away the evil spirit that was there. She counted miracles, extraordinary victories, among her feats, attesting of her strange, almost magical, powers over the occult forces that persecute and help us.

One of the most curious days, and it was spoken of in all parts and at all times, consisted in her driving away caterpillars. The pests were in a bean-field, in the thousands, covering the leaves and the stalks; the owner was getting desperate and already thought of everything as lost when he recalled the marvelous powers of *Sinhá Chica*. There went the old woman. She put twig crosses on the borders of the farm, as if she was making a fence of an invisible material, onto which she leaned: she left an extremity open and put herself at the opposing side, praying. The miracle did not delay in happening. The vermin, in a morose and serpentine flock, as if they were being driven by the staff of a shepherd, went leaving ahead of her, slowly, two by two, by four, by ten, by twenty, and not even one was left behind.

Doctor Campos had absolutely no envy towards this rival. He armed himself with a little disdain towards the superhuman power of the woman, but he never appealed to the arsenal of laws that prohibited the practicing of her transcendental medicine. It would be unpopular; he was a politician.

In the country—it is not necessary to distance oneself much from Rio de Janeiro²⁴⁷—the two medicines coexist without anger and both attend to the mental and economical necessities of the population. That of *Sinhá Chica*, done almost for free, went to meet with the poor population, those within whose brains the manitous and fetishes still lived by contagion or by inheritance, inclined to exorcisms, benedictions, and incense burnings. Her clientele, however, was not comprised only of the land's poor, born or raised there; even the recent arrivals from different airs, Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards, who were succored by her supernatural force, not so much because of the price, or contracted from their environment, but also due to that strange European superstition that all blacks or persons of color penetrate the truth, are sagacious in discovering evil things, and in practicing sorcery.

While the fluidic and herbaceous therapy of *Sinhá Chica* attended to the miserable, to the very poor, that of Doctor Campos was required of the most cultivated and rich, whose mental evolution demanded the normal and official medicine.

Sometimes, one from one group would go to the other; it was during grave illnesses, the complicated, the incurable, when the herbs and the prayers of the miracle-worker did nothing and when the syrups and pills of the Doctor were impotent.

²⁴⁷ In fact, one still need not even leave an urban center to find faith healers. Some of them are even televangelists, who have made fortunes out of enormous faith healing sessions. The largest and most powerful of these churches is the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, or the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which even has some presence in the United States.

Sinhá Chica was not a very agreeable companion. She lived always submerged into her divine dream, lost in the mysterious powers of her spells, seated cross-legged, with lowered, fixed eyes with a weak shine, so crumpled and dry, appearing like the enamel on the eyes of a mummy.

She did not forget the saints, Holy Mother Church, the commandments, the orthodox prayers; though she could not read, she was versed in the catechism, and knew the sacred history in chunks, adding to them her own picturesque interpolations.

With Apolinário, the famous chaplain of the litanies, she was the strong spiritual force of the land. The vicar was relegated to the position of a functionary, a type of civil records official, in charge of baptism and marriage, since all communication with God and the Invisible made itself known through the mediation of *Sinhá* Chica or Apolinário. It is a duty to speak of marriages, but they could have well been forgotten, because our poor make little use of that sacrament, with common law marriage taking the place of the solemn Catholic institution.

Felizardo, her husband, little showed at Quaresma's house; and, if he showed up, it was at night, passing the days in the woods afraid of the draft, and as soon as he would arrive he'd ask his wife if the racket was already over. He lived in constant fear; slept dressed, leaping out the window, and hiding in thickets at the least murmuring.

He had two children, but what a miserable people! They added to the moral depression of their parents their poor physiques and a repugnant indolence. They were two lads: the older one, José, was reaching twenty years; both inert, soft, without strength or belief, not even in witchcraft, in the prayers and benedictions which was their mother's delight and earned the respect of their father.

There was no one who could make them learn anything or subject them to continuous labor. From time to time, there around every fifteen days, they would cut a cord of wood and sell it to the first tavern-keeper for half its value; they would return home happy, satisfied, with a vividly colored handkerchief, a bottle of cologne, a mirror, trinkets that denounced their very savage tastes.

They would then pass a week at home, sleeping or roaming the streets and shops; at night, almost always during holidays and Sundays, they would leave with the harmonica to play pieces, which they were very good, their presence being in high demand in the balls of the neighborhood.

Though their parents lived in Quaresma's house, they would rarely appear there; and, if they did, it was because they had nothing to eat. They took the carelessness of life, the improvidence of it, to the point of not being afraid of the draft. They were, however, dedicated, loyal, and kind lads, but continuous work, from day to day, was repugnant to their natures, as if it was a punishment or castigation.

This atony in our population, this type of sickly despondency, this nirvanesque indifference towards all and everything, is surrounded by a heavy mist of desperate sadness in our countryside, and it takes away the enchantment, the poetry, and the seductive exuberance of plain nature.

It seems that not even the great oppressed countries of Poland, Ireland, and India have this cataleptic aspect in our countryside. Everything here sleeps, naps, appears dead; in those countries there is revolt, there is escape towards a dream; in ours... Oh! ... It sleeps...²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Recently, during the Summer (in the Northern hemisphere) of 2013, there were a series of protests whose motto was *o gigante acordou*, or "the giant has awakened." Brazilians often consider their country to be the "giant" of South America, one that never woke up, and, following the nation's narcoleptic culture, will never awake.

Quaresma's absence brought to his ranch this general atmosphere. Tranquility appeared to sleep, to sleep by enchantment, waiting for the prince that would awaken it.

Agricultural machines, which had not yet served their purpose, rusted with the factory's tag on them. Those plows with steel tips, which had arrived with resplendent cutters, with a soft bluish shine, were now hideous and died of tedium in the abandon where they lay, gesturing full of anguish towards the mute sky. In the morning, one could no longer hear the clucking of the birds in the chicken coop, the flight of pigeons—all these morning hymns of life, of work, of plenty, were no longer married to rosy dawn and with the merry chirping of the birds; and nobody saw the silk-cotton trees in bloom, with their beautiful rosy and white flowers that, in spaces, fell softly like wounded birds.

Dona Adelaide did not have the taste nor activity for superintending these services, and to enjoy the poetry of the farm. She suffered from the separation from her brother and lived as if she was in the city. She bought groceries from the market and did not bother herself with the tasks of the ranch.

She yearned for the return of her brother; she wrote him desperate letters, to which he responded advising patience, making promises. The last one she received, however, had, suddenly, another tone altogether; it was no longer confident, full of enthusiasm; it brought despondency, discouragement, even despair.

“Dear Adelaide. Only today could I answer your letter, which I received almost two weeks ago. , I had just been wounded as it arrived in my hands, a light wound, true, but one which took me to bed and brought me to a long convalescence. What a fight, my dear! What horror! When I remember him, I pass my hands over my eyes as if I were driving away a bad vision. I am horrified with the war in such a way that nobody can evaluate it... A confusion, an

infernal zooming of bullets, sinister brightness, imprecations—and all this in the bosom of the deep darkness of the night... There were moments when we abandoned the firearms: we would fight with bayonets, with the butts of our rifles, with axes, machetes. My dear: a combat of troglodytes, something prehistoric... I doubt, I doubt, doubt of the justice in all this, doubt of its *raison d'être*, doubt that it is right and necessary to go and take from within our depths all this dormant ferocity, that ferocity that made itself and deposited itself in us through the millennia-long combat with beasts, when we disputed our lands with them... And I did not see the men of today; I saw Cro-Magnon men, Neanderthals armed with flint axes, merciless, loveless, without dreams of generosity, killing, always killing... This, your brother you see, also made his own, also discovered in himself much brutality, much ferocity, much cruelty... I killed, my sister; I killed! And, not content with killing, I still discharged a shot when the enemy gasped at my feet... Forgive me! I ask for your forgiveness, because I need forgiveness and I do not know who to ask for it, to what God, to what man, to whoever, ultimately... You cannot imagine how this makes me suffer... When I fell under a wagon, what hurt was not the wound, it was my soul, it was my conscience; and Ricardo, who was wounded and fell by my side, groaning and asking—‘Captain, my cap, my cap!’—It seemed to me that my own mind ironized my destiny...

“This life is absurd and illogical; I already fear living, Adelaide. I fear, because we do not know where we will go, what we will do tomorrow, in such a way that we contradict ourselves from sunrise to sunset...

“The best is not to act, Adelaide; and since my duty discharges me from these responsibilities, I will go live in the most absolutely possible quiet, so that from the depths of myself or the mystery of things there is no provocation for my action and the surging energies foreign to my will, which make me suffer more, and take away from the sweet flavor of living...

“Besides all this, I think all of my sacrifice has been useless. All that I put into my mind was not reached, and the blood I shed, and the suffering that I will suffer my whole life, were employed, were spent, were spoiled, were vilified, and demoralized in favor of some political stupidity...

“Nobody comprehends what I want, nobody wishes to comprehend and to feel; I am perceived as mad, silly, a maniac, and life goes on inexorably with its brutality and ugliness.”

As Quaresma said in the letter, his wound was not grave. It was, however, delicate and demanded time for a complete cure without any complications. Ricardo, this one, was wounded more gravely. And if Quaresma’s suffering was profoundly moral, that of Coração dos Outros was physical and he would not tire of groaning and imprecating against his luck, which had dragged him to the position of a combatant.

The hospitals in which they were treated were separated by the bay, now insurmountable, the travel from one side to the next taking a good twelve hours by railroad.

So much in the going as in the return, wounded as he was, Quaresma had passed by the station where he had lived. The train, however, would not stop, and he limited himself in laying upon the small door a long homesick look to his Tranquility of the poor soil and old trees, where he had dreamt of reposing calmly for his whole life; and which, however, had launched him into the most terrible of adventures.

And he asked himself, where, in the land, was the true tranquility, where could he find this repose for the mind and body, which he longed for so much, after these agitations through which he had passed—where? And the map of the continents, the charters of countries, the plans of cities, passed by his eyes and he did not see, did not find one country, one province, one city, one street where it would exist.

His feeling was that of fatigue, not physical, but moral and intellectual. He had the desire to not think anymore, to not love anymore; he wanted, above all, to live, physical pleasure, the pure and simple material sensation of living.

Thus, he convalesced for a long time, slowly, melancholically, without one visit, without seeing one friendly face.

Coleoni and his family had retired outside; the General, due to laziness and negligence, did not go see him. He lived alone, involved in the suavity of convalescence, thinking of Destiny, of his life, of the ideas, and, above all else, of his delusions.

Nevertheless, the revolt in the bay was at an end; everyone already had a presentiment of that, and they wanted this relief.

The Admiral and Albernaz observed this end with sadness, both for the same motives. The first saw his dream of commanding a squadron taking flight and consequently his return to active service; and the General felt his commission, which profits made such notable a change to his family's situation, lost.

Early in the morning, *Dona Maricota* had woken up her husband:

—Chico, wake up! You have to go to Senator Clarimundo's Mass...

Hearing the wife's summons, Albernaz rose from bed. It was necessary that he did not miss this. His presence imposed and signified a good deal. Clarimundo was a historical republican, an agitator, a feared tribune, during the time of the Empire; after the Republic, though, he had not presented anything useful or beneficent to his peers at the Senate. Despite this, his influence remained great; and, along with many others, he was called a patriarch of the Republic. There are, in these republican magnates, an extraordinary necessity of being glorious and not forgotten by posterity, in which they take a stubborn interest.

Clarimundo was one of these magnates and, during the commotion his prestige grew—no one knows why—and he was already being considered a substitute for the Marshal. Albernaz vaguely knew him, but watching his Mass was a political statement.

The pain caused by his daughter's death had already faded much in his memory. The young lady's semi-life, sunk into madness and in illness, made him suffer. Death has the virtue of being brusque, shocking, but not corroding, like long illnesses in loved ones; the shock having passed, a sweet memory of the loved one remains within us, a good visage always present to our eyes.

Such was the case with Albernaz, and his satisfaction in living and his natural joviality were insensibly returning.

Obedient to his wife, he prepared himself, dressed himself, and left. As much as they were still in full revolt, these funereal offices were made in the churches at the center of town. The General arrived in time, to the hour. There were uniforms and top hats and everyone compressed themselves to sign the entry book. Not so much that they wanted to attest their support to the deceased's family with this delicate act; the hope of having their names in the newspapers reigned in them.

Albernaz did not forget to put himself in one of the books that was on one of the sacristy's table; and, when he was going to sign, someone spoke to him. It was the Admiral. The Mass was about to begin, but both avoided entering the crowded nave, and remained under the vane of a window, in the sacristy, talking.

—So, it ends soon, eh?

—They say that the fleet already left Pernambuco.

It was Caldas who spoke first and the General's answer made him smile ironically, saying:

—Finally...

—The bay is surrounded by cannons, continued the General, after a pause, and the Marshal will summon them to surrender

—It's about time, said Caldas... If it was up to me, the whole thing would already be over... Taking almost seven months to put down some rusty tubs!

—You exaggerate, Caldas; the thing was not so easy like that... And the sea?

—What did the fleet do for so long in Recife, will you tell me? Ah! If it was up to yours truly, they would've already left and attacked... I am for prompt decisions...

The priest, in the interior of the church, continued to ask God for the rest of Senator Clarimundo's soul. The mystical smell of incense came to them and the votive perfume, votive to the God of peace and goodness, did not move them away from war-like thoughts.

—Just between us, added Caldas, no one's of any use... This is a lost country, it'll end up being an English colony...

He nervously scratched one of his sideburns and looked for a while at the floor tiles. Albernaz advanced, half sarcastically:

—Not now; now, the authority is esteemed, consolidated, and an era of progress will open for Brazil.

—But what! Where have you seen a government...

—Lower, Caldas!

—... where have you seen a government take no advantage of its talents, abandoning them, leaving them to vegetate? ... It's the same with our natural riches: they lie around doing nothing!

The hand bell sounded and they looked a while at the crowded nave. By the door, there could be seen a portion of men, all in black, kneeling, contrite, beating their chests, confessing from self to self: *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa...*

A beam of sunlight poured down through one of the openings on high and shone over some heads.

Insensibly, the two, in the sacristy, took their hands to their chests and confessed as well: *mea culpa, mea maxima culpa...*

The Mass came to an end and both entered into the embrace of the litany. The nave reeked of incense and it had a tranquil aspect of immortality.

Everyone had a great air of compunction: friends, parents, acquaintances, and strangers appeared to suffer equally. Albernaz and Caldas, as soon as they penetrated the body of the church, caught in the air a profound sentiment and strapped it to their faces.

Genelício had come as well; he was addicted to the Masses of important people, of mourning cards, of birthday greetings. Fearing that memory would not help him, he possessed a small notebook where he put down birthday dates and addresses, as well. The index was carefully organized. There was not one mother-in-law, niece, aunt, sister-in-law, important man, who, during their birthday, would not receive his good wishes, and whose death would not bring him to a seventh day Mass.

His mourning costume was of thick heavy cloth; and, looking at him, one was soon reminded of a Dantesque punishment.

In the street, Genelício brushed his top hat with his overcoat's sleeve and said to his father-in-law and the Admiral:

—The thing is about to end...! Soon...

—And if they resist? asked the General.

—What! They won't resist. It's going around that they have already proposed to surrender... It is necessary to arrange for a demonstration with the Marshal.

—I don't believe it, said the Admiral. I know Saldanha very well, he is proud and won't hand himself in like this...

Genelício became a bit afraid with his parent's tone; he was afraid that he would speak louder, be seen, and compromise himself. He shut up; Albernaz, however, advanced:

—There is no pride that can resist a stronger fleet.

—Strong! Some rusty old tubs, man!

Caldas was strongly containing the fury that surged in his soul. The sky was blue and calm. There were white clouds in it, light, torn, moving slowly like sails in that infinite sea.

Genelício looked at him for a bit and counseled:

—Admiral, do not speak like this... Look that...

—What! I am not afraid... What rubbish! ...

—Well, said Genelício, I have to go to Primeiro de Março Street and...

He said farewell and left with his leaden costume, curved, looking at the ground with his bluish *pince-nez*, tramping on the street with little careful steps.

Albernaz and Caldas still talked for some time and said goodbye, always friendly, each with their own displeasures and their own disappointments.

They were right: the revolt came to an end within a few days. The government fleet entered; the revolting officials took refuge in the Portuguese ships of war and Marshal Floriano became the lord of the bay.

On the day of the entrance, believing that there would be a bombardment, a great part of the population left the city, taking refuge in the suburbs, under the trees, in the houses of friends, or in the hangars built by the State for that purpose.

It was something to see the terror that was stamped in those faces, the anxiety and the anguish as well. They brought with them bundles, wicker baskets, small suitcases; crying children on bosoms, the dear parrot, the pet dog, the little bird that for a very long time broke the sadness of a poor house.

What most put fear in the populace was the *Niterói's* famous dynamite cannon, a showy American invention, a terrible instrument, capable of causing earthquakes and of shaking the foundations of Rio's granite mountains.

The women and children, even out of reach of its power, feared hearing its thunder; nevertheless, this Yankee ghost, this nightmare, this near force of nature, died abandoned in a quay, disregarded and inoffensive.

The end of the rebellion was a relief; things were already becoming monotonous and the Marshal gained superhuman status with the victory.

Quaresma was discharged at this time; and a unit of his battalion was detached to guard the Isle of Enxadas. Inocência Bustamante remained as the superintendent of the corps with much zeal, from inside his office, in the condemned tenement that served as the barracks. The bookkeeping was up-to-date and had the best handwriting.

Policarpo accepted with repugnance the job of jailer, since in the Isle of Enxadas were deposited the imprisoned sailors. His torments of the soul grew with the execution of this function. He almost did not look at them; he was ashamed, merciful, it appeared to him that one among them knew the secrets of his conscience.

Of the rest, all the systems of ideas that made him get in the civil war had collapsed. He did not meet with Sully and even less so with Henry IV. He well felt that his motive thoughts did not reside into any of these people he had met. Everyone had arisen with puerile political thoughts, or for personal interest; nothing superior drove them. Even among the young men, who were many, if there was not a base interest, there existed in them a fetishistic adoration of the republican form, an exaggeration of its virtues, a penchant for despotism that his studies and meditations could not find to be just. His disillusionment was great.

The prisoners piled up in the cadets' old classrooms and quarters. There were simple sailors; there were non-commissioned officers; there were clerks and shipboard workers. Whites, blacks, mulattos, *caboclos*, people of all colors and all description, people who had put themselves into such an adventure out of the habit of obeying, a people entirely strange to debate, people torn away by force from their homes or from street sidewalks, little, tender, or who had enlisted because of their misery; unlearned people, simple, sometimes cruel and perverse like unconscientious children; sometimes, good and docile like a lamb, but, finally, people without responsibility, without political anxieties, without free will, simple automatons in the hands of bosses and superiors who had abandoned them to the mercy of the victor.

In the evening, he would go for a stroll, looking at the sea. The breeze was still blowing and the gulls kept fishing. The boats passed by. Sometimes, there were smoky barges that headed to the bottom of the bay; sometimes small skiffs or canoes, rocking carefully on the surface of

the water, swinging to and fro, as if their white bellied sails wanted to caress the mirrored surface of the abyss. The distant Orgão mountains appeared softly drying on the soft violet; and the rest was blue, an immaterial blue that inebriated, intoxicated, like a heady liquor.

He would stay like this for a long time, watching, and when he returned, he would look at the city entering into shadow, at the bloody kisses of the sunset.

Night would come and Quaresma kept strolling at the edge of the sea, meditating, thinking, suffering with those remembrances of hatred, streams of blood, and ferocity.

Society and life appeared to him horrible things, and he imagined that from their examples emerged the crimes that the same punished, castigated, and sought to restrain. They were black and desperate, his ideas; he often thought he was delirious.

And then he would lament being alone, not having a companion with whom to talk to, who would allow him to escape from those sad thoughts that harassed him and that were transforming themselves into obsessions.

Ricardo was garrisoned at the Isle of Cobras; and, even if he was with Quaresma, the rigors of discipline would not allow him to have a very friendly conversation. Night would fall completely, and silence and darkness would envelop everything.

Quaresma remained for hours in the open air thinking, looking into the depths of the bay, where there were almost no lights to interrupt the continuity of nocturnal obscurity. He would fix his eyes there, as if he wanted to habituate himself to it and penetrate indecipherable things and guess the shape of the mountains inside the black shadows, the outline of the islands that night had made disappear.

Fatigued, he would sleep. He would not always sleep well; he had insomnia and, if he wanted to read, his attention refused to fix itself and his mind would wander very far away from the book.

A certain night in which he was sleeping better, an inferior came and woke him up at around midnight:

—Mr. Major, there's some guy²⁴⁹ from Itamarati here.

—What man?

—The official that's searching the Boqueirão gang.

Without hitting upon what this was about, he rose and went to meet the visitor. The man was already inside one of the quarters. An escort was at the door. Some soldiers were following him, some of which carried a lantern that poured a weak yellowish light into the great hall. The vast room was full of bodies, lying down, semi-nude, and there were all sorts of human iris colors. Some snored, others merely slept; and, when Quaresma entered, there was someone who, dreaming, groaned—oh! They greeted each other, Quaresma and the emissary from Itamarati, and they said nothing. Both were afraid of speaking. The official woke up one of the prisoners and said to the soldiers: “Take this one.”

He went ahead and awoke another:—“Where were you?” “Me”—responded the sailor—“I was in Guanabara...” “Ah! Scoundrel!” retorted the man from Itamarati... “This one, too... Take him!” ...

The escorting soldiers went up to the door, left the prisoner, and returned.

The official passed by a portion of them and did not notice anything; further up, he met with a frail, clear-complexioned young man, who was not sleeping. He then yelled: “Stand up!”

²⁴⁹ The inferior says *home*, an abbreviation of *homem*, or “man.”

The young man stood up, shaking.— “Where were you?” he asked—“I was a nurse,” replied the young man.—“What, nurse!” said the emissary. “Take this one, too...”

—But, Mr. Lieutenant, let me write to my mother, asked the young man, almost crying.

—What, mother! responded the man from Itamarati. Follow! Go!

And so went a dozen, chosen by guesses, by chance, surrounded by the escort, embarking on a punt that a barge soon towed away from the island’s waters.

Quaresma did not immediately hit upon the sense of the scene, and it was only after the distancing of the barge that he found an explanation.

He did not leave thinking then for what mysterious force, for what chronic injunction had he mixed himself into such dark happenings, watching the sinister foundation of the regime...

The embarkation did not go far. The sea groaned slowly from meeting the stones of the quay. The wake of the ship shone phosphorescently like the stars. High up, in a black and profound sky, the stars shone serenely.

The barge disappeared into the darkness of the back of the bay. To where would it go? To the Boqueirão...

Chapter V: The Goddaughter

How did he think it illogical for him to be shut up in that narrow dungeon? Did he, placid Quaresma, Quaresma of such profound patriotic thoughts, deserve this sad end? By what cunning had Destiny dragged him there, without him having any way to foresee her extravagant designs, so apparently without relation with the rest of his life? Did it have anything to do with his past acts, with his actions imprisoned in time, which had caused that old god to docilely lead

him to the execution of his purpose? Or had it been external factors, that won over him, Quaresma, and made him a slave of omnipotent divinity? He did not know, and, when he persisted in thinking, the two reasons shuffled around, entangled, and the exact and certain conclusion escaped him.

He had not been there for many hours. He was arrested in the morning, as soon as he got out of bed; and, by the approximate calculation of time he imagined it could be eleven o'clock, since he had no watch, and even if he had one he would not be able to consult it under the weak light of the dungeon,.

Why was he under arrest? To be certain, he did not know; the official who had conducted him had nothing to say to him; and, since he had left the Isle of Enxadas to that of Cobras, he had not exchanged a word with anyone, had not seen any acquaintance on the way, not even Ricardo himself who could, with a look, with a gesture, bring calm to his doubts. However, he attributed his imprisonment to the letter he had written to the president, protesting against the scene he witnessed on the eve of his arrest.

He could not contain himself. That levy of miserable people to leave like that, in such early hours, chosen by chance, taken to a faraway charnel house, spoke deeply to all his sentiments; it had put all his moral principles in front of him; it had challenged his moral courage and his human solidarity; and he wrote a vehement letter, with passion, indignant. He omitted nothing in his mind; he spoke clearly, frankly, and in a clear hand.

It must have been because of that that he was in this dungeon, caged up, under lock and key, isolated from his fellows like a beast, like a criminal, buried in the darkness, suffering the humidity mixed with his own excrement, almost without eating... What will become of me? What will become of me? And the question would come to him, in the middle of that flock of

thoughts that his anguish provoked him to think. There was no foundation for any hypothesis. The Government was of such irregular and uncertain conduct that he could expect anything from them: liberty or death, more the latter than the first²⁵⁰.

The time was one of death, of carnage; everyone had a thirst for killing, to affirm victory more strongly, and to feel it well in one's conscience a thing of one's own, proper, and highly honorable.

He would die. Who knew, maybe even on that same night? And what had he done with his life? Nothing. He had lived it behind the mirage of studying the Homeland, to love it, and desire it intensely, under the intention of contributing to its happiness and prosperity. He had wasted his youth, and his virility as well, in this; and, now in his old age, how did it reward him, how did it award him, how did it decorate him?²⁵¹ By killing him. And what he had left off seeing, enjoying, flourishing, in his life? Everything. He had not played, he had not reveled, he had not loved—the whole side of existence that appears to take a man away from his necessary sadness, he had not seen, he had not tried it, he had not experienced it.

Since he was eighteen years old this patriotism had absorbed him and for it he had made the folly of studying inutilities. What mattered to him the rivers? Were they large? So they were... In what had this contributed to his happiness, this of knowing the names of Brazil's heroes? Nothing... The important thing was if he had been happy. Was he? No. He recalled his *tupi*, the folklore, his agricultural attempts... Did any of these things leave in his soul any satisfaction? None! None!

²⁵⁰ This is perhaps a dark parody of the words exclaimed by Pedro I, when he declared Brazilian independence from Portugal on September 7, 1822: "*Independência ou a morte!*" (Independence or death!).

²⁵¹ Though this is not explicit in English, Quaresma is referring to the Homeland, *patria*, which is feminine, and throughout the sentence he uses *ela* to refer to it.

Tupi found with general incredulity, laughter, derision, scorn, and brought him to madness. A disillusion. And agriculture? Nothing. The soil was not fertile nor was it easy to cultivate as the books had said. Another disillusion. And, when his patriotism had made him into a combatant, what had he found? Disillusions. Where was the sweetness of that people? For, had he not seen them fight like beasts? For, had he not seen them kill prisoners, innumerable of them? Another disillusion. His life was one disillusionment, a series, better, a chain of disillusionments²⁵².

The Homeland he had wanted was a myth; it was a ghost created by him in the silence of his office. It did not exist in the physical, moral, intellectual, or political sense he judged to exist. What existed, in fact, were the homelands of Lieutenant Antonino, of Doctor Campos, of the man from Itamarati.

And, well thought out, even in its purity, what did the Homeland live up to? Had he not led his life oriented by an illusion, by a worthless idea, foundationless, insupportable, by a God or Goddess whose empire was vanishing? He did not know if that idea was birthed from the amplification of the superstition of the Greco-Roman peoples from where the dead ancestors continued to live as shadows and it was necessary to feed them so they would not chase after the descendants? He recalled Fustel de Coulanges²⁵³... He recalled that this notion is nothing to the people of the Menena tribe, for so many people... It appeared to him that this idea as it was explored by the conquerors during knowledgeable instants in our psychological subservience, with the intent of serving their own ambitions...

²⁵² Barreto uses the word *decepção* throughout this whole sentence. Though the word can mean “disillusionment” or “disillusion”, it also carries the senses of “disappointment,” further strengthening the idea of Quaresma’s sad fate.

²⁵³ Fustel de Coulanges (1830-1889) was a French historian who wrote of ancient France.

He revisited history; saw the mutilations, their increments in all historical countries, and he asked himself: how could a man that lived for four centuries being French, Italian, German, feel the Homeland?

One time, to the French, the Frank county was the land of his grandparents, at another it was not; within a given moment, Alsatia was no more, then it was, and at last was not to be seen.

We ourselves, did we not have the Cisplatina and did we not lose it; and, perchance, do we not feel that the spirits of our grandfathers are there, and because of this we suffer sorrow?

But, how did he who was so serene, so lucid, employ his life, waste his time, grow old seeking such a chimera? How had he not seen reality clearly, had not foreseen it early and let himself be deceived by a fallacious idol, to absorb himself into it, to give it in holocaust the whole of his existence? It was his isolation, his forgetting about himself; and this way he would go to the grave, without leaving a single trace, without a child, without a love, without a warm kiss, without anyone at all, and not even one blunder!

He had left nothing that would mark his passage, and the land had given him nothing appetizing.

Although, who knew if the ones who would follow in his footsteps would not be happier? And he soon answered himself: but how? If he had not communicated, had said nothing, and had not caught his dream, giving it body and substance?

And would this pursuing serve for anything? And would this continuity bring some happiness to the earth? For how many years had lives more valuable than his been offered, sacrificed, and things remained the same, the land in the same misery, the same oppression, the same sadness.

And he recalled that a good hundred years ago, there, in that same place where he was, perhaps even the same prison, generous and illustrious men had been arrested for wanting to improve the state of things of their time. Perhaps they had only thought of it, but they suffered for their thought. Had this brought any benefit? Had the general conditions improved?

Apparently, yes; but, well examined, no.

Those men, accused of such nefarious crimes by the legislation of the time, had taken two years to be judged; and he, who had no crime, was not even heard, not even judged; he was simply executed!

He was good, he was generous, he was honest, he was virtuous—he, who despite all this, would go to the grave without the accompaniment of a relative, of a friend, of a comrade...

Where were they? Would he never lay eyes again Over Ricardo Coração dos Outros, so simple and so innocent in his obsession in his guitar? It would be so good if he could do so, to send a last message to his sister, a goodbye to black Anastácio, to embrace his goddaughter! He would never see them anymore, never!

And he briefly wept.

Quaresma, however, was partially mistaken. Ricardo knew of his imprisonment and was searching to release him. He received notice of its exact motive; but he was not intimidated. He knew perfectly well that he ran a great risk, since the indignation in the palace was universal. The victory had made the victors inclement and ferocious, and that protest sounded among them like a wish of diminishing the worth of the advantages they had reached. There was no more mercy, there was no more sympathy, nor respect for human life; what was needed was to give a sample of a Turkish massacre, a clandestine one, though, so that the power they had formed was never attacked or even discussed. It was the social philosophy of the era, with the force of

religion, with their fanatics, with their clerics and preachers, and it acted with the maleficence of a strong creed, over which we lay down the happiness of many.

Ricardo, however, was not frightened; he looked for the influence of friends. Upon entering São Francisco Plaza he found Genelício. He was coming out of the Mass of Deputy Castro's mother-in-law's sister. As always, he donned a heavy black overcoat that looked like it was made of lead. He was already subdirector and his work now involved imagining ways and means of becoming director. The thing was difficult; but he was working on a book: *The Audit Offices of Asiatic Countries*—which, demonstrating a superior erudition, would perhaps take him to the place he coveted.

Seeing him, Ricardo did not restrain himself. He ran up to him at the sidewalk and spoke to him:

—Doctor, would your Excellency allow me to have a word with you?

Genelício profiled himself and, as if he had a terrible memory for humble faces, asked with solemnity and arrogance:

—What do you want, comrade?

Coração dos Outros was in his Southern Cross uniform and it would not do well to Genelício to be seen as familiar with a soldier. The troubadour judged himself to have forgotten him and inquired ingenuously:

—You do not know me any more, Doctor?

Genelício closed his eyes a little from behind his bluish *pince-nez* and said drily:

—No.

—I, Ricardo said with humility, am Ricardo Coração dos Outros, who sang at your wedding.

Genelício did not smile, did not give any shows of happiness and limited himself to:

—Ah, it's you! Well, what do you want?

—Do you know that Major Quaresma is imprisoned?

—Who is he?

—The one who was your father-in-law's neighbor.

—That madman... Huh! ... So what?

—I was wondering if you could...

—I don't get into such things, my friend. The government knows best. Farewell.

And Genelício went on with his careful steps of one who spares the soles of his boots, while Ricardo stood there looking at the plaza, at the people who passed by him, the immobile statue, the ugly houses, the church... Everything appeared to him hostile, bad, or indifferent; those men's faces had the aspects of beasts and he wanted for a moment to cry out in despair, for not being able to save his friend.

He remembered, however, Albernaz, and he ran in search of him. It was not far, but the General had still not arrived. At the end of an hour the General arrived and, finding Ricardo, asked:

—What is it?

The troubadour, very emotional, explained all the facts to him with a doleful voice.

Albernaz fixed his *pince-nez*, arranged the gold chainlet on his ear, and said softly:

—My son, I cannot... You know I am pro-government and if I were to ask for a prisoner it would mean that I am not much of a supporter... I am very sorry, but... what is one to do? Patience.

And he entered his pleasant office, very certain of himself, inside his placid general's uniform.

The officials continued to enter and exit; the bells sounded; the continuums came and went; and Ricardo searched among these faces for one that could help him. There was none and he despaired. But who could it be? Who? He remembered: the commander; and he went to meet with Colonel Bustamante, in the old tenement that served as an office to the distinguished Southern Cross.

The battalion was still on a war footing. Though the revolt was finished on the ports of Rio de Janeiro it was necessary to send forces to the South; in such a way that the battalion had not been dissolved and one of them appointed to leave was the Cross.

The lame ensign, in the soapy courtyard of the old tenement, continued on his routine of instructor to the new recruits. Shoooooou-l-ders...Arms! Aboooooout turn!

Ricardo entered, quickly ascended the old tenement's swaying staircase and as soon as he arrived at the commander's office, he yelled out: "Excuse me, commander!"

Bustamante was in a bad mood. That business of leaving for Paraná did not please him. How was he supposed to superintend the books of the battalion, in the heat of battle, in the disorder of the marches and countermarches? This was a silly thing, this of a commander marching; the chief should remain on the rear, to provide and direct the books.

He was thinking of these things when Ricardo excused himself.

—Come in, he said.

The brave colonel scratched his great mosaic beard, unbuttoned his dolman, and put on one of his boots on his feet, so that he could receive the inferior with more decency.

Ricardo laid out his request and waited patiently for the response, which was slow to come. At last, Inocêncio said shaking his head and looking full of severity at the inferior:

—Be off, or else I'll imprison you! Now!

And he pointed his finger to the exit with a martial and energetic gesture. The corporal did not delay any longer. In the courtyard, the lame instructor, a veteran of Paraguay, continued to fill with solemnity the ruined tenement with his voice of commands: Shooooou-
ders...Weapons! Haaaaaalf-turn! Volver!

Ricardo walked sad and discouraged. The world seemed to him empty of affection and love. He who always sang in his *modinhas* of dedication, of love, of the sympathies, now saw that such sentiments did not exist. He had marched after things without reality, after chimeras. He looked at the high sky. It was tranquil and calm. He looked at the trees. The palms grew with pride and reached titanically to the sky. He looked at the houses, the churches, the palaces, and recalled the wars, the blood, the pains that had cost all that. And on such life was made, history, heroism; with violence against others, with oppression, and with suffering.

Soon, however, he remembered that he needed to save his friend and that it was necessary he make some more efforts. Who could do anything? He consulted his memory. He saw one, saw another, and at last remembered Quaresma's goddaughter, and went after her in Real Grandeza.

He arrived, narrated to her the fact and his sinister apprehensions. She was alone, since the husband was now working more to enjoy the spoils of victory; he did not lose a minute, walking after each and every opportunity.

Olga well recalled her godfather, his eternal dreaming, his tenderness, the tenacity he put into following his ideas, the candor of a romantic damsel...

In an instant a great sorrow took over her entirely and removed her will to act. It appeared to her pity was enough, and that she would in some way give relief to the suffering of her godfather; but very early on she saw him bloody—he, so generous, he, such a good man, and thought of saving him.

—But what to do, my dear Mr. Ricardo, what to do? I don't know anyone... I don't have any relations... My friends... Alice, the wife of doctor Brandão, is away... Cassilda, the daughter of Castrioto, cannot... I don't know, my God,!

And she accented these last words with a great piercing despair. The two remained quiet. The young lady, who was seated, put her head between her hands and her long pearly nails inlaid among her black hair. Ricardo was on his feet, bewildered.

—What ought I to do, my God? she repeated.

For the first time, she felt that there were despairing things in life. She possessed the strongest disposition to save her godfather: she would sacrifice everything, but it was impossible, impossible! There were no means; there was no way. He would have to go to the point of supplication, he would have to climb his Calvary, without the hope of resurrection.

—Maybe your husband, said Ricardo

She thought a bit, took her time in examining the character of her husband; but, soon, she well saw that his egotism, his ambition, and his ferocious self-seeking would not allow him to make the least effort.

—What, this...

Ricardo did not know what to counsel her and he looked without thinking at the furniture and the tall black mountain that could be seen from the room where they were. He wanted to find a suggestion, advice; but nothing!

The young woman continued to run her fingers through her black hair and to look at the table where her elbows rested. The silence was august.

In a given moment, Ricardo had a great joy in his eyes and said:

—If you were to go there, ma'am...

She raised her head; her eyes dilated in amazement and her face became rigid. She thought a bit, a nothing, and spoke firmly:

—I will go.

Ricardo was then alone and he seated himself. Olga went to get dressed.

He then thought with admiration about that young lady who for the sake of simple friendship would make such a risky sacrifice, who had her soul so within her reach, and he felt her to be very far away from our world, this of egotism, this of our lowness, and he covered her image over with a great look of acknowledgment.

It was not long before she was ready, and already buttoning her gloves in the dining room, when her husband came in. He arrived radiant, with all his great whiskers and his round face full of satisfaction in himself. He did not even mention having seen Ricardo and soon went straight to his wife:

—You are leaving?

She, inflamed with the desperate anxiety of saving Quaresma, said with a certain vivacity:

—I am.

Armando admired seeing her speaking in such a way. He turned for an instant towards Ricardo, wanted to interrogate him, but soon, directing himself to his wife, he asked with authority:

—Where are you going?

The wife did not answer him, and, in his turn, the Doctor interrogated the troubadour:

—What are you doing here?

Coração dos Outros did not have the energy to respond; he guessed there would be a violent scene that he would like to avoid; but Olga hurried in:

—He will accompany me to Itamarati, to save my godfather from death. You know already?

The husband appeared to calm down. He believed that, with persuasive means, he could prevent the wife from making a step so dangerous to his interests and ambitions. He spoke softly:

—You do badly.

—Why? she asked heatedly.

—You will compromise me. You know that...

She did not respond to him right away and stared at him for an instant with great scornful eyes; she stared at him one, two minutes; then, she laughed a little, and said:

—That's it! "Me," because "me," because "me", it's only "me" here and "me" there... You don't think of anything else... Life is made for you, everyone ought to live only for you... Very funny! In such a way that I (now I say "I," too) have no right to sacrifice myself, to prove my friendship, to have a superior trait in my life? It's interesting! I am nothing, nothing! I am something like a piece of furniture, an adornment, I have no relations, I have no friendships, I have no character? Well! ...

She spoke, sometimes slowly and ironically, sometimes quickly and passionately; and the husband was greatly frightened at her words. He had lived always so far from her that he had not

judged her capable of such fits. Was the girl like this? Was the *bibelot* like this? Who could have taught her these things? He wanted to disarm her with an ironical statement and said, smiling:

—Are you in the theatre?

And she answered him quickly:

—If there are only great things in the theatre, then I am.

And she added with force:

—It is what I tell you: I go, and I go because I must, because I want, because it is within my right.

She grabbed her small umbrella, fixed her veil, and exited solemn, firm, tall, and noble. The husband did not know what to do. He became terrified, and terrified and silent he saw her leave out the door.

Soon, they were at the palace in Larga Street. Ricardo did not enter: he let the young lady do it and went to the Field of Sant' Ana to wait for her at.

She went up. There was an immense murmuring and agitation of entrances and exits. Everyone wanted to show themselves to Floriano, wanted to greet him, wanted to show him their dedication, prove their services, to show themselves co-participants in his victory. They made use of all their resources, of all plans, of all processes. The dictator, so accessible before, now shunned everyone. There were those who wanted to kiss his hands, as if here were the Pope or an emperor; and he was disgusted with such subservience. The caliph did not suppose himself to be sacred and was weary.

Olga spoke to some continuums, asking to be received by the Marshal. It was useless. With much effort she spoke with a secretary or aide-de-camp. When she told him why she was

there, the man's earthy complexion became that of ocher and over his eyelids ran a firm and quick flash of a sword:

—Who, Quaresma? he said. A traitor! An outlaw!

Then, he was sorry for his vehemence, and said with certain delicacy:

—It is not possible, ma'am. The Marshal will not receive you.

She did not even wait for the end of the phrase. She rose proudly, turned her back on him, and was ashamed of having asked for it, of having descended from her pride, and to have soiled the moral grandeur of her godfather with her wish. With such people, it was best to leave to him to die alone and heroically in some islet, taking to the grave his totally intact pride, his sweetness, his moral personality, without a spot of a pledge that diminished the injustice of his death, that in any way made his executioners believe that they had the right to kill him.

She left. She looked at the sky, the winds, the trees of Santa Teresa, and recalled that, savage tribes had wandered throughout these lands already, those whose chiefs were proud of having in their blood the blood of ten thousand enemies. It had been four centuries ago. She looked again at the sky, the winds, the trees of Santa Teresa, the houses, the churches; she saw trams go by; a locomotive whistled; a car, drawn by a beautiful team, crossed her when she was already entering the field... So many great and innumerable great changes had taken place, in the land's countenance, perhaps in the climate... Let us wait some more, she thought; and went serenely onwards to meet with Ricardo Coração dos Outros.

Todos os Santos (Rio de Janeiro), January, March 1911.

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