

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE DIABLESSE

The annual dance was held in the village schoolroom one Saturday night. A big crowd attended.

A young man who was recently married went to have a good time.

The parang band played gay joropos and castillians and paseos. There was a lot of pelau and rum to buy and everyone was having a good time.

All at once there was a hush in the dance hall. A beautiful young lady had entered alone. She was dressed in the latest style. She smiled sweetly at everyone and the men all rushed to her side.

The music started and the girl danced with most of the men, dance after dance. They got tired but the more she danced the fresher she looked.

Between dances the men chatted with her and bought her rum and pelau while they neglected the other girls who became jealous and passed remarks at the girl who only laughed at them.

About fifteen minutes before midnight she said that she must go home but the men did not want her to leave. She stated that she must leave and asked the young man if he would escort her home. He was delighted and they left together.

Some distance along the lonely dark road they heard the far-away church-clock striking twelve.

The girl asked the man to light her cigarette.

He struck a match and by its light he saw the face of the girl looking old and ugly.

He was so amazed that he stumbled backward and became caught in a patch of pickan.

He heard a cackling laugh and a stomping step and on looking at the lady's feet saw that one of them was a cloven hoof.

The lady went off with a cackling laugh.

The young man was properly stuck in the pickan patch. The slightest move he made caused him to be pricked in some part of his body.

Four-day morning, when some gardeners were taking their vegetables to the market, they heard him groaning and cut down the brambles and pickan and rescued him from misery and fear.



On hearing his story they said that it was La Diabliesse whom he had met and that he was lucky to get away so easily.

He promised never to find himself in such a situation again for, although he had suffered so much, his wife never forgave him and she never stopped reminding him of it. And his friends always gave him jokes about how La Diabliesse had fooled him.