The Fifth Member.

AN BEULA was one of those characteristic small cities of Porto Rico, and on this special Saturday evening the usual crowds thronged the streets, passing to and fro, and the cafés were enjoying their usual good-run of business amid their glare of lights and profusion of palms. In sharp contrast to the noise of laughter and merrymaking in the street and in the cafés, lay that portion of the town overlooking the miniature harbor, where reigned the perfect stillness of a summer's night.

It had been a terribly hot day. The engineers surveying for the Mining Company had put in a hard day's work, and with a sigh of satisfaction they clinked the ice in their glasses at the little round, table in the front of Pisno's Café. The fifth member, however, was missing; but they hardly missed him, for, long ago, after a few vain attempts to induce him to join them evenings, they had voted him a queer fellow and let him go.

The fifth member was Ruddy, one of the most popular men in his class, and when he was "flunked" out at "mid-year's" in his Junior year many were the regrets of his classmates and many were their congratulations when they heard that he had secured a fine position with some engineers somewhere in Porto Rico. On this particular evening the fifth member was in his favorite haunt on the broad veranda in the rear of Pisno's Café, the one that was so high up and overlooked the bay. Here, lying back in a steamer chair under the vari-colored awning and slowly smoking his cigar, he enjoyed in peace the beautiful moonlight playing on the smooth surface of the bay, and the soft breeze that stiffly rustled the palmetto branches made the evening delightful after a torrid day.

He began this evening, like every other evening, by making the firm resolve not to think of home, and so he sat listening to the clinking of the cracked ice in the café, while the odor of mint and cigarettes was wafted every now and then through the open blinds and through the palms. But to-night something seemed to force him to think of home and of—well, of his friends. Perhaps it was the hard work in the broiling sun. Anyway, his mind returned again and again to the time when he received that notice that told him he would have to drop out; how at first he was sorry, and then how he thought that all the time he had been wishing he was out of the hanged place for good! How the fellows congratulated him and seemed envious at his luck in securing such a good position. Position! The very thought of it disgusted him now. Suppose the fellows knew that he was only holding the rod with the prospects of forevermore doing it. However, he must stick it out now, for what could he say if he returned? He wouldn't mind sticking it out so much if it wasn't for—No, he had forbidden himself that thought.

He sat for some time watching the smoke from his cigar drift out under the awning and disappear up into the moonlight. Only the monotonous chug chug of a launch crossing the bay broke the stillness of the night, and now that had finally stopped and all was still. At last his ear caught the strain of some musical instrument across the water. It reminded him so much of that night of all nights when he and sh—

He could not stand it a minute longer. He would start Monday and go back and finish his course, no matter what the fellows would think, and if he did have to own to himself that it was all for her.

It was two hours later and not until all the guests had left the café did old Pisno step out upon his veranda and inform the young American that he was about to close. "It must be very late," thought the fifth member, as he roused himself from his chair and went out into the night.