



FROM FLAG TO FLAG

*A WOMAN'S ADVENTURES AND EXPERIENCES
IN THE SOUTH DURING THE WAR,
IN MEXICO, AND IN CUBA*

BY

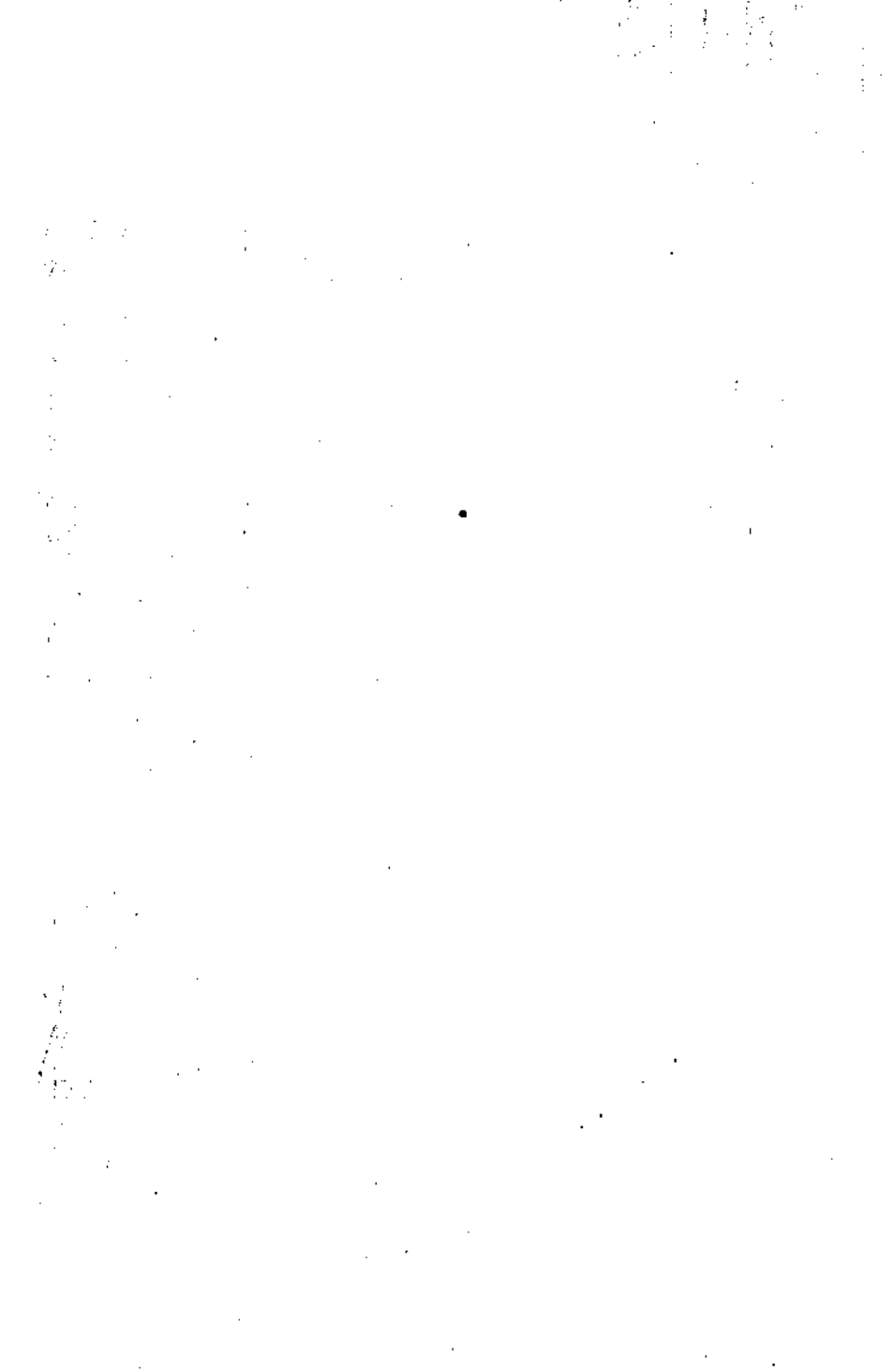
ELIZA McHATTON-RIPLEY

"Faith ! I ran when I saw others run."—I HENRY IV.

"See here, my friends and loving countrymen ;
This token serveth for a flag of truce
Betwixt ourselves."—I HENRY IV.

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NOTE.

THE years covered by this narrative were full of stirring interest. Civil war in the United States put the nation under arms from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande, and shattered the entire social and political fabric of the South. Mexico was conquered by the French, who, in time, were driven from the country, and the improbability of any European power obtaining a foothold there forever settled. A large portion of the Island of Cuba was for years under the control of the insurgents; and, not until a sea of blood and millions of treasure had been poured out, was a semblance of peace secured.

The minor part I bore in these exciting times has been a thrice-told tale at my fireside; and, believing the unfamiliar pictures of life, varied incidents, and historical facts worthy of record, I have written why, and how, we ran "from flag to flag."

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FROM FLAG TO FLAG.

CHAPTER I.

A PLANTATION HOME IN LOUISIANA.

A SPACIOUS mansion, with deep verandas supported by fluted columns, so closely following the architectural features of the historic Lee homestead on the Potomac as to give the name of "Arlington" to the plantation, was the home of my early married life.

The house faced a broad lawn, dotted here and there with live-oak and pecan trees. An avenue, over which the "pride-of-China" trees cast their shade, and beside which the Cherokee rose grew with great luxuriance, led to the river-bank, and commanded a magnificent view of the Mississippi for many miles above and below.

To this house, with all its attractive appointments, I came a bride, and from this home I took a hurried

departure a decade later. Time has not dimmed the memory of those years; on the contrary, it has added to their radiant brightness.

Turning back a quarter of a century, I see a picture of peace, happiness, and the loveliest surroundings. In those spring days at Arlington the air was so pure and fragrant that its inhalation was a positive luxury. It was delightful to wander over the lawn, with its fresh carpet of green, and note the wonderful growth of vegetation on every side. The roses that arched the gateways, the honeysuckles and jasmynes that climbed in profusion over the trellises, the delicate-foliaged crape myrtle with its wealth of fairy pink blossoms, all contributed perfume to the breeze.

Those grand autumnal days, when smoke rolled from the tall chimney of the sugar-house, and the air was redolent with the aroma of boiling cane-juice; when the fields were dotted with groups of busy and contented slaves, and their cabins resounded with the merry voices of playing children; when magnolia and oak trees were musical with the mocking-birds, whose throats poured forth melodies unknown to any other of the feathered tribe, and nimble squirrels gathered their winter stores in the pecan-groves—oh, those grand autumnal days!

Those Christmas-days, when the house was filled with gay throngs of city guests, and the broad halls resounded with merry laugh and romp; when the

“plantation band,” with the inspiring airs of “Monie Musk” and “Come, haste to the Wedding,” put wings to the giddy feet—how the happy moments fled! oh, the jolly days, when we danced the hours away!

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW FLAG—CAMPAIGN SEWING SOCIETY—CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS.

BASKING in the sunshine of prosperity during the stirring events that crowded one after another through the winter of 1860-'61, buoyed up by the hope and belief that a peaceful solution of national complications would be attained, we were blind to the ominous clouds that were gathering around us. Prophets arose in our midst, with vigorous tongue and powerful eloquence lifting the veil and giving us glimpses of the fiery sword suspended over our heads; but the pictures revealed were like pages in history, in which we had no part nor lot, so hard it was for people who had for generations walked the flowery paths of peace, to realize war and all that that terrible word imports.

It was during the temporary absence of my husband, and Arlington full of gay young guests, when our city paper described the device for "*the flag*," as decided upon at Montgomery, the cradle of the new-born Confederacy. Up to and even far beyond that period we did not, in fact could not, realize the mightiness of

the impending future. Full of wild enthusiasm, the family at Arlington voted at once that the banner should unfold its brave States-rights constellation from a staff on our river-front. This emblem of nationality (which, on account of its confusing resemblance to the brilliant "Stars and Stripes," was subsequently discarded) consisted of a red field with a horizontal bar of white across its center; in one corner was a square of blue with white stars. There were red flannel and white cotton cloth in the house, but nothing blue could we find; so a messenger was hastily dispatched to town with orders for goods of that color, no matter what the quality or shade.

On a square of blue denim the white stars were grouped, one to represent each seceded State. We toiled all that Saturday, and had no little difficulty in getting our work to lie smooth and straight, as the red flannel was pieced, the cotton flimsy, and the denim stiff. From the negroes who had been spending their half-holiday catching drift-wood, which in the early spring floats from every tributary down on the rapidly swelling bosom of the broad Mississippi, we procured a long, straight, slender pole, to which the flag was secured by cords, nails, and other devices. When the staff was firmly planted into the ground, on the most prominent point on the river-front, and its gay banner loosened to the breeze, the enthusiastic little party danced round and round, singing and shouting in ex-

uberance of spirit. At that critical moment a small stern-wheel Pittsburg boat came puffing up the stream; its shrill whistle and bell joined in the celebration, while passengers and crew cheered and hallooed, waving newspapers, hats, and handkerchiefs, until the little Yankee craft wheezed out of sight in a bend of the river. Of all the joyous party that danced and sung round that first Confederate flag raised on Louisiana soil, I am, with the exception of my son, then a very small boy, the only one living to-day.

It made such a brave show, and we were so exhilarated, that we passed all that bright Sunday in early spring under its waving folds, or on the piazza in full view of it.

When my husband, after a two weeks' absence, boarded the steamer *Quitman* to return home, the first news that greeted him was, "There is a Confederate flag floating over your levee!" He was thunderstruck! That far-seeing, cautious man was by no means an "original secessionist," and did not, in his discretion, and the hope that lingered long in his breast of an amicable adjustment of the difficulties, countenance the zealous order of his hasty and impetuous household. Our flag was already beginning to look frayed and ragged-edged. We had no means of lowering it, and its folds had flapped through fog and sunshine until the sleazy cotton split and the stars shriveled on the stiff blue ground. The coming of the "general

commanding," as we now playfully called him, signalized the removal of our tattered banner; but we had the satisfaction of knowing that advantage of his absence had been taken to float it a whole week, and that it was no hostile hand that furled it at the last.

The wild alarms of war roused us at last from this Arcadian life of ease and luxury. The rumbling thunder of battle was making itself heard from Sumter on the one side and Manassas on the other. "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag" were replacing the soul-stirring battle-songs of our fathers.

Men who had never saddled their mettled steeds, nor harnessed their own teams for pleasure-excursions, now eagerly bestrode any nag they could command, or drove lumbering mule-teams, or, worse still, plodded on foot with a military company on its march to the front; while the daintily nurtured women, who, in the abundance of service that slavery afforded, had scarce put on their own shoes, assembled and toiled day after day in the preparation of clothing for the soldiers, which quickly became their all-absorbing occupation.

In the neighboring city of Baton Rouge we organised the "Campaign Sewing Society." Its very title shows how transient we regarded the emergency; how little we deemed the *campaign* would develop into a four years' war! There many of us received our first lessons in the intricacies of coats and pantaloons. I so well remember when, in the glory of my new ac-

quirements, I proudly made a pair of cottonade trousers for a brother we were fitting out in surpassing style for "service," my embarrassment and consternation when I overheard him slyly remark to my husband that he had to stand on his head to button them—they lapped the wrong way! Stockings had also to be provided, and expert knitters found constant work. By wearing a knitting-bag at my side, and utilizing every moment, I was by no means the only one able to turn off a coarse cotton stocking, with a rather short leg, every day.

From the factory in our little city—the only one, by the way, of any size or importance in the State—we procured the cloth required for suits, but in the lapse of time the supply of buttons, thread, needles, and tape, in fact, of all the little accessories of the sewing-room, was exhausted, and to replenish the stock our thoughts and conversation were necessarily turned into financial channels. I cordially recommend to societies and impecunious institutions the scheme in all its entirety that we adopted as vastly superior to the ordinary and much-maligned fair; the plan was the offspring of necessity; the demand was so instant and urgent that we could undertake no fair or entertainment that involved time, work, or expense.

A "Tombola," where every article is donated and every ticket draws a prize, was the happy result of numerous conferences. The scheme was discussed

with husbands and brothers; each suggested an advancement or improvement on the other, until the project expanded so greatly, including all classes and conditions of donors, that it was quickly found that not only a large hall but a stable and a warehouse also would be required to hold the contributions, which embraced every imaginable article from a tooth-pick to a cow! The hall was soon overflowing with minor articles from houses and shops. Nothing was either too costly or too insignificant to be refused. A glass show-case glittered with jewelry of all styles and patterns, and bits of rare old silver. Pictures and engravings, old and faded, new and valuable, hung side by side on the walls. Odd pieces of furniture, work-boxes, lamps and candelabra, were arranged here and there, to stand out in bold relief amid an immense array of pencils, tweezers, scissors, pocket-knives, tooth-picks, darning-needles, and such trifles. The stalls of the stable were tenanted by mules, cows, hogs, with whole litters of pigs, and varieties of poultry. The warehouse groaned under the weight of barrels of sugar, molasses, and rice, and bushels of meal, potatoes, turnips, and corn. Tickets for a chance at this miscellaneous collection sold for one dollar each. As is ever the case, the blind goddess was capricious: with the exception of an old negro woman, who won a set of pearls, I can not remember any one who secured a prize worth the price of the ticket. I invested in twenty tickets, for which I received nine-

teen lead-pencils and a frolicsome old goat, with beard hanging to his knees, and horns like those which brought down the walls of Jericho. Need I add that the "general commanding" refused to receive that formidable animal at Arlington?

The "Tombola" was a grand, an overwhelming success; without one dollar of outlay—the buildings and necessary printing having been donated—we made six thousand dollars. Before this sum could be sent to New Orleans for investment, that city was in the hands of its captors.

Thus cut off from the means of securing necessary supplies, and at the same time from facilities for communication with those whom we sought to aid, the "Campaign Sewing Society" sadly disbanded. The busy workers retired to their own houses, the treasurer fled with the funds for safe-keeping, and, when she emerged from her retreat, six thousand dollars in Confederate paper was not worth six cents!

The Federals captured New Orleans in April, and there was intense excitement all up and down the river. We boasted and bragged of what we could do and what we were going to do, like children whistling in the dark to keep their courage up. We had never seen soldiers "on deeds of daring full intent." We had never seen any drilling and manœuvring of companies and battalions, except our own ardent and inexperienced young men, full of enthusiasm that was kindled and

encouraged and in many cases bolstered up by the women, who, like most non-combatants, were very valiant, and like all whose hearthstones are threatened very desperate. So the landing of the enemy in our chief city, and the capitulation of our defenses, roused every drop of blood in our hearts. Nothing but "war to the knife" was spoken of. While we openly declared that New Orleans should have been fired, like Moscow, rather than surrendered, men went about destroying cotton wherever it was stored, and fierce and loud were the denunciations against any man who even by gentle remonstrance made the slightest objection to having his property touched by the torch of his neighbor, to prevent the possibility of its capture by the "hordes of hirelings" as we called the Northern soldiers and their naturalized comrades.

All the blankets and bedding that could reasonably be spared had been gathered during the winter, by teams driven from house to house, making one grand collection for our suffering troops.

Now, thoroughly alarmed at the possibility of being cut off from all communication with our soldiers in the field, and prevented from contributing to their comfort, carpets were ripped from the floors of many houses, cut into suitable blanket-size, and sent *via* "Camp Moore"—now our only outlet—to the army in the mountains of Virginia and on the borders of Tennessee. There was no combined or concerted plan;

each acted his individual part, and made personal sacrifices to help the cause. Plantations were adjoining, but the residences too remote to meet and discuss matters when time was so precious. Black William and I drew the tacks from every carpet at Arlington; brussels, tapestry, and ingrain, old and new, all were made into blankets and promptly sent to the front. One half the house was closed, and a deal of management was required to keep the other half comfortable without a carpet or rug to lay over the bare floor. So it happened that when the Federals, after an exciting siege, captured New Orleans, very little was left in the houses on the river that could be made available for the use of the army.

CHAPTER III.

A GREVASSE—OCCUPATION OF BATON ROUGE—DEFENSELESS CITIZENS.

THE rapidly rising river was another element of danger menacing us. It is a fearful sight to see the relentless flood plunging by, bearing great trees and logs of drift-wood on its muddy surface many feet above the ground on which you stand, an embankment of earth your only defense, and the waves of passing steamboats dashing over that frail barrier and falling in spray at your feet. It is startling to realize that busy craw-fish, the dread enemy of every man whose "lines are laid" behind a Mississippi levee, are constantly boring holes through the earthworks, and invading the ditches carefully constructed to receive and bear away to the rear swamps and drains the seepage that exudes all the time from the pressure on the outer side; and terrible to know that one malicious cut of a spade would make an insidious fissure through which those battling waters would in a few hours rush in an overwhelming torrent, destroying property worth thousands of dollars—a calamity greatly dreaded, and

guarded against day and night by trusty men with shovels and lanterns.

My husband, whose duty it was as levee inspector, notified our neighbors of a dangerously "weak spot" on an adjoining plantation front, but so fearful were all planters at that time of negro assemblages, so apprehensive lest they communicate from plantation to plantation, and a stray spark enkindle the fires of sedition and rebellion, that the responses to his call were not adequate, and the result was a *crevasse* between Baton Rouge and Arlington, four miles south, that cut a broad chasm directly across the road, and through our cane-fields far back for miles to bayous and draining canals, leaving a wide ravine with a rush of roaring water that poured millions of gallons a minute, plowing a deep canal through roads and fields, spreading and widening over the rear swamps in its destructive errand, until it reached the river again in a bend twenty-five miles away.

But the terrors and subsequent losses by such a calamity were forgotten in the greater alarm and the foreshadowing of untold disaster to the panic-stricken planters' wives, who were in many instances left by their soldier husbands in charge of threatened homes. The negroes, already seeing the dawning rays of liberty, which at that time meant plenty to eat and nothing to do, "jist like marster," were becoming lazy and impudent. So the *crevasse* and the injury it was des-

lined to inflict were of small moment to us when the prospect of cultivating the growing crop, grew beautifully less day by day.

One magnificent morning in early summer the whole river, the silence on whose surface had remained now many weeks undisturbed, was suddenly, as if by magic, ablaze with the grandeur of Federal gunboats and transports with flags and bright-colored streamers flying from every peak, their decks thronged with brilliantly uniformed officers. We stood upon the veranda, with streaming eyes and bursting hearts, the gay strains of "Yankee Doodle" as they floated o'er the waters filling our souls with bitterness unspeakable, and watched the victorious pageant, until, with a mighty sweep to avoid the boiling and surging currents of the covease, it anchored amid blare of trumpet and beat of drum beside the deserted landing of our dear little city. The enemy was there! But there was a barrier between us that cut off all communication by land, and, though they could forage above and back of the town, as is the way with hungry soldiers, we had the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that access to Arlington was not feasible.

By and by the old Mississippi began to subside; the tributary streams had well-nigh exhausted their superfluous floods. Water began slowly and steadily to recede from the fields; day by day we could see from the windows and verandas new bits of green

here and there; places where bridges that spanned ditches had been swept away; and deep ridges cut by the action of rushing torrents where were once smooth, level fields of waving cane.

But the big gully at the mouth of the crevasse was still there, deep, muddy, and unutterably foul with the odor of dead fish lying stranded all about. The road was cut in two by an impassable barrier, a fathomless mud-hole. So the crevasse was a blessing, and we were at least thankful that, if we did not have a crop, we were safe from unwelcome visitors.

My little baby was two weeks old, and I was reposing quietly in bed, early one morning, when, lo and behold! not a cloud of dust, but a splash of mud; and a company of soldiers made their unwonted appearance on the hither side of our defenses. Before Charlotte could run up-stairs with the spoons and forks, hastily gathered from the breakfast-table, to hide under my pillow—for the darkies had been carefully taught that the whole war was a thieving expedition to steal our homes and property—before Charlotte could tell the news and tuck the spoons away, the clatter of hoofs on the lawn and the voices of strange men revealed the fact that the Federal soldiers were upon us!

My husband, whose disability, from the loss of an eye, relieved him from active service, was equal to the occasion, and met the party at the door; explained the

invalid condition of his wife till one might have thought that nothing less than a miracle could save her delicate life; requested the officers not to permit their men to dismount, offered them milk, the only refreshment we had that they would accept, and it was handed around by William, in a pail; after every man was refreshed, they quietly and decorously rode away. I was up and peeped through a hole in the curtain at the only company of Federal soldiers I saw during the war.

Their gentlemanly deportment quite disarmed Charlotte of her fears for the safety of the silver; as she took it from under my pillow, she said, "I don't believe them men would 'onderseend to steal *spoons*."

They went on, though, those very men, to a plantation five miles beyond. The poor, old gentleman had all his sons in the Confederate service; he kept a horse tied at his back gate, day and night: it seems he did not share our confidence in the protection of the muddy gully, so he was always in retreating order. When the soldiers rode into his front yard, the tip of his horse's tail could be seen vanishing in the distance; in Southern parlance he "took to the woods." Finding no one to represent the host but a very young and bashful daughter-in-law, they soon disposed of her in a safe place—a bedroom with locked doors—and for twenty-four hours remained on the premises, engaged in collecting all they could find for

food and forage. Cattle, corn, molasses, and hay were shipped to town by the ferry-boat sent to their assistance. In due course of time, finding the coast was clear and the whole place "cleaned out," the old gentleman ambled home. The bashful lady of the castle had been released from her confinement, and order somewhat restored, so there was little left to do but estimate the damage.

Charlotte told me the story as she had it from the sable "cloud of witnesses" that pervaded every Southern household, ending the recital with the wise remark, "We didn't hide them spoons none too soon."

"Bombs bursting in air" every few days gave assurance that the "guerrillas," as a hastily organized band of rowdies and bullies, that hovered on the outskirts of the town, chose to style themselves, had "run in and fired off and run out again," making just enough demonstration to call a return fire from the gunboats and scare everybody in town. These occurrences became so frequent that scarce a day passed that we did not hear, either of an intended raid by the "guerrillas," or the hissing and explosion of bombs, with shudders of unutterable agony for the safety of aged and defenseless friends.

The towns-people actually made excavations in their yards and covered them with planks for refuge in a bombardment. Some of the plank coverings were struck and shattered by fiery missiles, so the

wretched inhabitants had to dig tunnels by which they could obtain shelter beyond the covered entrance. Plans and diagrams for these were passed around, and neighbor helped neighbor in the life-saving work. It was a terrible state of things, no military organization at hand to control the rowdy element on the Confederate side, and the Federals claiming to have no other way of putting a stop to these senseless raids except by firing from their gunboats.

In the midst of these occurrences, which we viewed from a safe distance, I was startled one day by seeing a man dressed in the striped and numbered garb of a convict enter the gates. He hurriedly explained to my husband that the doors of the penitentiary at Baton Rouge had been thrown open by military order, and the convicts freed, with injunctions to report at headquarters and enlist.

I do not know how many inmates there were, but the people of the town were terrified to find the whole criminal gang of the State turned loose upon their streets. The man who sought to escape the Federal service as well as the jurisdiction of the prison was a South Carolinian, who in a sudden burst of passion had made himself amenable to the law. He begged to be supplied with citizen's clothing and transportation beyond the limits of the State, so that he could reach his home. We opened trunk after trunk that had been left at Arlington for safe-keeping, by men long gone

to the front, to find a suit that would fit the slender, under-sized man. At last we succeeded, and gave him my little boy's only hat, as the one that best fitted, and with its broad brim somewhat concealed his face, bleached from long confinement in the cotton-factory. A slight change of clothing was also provided in an improvised traveling-bag. My husband advanced him the needful funds, loaned him a pony, and gave minute directions as to the safest road to Camp Moore, where he could leave the animal and board the train that would quickly carry him toward his old home. When warned to be very cautious lest he be apprehended on the road, and not to carry anything on his person that could betray him, with moistened eyes and quivering lip he drew from his pocket and handed me a package of photographs of his little children and a bundle of letters the only things he turned back for when the portals of the prison were opened. "I can not tell you what a gift you are sending to my wife when you put me on the road to home; read these, they will tell you." We stood on the back piazza at early dawn and watched the retreating form of that happy man until it disappeared from sight—then burned the unread letters and the thumbed and worn photographs.

Twenty years after, we heard from him as quietly and peacefully living in Carolim, surrounded by his family.

CHAPTER IV.

WILLY'S ERRAND—BRECKENRIDGE'S MESSAGE—THE EAST
RECRUITS.

TAXES had to be paid on plantations in Mississippi. Federal gunboats cut off the usual means of communication. From New Orleans to Baton Rouge, and from Cairo to Vicksburg, they were in undisturbed possession. So we were compelled to send a messenger by land to Greenville, some distance beyond Vicksburg. I well remember how carefully Willy, a boy of fourteen, very bright and manly, though small for his age, was prepared for the undertaking. He had never been through the country. So he had a memorandum given him, how far and by what road to go the first day, and that would bring him to a certain house where my husband was known; he was to tell who he was and who sent him "on an errand," but on no account to divulge the nature of his errand, and "die" before he told about the money he had on his person!

Day after day his route was mapped out; he was told what to say, what not to say, and where to stop each night; at Greenville to pay the clerk of the court

the fifteen hundred dollars he had belted around his waist, get a receipt, and return home.

Willy was an orphan, whose entire family had died of yellow fever in New Orleans; a bright, intelligent boy, with only the little education we had been able to give him before the schools were closed and people's minds turned to more exciting things; he was so apt and faithful that we confided many things to his care, though of course he had never been trusted to the extent of a four days' journey on horseback with a large amount of money in his keeping. Even if we had found a man to send, he was liable to conscription on the road, so we had to depend on the boy's natural shrewdness, willingness to obey orders implicitly, and diminutive size, to help us.

Days went by and no Willy returned. We began to whisper our anxieties to each other, when out on the lawn where no one else could hear; having already learned to be wary of the darky. We were afraid he had *died before he told*, as he had been cautioned to do again and again. At last, one day Willy presented himself all right and Irish as a rose. Pony looked as though he had been in clover instead of on a long and rather perilous journey. The boy came to me, in the absence of my husband, and handed the receipt. To my eager inquiries as to the delay, he could furnish no sensible reason. He was detained, could not tell by what. Did he lose the road? "No." Was he

sick? "No." Did pony give out? "No" "What was the detention?" Well, he "couldn't just tell." "Of one thing you may be sure, sir; your uncle will make you tell." And he was dismissed with a frown. The orphan boy was no relative, but called my husband uncle, from association with our nephews.

My husband's step was heard. Willy ran to meet him, and they had a long and anxious talk, walking down the road. The bright, animated face of the youth, and his uncle's bowed, eagerly listening attitude, warned me that Willy *did* have a "tale to unfold" that was not simply "No," for the talk came from him: My assiduous pumping must have started the stream, for the anxious listener was eagerly drinking refreshing draughts of news.

We were only two in those days: the children were young, the negroes crafty, and the neighbors scattered; so we were only two, and never did two hearts beat as one as ours did in those times that tried men's souls, and made the bravest among them feel the need of help, even though it were the help of a woman, whose quick inspirations often assisted her husband's deductions, and sometimes solved the problem by intuition. There was no secret I did not share—there was nothing done—and, dear me! we felt, while the world was "up and deing," that we could do so little—but there was nothing done wherein I was not allowed to help. That night we walked by the silent river's bank, and

then I heard the story that made my blood run quick. I longed to be a soldier, and go forth to battle for my beloved land, like Joan of Arc.

When Willy reached within a few miles of home, he was astounded to find a "whole army," as he called it, on the wary march. He was arrested, as traveling in the direction no one was allowed to pass.

General Breckinridge, with a totally inadequate contingent of men, was moving toward Baton Rouge, then in possession of the Federals. If he could swoop down upon them suddenly, and have the co-operation of a Confederate gunboat, he hoped by strategy to accomplish what might be impossible in open battle. Willy was detained two or three days, before obtaining permission to see General Breckinridge. When admitted, he related his story to the general, even that part he was cautioned to "die before telling," and in sheer desperation showed the tax-office receipt. General Breckinridge immediately dispatched the boy with a secret message to my husband (with whom he was personally intimate), to the effect that he "was slowly approaching Baton Rouge, and needed all the assistance possible; if he could send any men to join him, to do so; they could bring arms if they had them. He had no hospital supplies. No one could be spared to attend to the disabled, and men who could not engage in actual conflict could battle with disease and wounds

in the rear. If lint and bandages could be had, send them, and come himself within two days." Poor, burdened Willy trotted home, big with the secret no man knew this side of the advancing command.

By the light of the moon I heard the stirring story, and earnestly we talked and planned. We each had a tired and wounded brother only a few days home from the battle-field of Shiloh, on sick leave, both the poor fellows up-stairs in bed, ragged, foot-sore, tired, disgusted, and inclined to think that the "hireling horde" the North was pouring down upon us was a well-disciplined, almost invincible foe. We know those young men would need no "bugle-call" to summon them to the front; while they really had nothing to buckle on but a tin water-can, they would be off at the earliest moment, and take the chance of getting arms from the first captured men. Then, one by one, we recalled the names and whereabouts of some eight or ten others. Some were exempts; some called themselves by the alluring name of "Home-Guards," that would fight "right thar," but couldn't go all the way to Virginia to do it; and one or two were, like our two, home from Shiloh. We made our plans to recruit, under the calm radiance of an August moon that was destined to shine on many an upturned face on that bloody battle-field, un pitying for the agonies that surge far and wide, blasting hearts that never heard the cannon's roar. Next morning my husband sallied forth.

“Not with the roll of the stirring drum
And the trumpet that sings of fame,”

but in a very cautious way he went after recruits, and succeeded in raising a dozen, all told. In the gray of the early morning of the day following there assembled at Arlington a rough stalwart set of men. I do not know how many fought the next day, nor how many ran, but they were quietly and soberly enthusiastic. We furnished a hearty breakfast by candle-light, filled their tin cans with coffee, and, as they were not burdened with arms or accoutrements, a substantial lunch was put into their pockets. They marched off in the early dawn, toward the rear of the plantation, and no more earnest prayer was ever offered to the God of battles than ascended from our lips as, with dimmed eyes and beating hearts, we watched them vanish in the veil of mist which at that hour rises from the river.

Knowing that the assault was planned for the following morning, we felt anxious and excited all day; and at evening my husband mounted his horse, followed by an attendant, both loaded down with hastily prepared lint, linen sheets for bandages, and all the medicines we had. They also vanished amid the descending shades of night, and I was left alone with two little children and a few house-servants.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE—RUSH TO ARLINGTON—DISASTER—DEPARTURE OF OUR GUESTS.

THE next morning, at the first blush of dawn, firing was distinctly heard from the direction of the town. Now, while the town was distant four miles by the road winding with the river, it was not half that far as the crow flies. Baton Rouge was on a sharp point; then the river made a deep bend, and Arlington was on the next point of the scallop; so that, looking toward the town from the windows, we looked partly over water, and the city had somewhat the appearance of being built on an island, the two points were so sharp and well-defined. It is proper to add here, twenty-five years make at least twenty-five changes in that most fickle of rivers. To-day, Arlington Point may have been washed away—I do not know.

My little baby, whose advent was made such a good excuse for asking the soldiers not to alight on our lawn, was now two months old. With care, anxiety, a never-ceasing interest in all that surrounded us, and rather delicate health at the best, I was by no means

in good fighting order for what had to be endured on that most memorable day. I sprung from my bed, and flew half dressed to the windows commanding a view of the scene. The roar of cannon was distinctly heard, and the house seemed to tremble and shake with the unusual noise; the rattle of musketry, the flying of bursting bombs from the Federal boats, the incessant smoke and the rumble of nameless battle-sounds, kept us in suspense and excitement, pride and fear, alarm and enthusiasm, that were painful. General Breekinridge's name had always carried victory with it in civil life, where we knew him best. So, as I watched and prayed, I could not bring my thoughts to the point that *our* men could be beaten on their *own* ground under my very eyes! My thoughts turned from these exultant channels, to see what at first seemed to be stampeded sheep, emerging from the foggy mist in the far-away bend of the road, swelling and surging, and rushing in the wildest hurry and flight, through a volume of dust made ten times more stilling by the fierce heat. These were not sheep, but human beings, running pell-mell, under intense excitement, as fast as their legs could carry them. It is a sad commentary on humanity that individuals are swallowed up in masses. When we prayed that our troops might conquer and prevail, no thought of the hearts that might be made desolate forever by the fatalities of war came to us. "Victory! victory!" was

the cry of every woman, as she buckled on the sword, and sent husband and son to fight. No thought came of her own or any other woman's desolation. So, that morning, standing alone at my window, watching through the dim mist what seemed to be the ebb and flow of battle, hearing in the distance the booming, hissing, and rattling sounds of conflict, I never once thought of the homes of that besieged city, of the women and children, the old men and the sick—never once thought of them, so swallowed up the destiny of the day every other consideration. But when that struggling mass was revealed to me—pouring, panting, rushing tumultuously down the hot, dusty road, hatless, bonnetless, some with slippers and no stockings, some with wrappers hastily thrown over night-gowns; now and then a coatless man on a bare-back horse, holding a helpless child in his arms before him, and a terrified woman clinging on behind; men trundling children too young to run, in dirty wheelbarrows, while other little half-clad, barefooted ones ran beside, weary and crying; an old man, who could scarcely totter along, bearing a baby in his trembling arms, while the distracted mother carried an older child with wounded and bleeding feet; occasionally could be descried a battered umbrella held over some delicate woman to temper the rays of what was fast becoming a blazing August sun. Some ran, some stumbled along, others faltered and almost gave out;

but, before I could hurry on my clothes, they poured into our gates and invaded the house, a small army of them, about five hundred tired, exhausted, broken-down, sick, frightened, terrified human beings—all roused from their beds by firing and fighting in the very streets; rushing half-clad from houses being riddled with shot and shell; rushing through streets filled with men fighting hand to hand; wildly running they scarce knew whither, being separated from children and wives and mothers in the midst of the roar of battle, and no time to look for them; no turning back; on—on—through yards and over fences and down narrow, dusty lanes—anywhere to get from the clash of steel and the bursting of countless bombs!

Once on the open road and away from the very midst of battle, they ran as though demons pursued them, never turning back or branching off. There was but the one hot, dusty road to run, and that led straight to our ever-open gates and to other gates beyond; but when they gained the first, by common consent they turned in.

The battle roared and surged, but there was a roaring and surging battle for bread in that house which for the moment silenced every other. Our store-closets were thrown wide open; but how the crowd managed that day I never knew. Before noon news came of our defeat. I was sick and heart-sore, too much so to eat my own slender breakfast which

Charlotte smuggled up the back stairs under her apron; too sick to care, too overwhelmed with the immensity of the undertaking of feeding a great multitude with five loaves and no fishes, to attempt it.

I lay down beside my half-starved babe, whose nourishment was cut short by the excitements of the morning, and, while I wept the bitterest tears I ever shed, told the little unconscious child it did not matter much whether we lived or died; we were beaten—beaten!

The few men in the army that invaded Arlington foraged as better-disciplined ones do, and brought in some sheep and an ox; killed, skinned, and cut them up with such knives as they could find, and in lieu of better, used their own pocket-knives. Bits of meat distributed around hastily cooked, smoked, and singed, they devoured like savages; the famished babies had pieces given them to suck. Long before noon the twelve pounds of tea from the store-closets had entirely disappeared. We had immense iron kettles "set" in the laundry where soap had been made by the barrel for plantation use, fires were kindled under them and tea made *ad libitum*, but, to use Charlotte's forcible language, "it was drunk faster than it was made"; it could not be furnished fast enough to meet the demands of the parched and thirsty crowd. In the tumult of finding something to eat and drink,

as in all such cases, the strongest and hardiest being the enterprising ones, fared the best, and the weak and ailing were in a measure overlooked and neglected by the general crowd. By and by individual cases attracted attention. One frail woman came down that road, carrying a child five years old, wrapped in the blanket in which it had lain at death's door for days and nights. At first the distracted parents thought they would stand by the suffering bedside amid all the sounds of battle; it would be certain death to remove the patient. They remained until a bomb exploded in their yard, carrying off part of the house-top; then the mother, in a light night wrapper, snatched the child up, enveloped in its blanket, and ran after the terrified crowd down the road, the father by her panting side, with a younger child in his arms whose weight was more than that of the invalid. That distressed family was provided with the luxury of a bed, and the entire room was almost yielded to them by the crowd at Arlington, who still had wit enough to know that malignant scarlet fever was almost as bad as bullets.

Time and again Charlotte, who was the Lady Bountiful of the occasion, came to tell me that first one, then another, and still another poor woman was in peril, and little garments went from my scanty store to the innocent babes who opened their eyes on that eventful day, and nothing but the supreme terror of

their mothers prevented them from first seeing light amid scenes of carnage and desolation.

So the day wore on—such a long day and such a short one it was; so much crowded into it—and night found us all more tired and anxious than ever.

The brief conflict was over. We knew we were beaten; the bad news followed swiftly after the defeat; but the news of our dear ones, the anxiety to know particulars, the surmises, hopes, and fears, but, above all, the overwhelming news that we were *beaten*, wore us all out. About sunset a sergeant and a few men from the victorious enemy came down to Arlington and demanded to see my husband. Of course, he was not at home, and I received them, bewitched to know what to say, for I could not tell them that he was with General Breckinridge's wounded. I made the most plausible excuse possible for his temporary absence, and the sergeant handed me a permit for him to enter their lines and visit General Clark, of Mississippi, a most dear friend, who had been grievously wounded and was their prisoner. My husband returned before bedtime, and hurriedly availed himself of the permit. In his absence word came to me, from a man who said he was just from town, that the Federal officer in command said, if we did not send that rebel crowd away from Arlington, a gunboat should be dispatched to shell them out. I was desperate then, and simply replied that I could not send that homeless multitude adrift.

Many became alarmed, however, and took up their weary march, some going down to neighboring plantations on the river-bank, and others going back into the woods and swamps; enough remained, however, to overflow the house—every stair-step had its reclining form, every inch of sofa, bed, and floor was occupied by tired, sleepy humanity. There was the usual rain that follows heavy cannonading; it was damp and miserable everywhere. There were two very large oak-trees in front of the house, with wide-spreading branches and luxuriant foliage, a favorite resort for mocking-birds, whose songs (how I should delight in them now!) were often an intolerable nuisance. In those sturdy trees a whole colony of boys roosted, congratulating themselves that nobody could turn them out, the thick leaves sheltering them from falling drops of rain. So wearied nature gradually sought repose; the last noises were the occasional twitterings of the wingless occupants of the oak-trees. A hissing noise rent the air, and a bomb exploded in front of the house; then another, and another; and a fourth went whizzing over our heads, exploding with loud reports back of the house, and on this side and on that. A gunboat anchored in the river was sending its deadly missives far and wide. Far and wide they were meant to be; for surely, if they intended to strike the house, they could have done so, such a shining, big white mark as it was. The first bomb that burst on the lawn roused

our poor wingless birds, and the boys tumbled out of those trees like overripe fruit in a gale, like something that falls faster than that; like a great shake to a tree of ripe persimmons, all fell at once. Each bomb called forth wails and shrieks of terror from the thoroughly alarmed and nervously excited people. After having accomplished their purpose, the boat moved off; but there was no more roosting that night, nor sleeping either. A feeling that something more was to happen pervaded the air, and we sat about in anxious groups and desperately waited for it.

The first slanting rays of the rising sun saw a good many fired fathers and mothers march off with their little half-clad families in various directions. Others wandered back to their demolished and desecrated homes, or to the homes of friends in the country; and by noon none were left to our hospitable care, except the mothers with the new babies.

The poor woman with the sick child was frightened by the mere threat of bombardment; she picked up the scarlet fever and blanket, there seemed little else tangible—the patient was so emaciated and lifeless—and sought refuge in the woods. I would add here that the child is alive to-day, a beautiful woman, so deaf from that illness and cruel exposure that she has almost lost her speech.

CHAPTER VI.

RESTORING ORDER—SCENES OF VANDALISM—PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

No one, who has not had the experience, knows what a litter and indescribable confusion of dirt and *débris* is left after twenty-four hours' occupancy of a house and grounds by a host, such as I have attempted to describe. For days the negroes were cleaning up, and restoring some kind of order. We moved around in a melancholy way, ministering to the wants of our reluctant guests as far as we could, and bidding them Godspeed when one by one they recovered sufficient strength to pick up their additional little burden and creep away to join their own friends, and to collect as far as they could the remnants of their scattered (in many instances shattered) belongings, or to erect other hearthstones over the remains of what had once been not only comfortable but luxurious homes.

Though the days were prolonged by our constant anxiety, the remainder of the summer gradually wore away. We stayed quietly at home; the horses, except a small pony, had been given away, and we had no

means of locomotion except behind heavy wagon-mules, quite unfit for our laudau; and we were reluctant to yield with grace to that order of things, so we kept at home. Books, portraits, and family plate had already been sent to remote places of safety. Poultry was all devoured. Some sheep and cattle remained, perhaps enough to supply the plantation with food for some months longer. So we had nothing tangible to afford us occupation or entertainment; no crop to cultivate, the planted cane having been plowed up by the waters. Corn was put in the ground, but the worms which invariably appear on a submerged field devoured it as fast as it sprouted. The negroes, in a half-hearted way, as if they foresaw the doom that awaited the plantation, repaired only a few bridges, leveled some ruts, and in a listless manner potted around as though they knew perfectly well "it was no use"; we realized the same, but felt the necessity of furnishing these dependent laborers with occupation.

It is difficult at this distant day for me to realize how isolated we were. Having relied almost entirely on the Mississippi River packots for intercourse with the world beyond, all facilities of communication through that medium were now suspended. The post-office might as well have been closed so far as we were concerned, for no mails were received from, or dispatched to, any point outside of the Federal lines.

Near relatives sickened, died, and were buried within a day's ride of our home, of whose extremity we did not know for weeks—receiving the information then through a casual passer-by. People journeying from point to point avoided towns on the river-bank and sought hospitality at plantation or farm houses. So frequent were the demands made upon Arlington by lonely and forlorn travelers, that a couple of rooms in the rear of the house were set apart for their convenience.

Occasionally small companies of Federals made raids in the neighborhood, under some pretext or other; notice of the intended visit was often mysteriously conveyed to the planter in time for him to prepare.

On one occasion, word was brought to my husband of an intention to search Arlington for arms and accoutrements. Our two soldier brothers had crept home under shadow of night, a few days after the battle, with guns captured on the field; William had secreted them in our attic. As he was absent, I went in search of them. The attic covered the entire house; it was never used, and was not floored. Carefully stepping from beam to beam in the darkness, trusting more to the sense of touch than sight, in search of the guns, by an unlucky step one foot went through lath and plastering. I was alone, and struggled desperately, sinking deeper with every effort, until I was

actually in danger of descending bodily into the room below. Finally extricating myself, I hobbled in a very scratched and bruised state down-stairs, to find that the accident had occurred immediately over the bed where one of the sick brothers lay unable to rise, his bed covered with the *débris*, and he convulsed with laughter. We eagerly watched the small detachment of soldiers approach our gate, and without even pausing, ride by. When we left Arlington, the arms were still secreted in the attic; and as the substantial homestead still stands—dismantled, shutterless, and perhaps in many places floorless though it be—those guns are doubtless lying in some remote corner under the roof, mute witnesses of the horrors of war.

When the Federals left the town I do not remember, but after a while they did leave, and we had something to say about a barren victory, forgetting that Baton Rouge was no strategic point. In those days, to us Baton Rouge was a considerable place, only second in importance to New Orleans, and that city ranked with Richmond in our estimation. One fine day the fleet of gunboats steamed away, accompanied by transports loaded to the edge with their black freight. Negroes from every direction flocked in after the battle, old and young and of both sexes. Some went from Arlington, too; several women, in their eagerness, and desiring to be unencumbered, left their sleeping babies in the cabin beds. The

Federals, in acknowledgment of their loyalty, took them to New Orleans, and the general who first gave them the title of *contraband* must have been well-nigh overwhelmed by the motley crew that hastened to put themselves under his protection.

For many weeks we had not passed beyond our plantation limits. My husband's business, which formerly took him daily to the little city, was suddenly and disastrously terminated when the Federals took possession. During this depressing interval, General Clark's wife arrived at Arlington from his plantation in Mississippi, after a six days' ride through a very rough country. The distracted woman had heard that her husband was seriously wounded—no more; but we were able to comfort her with the assurance that he was alive and in General Butler's care. It was hard to recognize, in the heart-broken, weary traveler, the robust, cheerful woman, who formed one of the party when we accompanied our delegate husbands to the Democratic Convention at Charleston in April, 1860.

The incidents of those stormy days can never be effaced from my mind. From my favored seat in the gallery I witnessed the proceedings every step of which led to more tumultuous excitement, culminating at last in the disruption of the convention, and opening the way for a momentous future of which we had little conception. How well I remember my

intense emotion while leaning over the gallery rail, listening to the roll-call of States to ratify the adoption of the platform, seeing one Southern delegation after another, with a few words of explanatory protest from its chairman, rise and solemnly file out of the hall! How my heart beat at the call "Louisiana!" how intently I listened to catch the words of grand old Governor Mouton, as with French accent, made ten times more unintelligible by his vehement manner and rapid utterance, he explained the attitude of his State! Pointing a tremulous finger at the seated representatives of Louisiana, with emphatic delivery and quivering voice he concluded: "Louisiana instructed her delegation to vote as a unit; two of the number refuse to act with the majority; they can retain their seats, but they have no voice, they can not represent the State." The impetuous old gentleman descended from the bench on which he stood, to command attention to his remarks, and strode out of the assembly, followed by nine of his *confères*. To my unspeakable dismay—for I was too hot-headed to be reasonable amid so much excitement—I saw my husband and his colleague remain seated, the delinquents toward whom the defiant finger of the creole Hotspur had been directed. General Clark's attitude in the Mississippi delegation was scarcely less conservative than that of my clear-headed husband.

Poor Mrs. Clark was detained several days, until

a flag of truce could be obtained from the nearest Confederate post to escort her to New Orleans, and we had ample time to talk over the rush of events since the exciting period when we had last sat side by side.

After the Federals evacuated we were induced to go to Baton Rouge to inquire concerning the welfare of certain friends who had returned to town, and of others who remained during the conflict witnesses of the struggle. Pickets commanded all the approaches during the Federal occupation, and at first only the *loyal* were permitted to pass. It is needless, perhaps, to say what class composed the "truly loyal," thus early in the war, in an extreme Southern State. Ignorant and brutal negroes, who for generations had been kept under some kind of control, rushed past the pickets without a challenge, and no doubt contributed no small share to the indiscriminate robbery and devilish destruction which we in our indignation attributed to the common soldiers, who, by the death of General Williams (unfortunately killed in the battle of Baton Rouge), were left under officers certainly unequal to the task of keeping them in subordination. It was only after the place had been *sacked*—I believe that is the word, though it is scarcely comprehensive enough—that the former residents were allowed to enter and view the abomination of desolation. More than one distressed man returned to his wife, detained at Ar-

lington by the claims of maternity, with a few broken articles or a bag of willfully mutilated clothing, and reported, "This is all I could find at home."

Several days after the evacuation we ventured to enter the gates of our sweet little city, on errands of mercy, mingled with no little curiosity to see the condition in which it had been left by its unwelcome and turbulent visitors. The tall, broad-spreading shade-trees that lined the streets had been felled and thrown across all the leading thoroughfares, impeding travel so that our landau made many ineffectual attempts to thread its way. At last I descended and walked the dusty, littered, shadeless streets from square to square. Seeing the front door of the late Judge Morgan's house thrown wide open, and knowing that his widow and daughters, after asking protection for their property of the commanding general, had left before the battle, I entered. No words can tell the scene that those deserted rooms presented. The grand portraits, heirlooms of that aristocratic family, men of the Revolutionary period, high-bred dames of a long-past generation in short bodices, puffed sleeves, towering head-dresses, and quaint golden chains—ancestors long since dead, not only valuable as likenesses that could not be duplicated, but acknowledged works of art—these portraits hung upon the walls, slashed by swords clear across from side to side, stabbed and mutilated in every brutal way! The contents of store-

closets had been poured over the floors; molasses and vinegar, and everything that defaces and stains, had been smeared over walls and furniture. Up-stairs, *armoires* with mirror-doors had been smashed in with heavy axes or hammers, and the dainty dresses of the young ladies torn and crushed with studied, painstaking malignity, while china, toilet articles, and bits of glass that ornamented the rooms were thrown upon the beds and broken and ground into a mass of fragments; desks were wrenched open, and the contents scattered not only through the house, but out upon the streets, to be wafted in all directions; parts of their private letters as well as letters from the desks of other violated homes, and family records torn from numberless bibles, were found on the sidewalks of the town, and even on the public roads beyond town limits!

Judge Morgan's was the only vacated house I entered. It was enough: I was too heart-sick and indignant to seek another evidence of the lengths to which a conquering army can go in pitiless, unmeaning destruction, when nothing can result from such vandalism but hatred and revenge.

All the devastation that harrowed my soul on that visit was not entirely due to the conquering army. The Confederate attack, on that day so full of sad and tender memories, was made from the rear of the city. The men in gray sprung over the fences and swarmed

through the cemeteries, trampled down the graves, rushed over the little crosses and demolished and scattered the larger monuments that marked the resting-place of their own beloved dead, making, in that wild and desperate onslaught, ruins that tender hands and loving hearts have never yet been able to entirely repair.

My husband soon found that the distracted state of the country, the upheaving of the very foundation upon which our domestic life was based, and the idleness into which the negroes lapsed, partly from lack of steady work caused by the destruction of the growing crops, was more than he could endure.

So, in direct violation of military orders issued from headquarters in New Orleans, prohibiting the transfer of slaves from one plantation to another, a number of our negroes were sent to my brother's plantation, where work was provided for them, by which they could at least earn their food, and at the same time partially relieve us of an element of querulous discontent that was fast becoming dangerous.

Our experience before and after the battle was so painful and harassing as to lead to the determination never again to be placed under the arbitrary rule of the army of occupation, whose frequent arrests and incarcerations in the common jail of unoffending citizens under the most frivolous pretexts, and often with no pretexts at all, made our very lives insecure. Believing

that at no distant day we would have to accept the only alternative, voluntary exile, preparations for departure were quietly matured. The landau was exchanged for a rockaway, and this, with the curtains buttoned down, and some alterations in the seats to render a sleeping-place possible, made a reasonably comfortable traveling vehicle. A stout wagon, with a cotton cover, was put in order, to carry food and such articles as were necessary in camping out during a long journey, and six of the best and strongest mules were stabled with their harness hanging beside them for use at a moment's warning. We did not have long to wait.

CHAPTER VII.

SECOND VISIT OF THE ENEMY—MIDNIGHT FLIGHT—FAREWELL TO ARLINGTON.

THE only exact date I can remember, and *that* I can never forget, was the 17th of December.

The weather was warm for the season, a thick fog hung over the river, obscuring objects only a few yards distant. As I stood by the window, in the early morning, completing my toilet, the white, misty curtain rolled up like a scroll, revealing a fleet of gunboats. Far as the eye could reach, up and down and around our point, the river was bristling with gayly flagged transports, anchored mid-stream, waiting for the dissipation of the mist to proceed. In a twinkling all was excitement with the hurry and bustle of preparation for our immediate departure. A breakfast eaten "on the fly," as it were, a rushing here and there, and packing of necessaries for our journey, God only know whither, we did not care where, so we escaped a repetition of scenes that had made us old before our time, and life a constant excitement that was burning us up. William was dispatched to the city on a tour of ob-

servation. He returned, to report ten thousand men and the most warlike demonstrations that the darky's genius could invent; pickets to be stationed away beyond Arlington, and all of us to be embraced within the lines and made to "toe de mark." "Mars Jim, and every white man what harbored a Confederate soldier de time of de fight, was to be tuk prisoner." The more William told, the more he remembered to tell; and, long before he was through with his recital, I was perplexed, bewildered, and almost distracted.

The negro men were summoned from their quarters to help load the wagon. We put in cooking-utensils, some dishes and plates, bedding and a small mattress, a few kegs and boxes of necessary provisions, a trunk of clothing, some small bags and bundles—that was all.

I wandered through the dear old rooms of the house where we had lived ten happy years, taking a mournful farewell of a whole *armoire* of dinner and ball dresses, that were of no use to me now, packed a trunk full of laces, flowers, feathers, and other such useless things that were found here and there in boxes and drawers, leaving the packed things in a front room. The only thing among them I specially remember was a partly made album quilt that bore the signatures of numberless friends and of some distinguished personages. When Baton Rouge was threatened, and indeed after its capture, trunks, bags, and bundles, belonging to men off "on service," were at various times

conveyed to Arlington for safe-keeping. These I now opened, and all the letters and papers they contained were destroyed.

The mules safely locked in the stable, the harnesses all ready to slip on, extra straps and ropes thrown into the wagon—too excited to sleep, we threw ourselves on our beds for the last time; too tired to talk, sore at heart, too worn out to weep. There we lay in a fitful and uneasy slumber. In the dead stillness of the night there came a low tap at our chamber-door. "Mars Jim!" My husband was on his feet with a bound. "Your niggers is all gone to de Yankees; de pickets is on our place, and dey done told your niggers you would be arrested at daylight!" The speaker was head sugar-maker on an adjoining plantation, himself a slave. "Call Dominick and tell him to get my buggy ready while I put on some clothes," was the only response. I lighted the candle and hurried my husband off, while he whispered directions for me to join him immediately after breakfast at the house of a neighbor five miles back of us, which he could speedily reach by going through the woods, and to have one of the men drive the wagon and one drive the ambulance through the longer but better wagon-road.

That was all—and he was gone! Knowing that my husband's disregard of military orders by the removal of negroes from Arlington to my brother's plantation rendered him liable to immediate arrest,

it was an untold relief to feel that he was safe beyond Federal reach.

I did not lie down again, but wandered around in an aimless sort of way, too excited and nervous to sit still a moment, and too distracted to do a useful or sensible thing. At the first appearance of dawn I aroused William to prepare breakfast, and Charlotte to get the table ready. Before the children were awake, I was down at the stable, having William and Willy hitch up the teams. I saw with half an eye that William was not in sympathy with our plans, and knew intuitively that my husband distrusted him, else he and not Dominick would have been the one to pilot him through the canebrake and woods the previous night. Incidentally William dropped remarks to the effect that he "could lend a hand at harnessing, but he never *druv* mules; he *know'd a smatterin'* 'bout *hosses*, but *mules* (with a sneer) was clean away from him." With difficulty I repressed my disappointment regarding further help from him in my emergency. He who had been my husband's valet in his gay bachelor days and our confidential servant, our very aid and help in all my bright married life, had had his poor woolly head turned by that one trip to town, and asserted his independence at the first shadow of provocation. William failing me, I knew I must seek other help. Some of the negroes had left during the night, but I was aware that others remained who might seek exemption

from service now that they were in sight of the flag whose brilliant stars and stripes were plainly visible floating from the dome of the State Capitol. Being ready and eager to start, I immediately went down to the quarters a half-mile distant; there I waited, going from cabin to cabin, and walked to the dwelling-house and back again. Willy stood by the hitched-up teams, and Sabe, near by, held the baby in her arms, while little Henry clung to her skirts. Then back to the quarters. This man "had a *miser*y in his back—had it ever since the crevasse"; that man "never *druv* in his life—didn't I know he was do engineer?" Another man "wouldn't drive old Sall—she was de *balkinest* mule on de place; you won't git a mile from here 'fore she takes de *studs* and wont budge a step." "Well, drive us that mile." "Not me! I don't 'low to walk homo wid dis here lamo foot." I could have sat down and wept my very heart out. It was long past noon; the harnessed mules had to be fed, and William made out to say: "We had better take a little *snack* and give it up; if we stayed home, Mars Jim would come back; the Yankees didn't have nothing 'gin him."

I could hardly hold my tongue by almost biting it off—so helpless—so worried; and ever and anon the thought of my husband's impatient waiting almost crazed me. At last old Dave said he "warn't no hand wid mules, but he 'low'd he could tackle old Sal till

she balked." There was no time for bargaining for another driver now. I caught at Dave's offer before he knew it, only stopping long enough to bid all the deluded creatures a hasty good-by. Old "Aunt Hannah" (that was my mother's laundress long before I was born, and who had been given a cabin to herself to sun away her half-blind and grumbling old age) stood in her little cabin-door, as straight as an arrow; she always complained of *rheumatiz*, and I don't think I ever saw her straight before; but there she stood, with the air of one suddenly elevated to an exalted position, and waved me a "Good-by, mudam—I b'ar you no malice."

Dave was hurried by my rapid steps back to the stable, and Sabo came out with the tired children. Just as I thought we were fairly off, William announced, "Sence you was gone, a Yankce gunboat is cum down and I see it's anchored 'tween us and Kernel Hickey's." A peep around the corner of the house confirmed the truth of his statement. Hastily grasping a carpet-bag, lying ready packed in the ambulance, I ascended to my bedroom, took from it two large pockets quilted thick with jewels which I secured about my person, while Charlotta put the breakfast forks and spoons in the bottom of the bag. When I returned to the teams, everybody was standing about, apparently waiting to see what "Miss 'Liza" would do *now*. Summoning every effort to command

a voice whose quaver must have betrayed my intense emotion, I directed Willy to mount the wagon, a few last baskets and packages were tossed into the ambulance, and Henry's little pony tied behind. I got in, then the little ones and Sabe; Dave shambled into his place in front; the curtain cutting off the driver's seat was carefully rolled up, so I could have an unobstructed view, and Willy was told to lead the way. Twice I had bidden Charlotte, whose mournful eyes had followed me all day, a tearful farewell, and twice I had returned from a fruitless and unsuccessful tramp to the negro quarters. At the last moment I waved her good-by as she stood sobbing by William's side on the veranda, watching us as with bowed heads and heavy hearts we drove through the gate of our once lovely home.

So I rode away from Arlington, leaving the sugar-house crowded to its utmost capacity with the entire crop of sugar and molasses of the previous year for which we had been unable to find a market within "our lines," leaving cattle grazing in the fields, sheep wandering over the levee, doors and windows flung wide open, furniture in the rooms, clothes too fine for me to wear now hanging in the *armetres*, china in the closets, pictures on the walls, beds unmade, table spread. It was late in the afternoon of that bright, clear, bracing day, December 18, 1862, that I bade Arlington adieu forever!

CHAPTER VIII.

"PIKETS DOWN DAD!"—HARD JOURNEYING—WILLY'S FATE—
CHARLOTTE.

THE whole plantation field-work was done with mules, and I really believe Willy was the only person on the place, capable of driving, who had never managed a team of four. He moved slowly up toward the town, as directed. I think Dave felt a little reassured so long as he faced the Federal flag; but at Gartness Lane the wagon turned in, leaving the starry emblem to the left; then Dave stopped to remark that he believed he "had gone 'bout far enough—p'raps Sabo could drive, but *he* wouldn't." Here was the supreme moment for me. There was a small pistol-case on the seat behind me. I do not know to this day whether that pistol was loaded or not, but there was no time to waste, and I was in no frame of mind for hesitation. I pulled it out like a professional highwayman, held it close to Dave's woolly head, and ordered him to follow the wagon, or I'd blow his brains out! Even now, when I think of that moment, my lips quiver and my hands tremble.

Not a word did Dave utter, but, with one scared look that made his old black face ashy, he drove through the gate and closely followed the wagon.

By evening we reached the end of Gartness Lane, and a black head popped out of the bushes. "Don't go dat road, pickets down dar!" so we turned up the road we wanted to go down. When it was quite dark, we reached a house, where we asked to remain all night, and there to my intense astonishment I met our overseer, who, instead of remaining on the plantation attending to his duties, had taken flight on the first appearance of the Federals. He had departed without the slightest notification, leaving me to do the best I could, without the help of a living soul but little Willy; seeking a place of safety for his worthless self, and in that place of safety I found him at night—waiting for me!

I was too dejected, helpless, and cowed, to say anything more than that I was pleased to see him, and would he be good enough to help Willy feed the mules; and be sure to put Dave in a safe place, as he was my only dependence for a driver until I could join my husband?

The next morning, the first thing I heard was, that Dave had stolen Henry's pony and absconded! Words fail to express my indignation, but I controlled sufficient vocabulary to give the overseer my opinion of him in terms that must have made him think he was

a very contemptible piece of humanity. He was given to understand that he must tie his horse to the tail of the wagon, and take the reins of the four mules, while Willy would drive the ambulance.

I never saw before the people who so hospitably entertained us that night, and have forgotten their names, but I presume they thought I was equal to any emergency, and did not wonder I had been left to "paddle my own canoe."

The rest comes to my mind in vague confusion. Recollections of woolly heads popping out of bushes at every cross-road, and sending us the roundabout way, with the whisper, "Pickets down dat road!" temporary bridges over impassable places, felled trees shoved aside, fences taken down for us to pass through woods and fields to come to an open road, and the oft-repeated warning, "Pickets down dar!"—it is all now like a din, troubled dream. On the third day we emerged on a broad highway, where were wagons loaded with furniture, beds, bundles, cooking-utensils, articles of clothing, old trunks and barrels overflowing with hastily collected household effects, being laboriously drawn by broken-down, emaciated horses, whose days of active service had long since departed. A few decrepit, bedraggled, dejected women, with whole families of shivering children, walked the dusty roadside.

These were the "rear-guard," as it were, of a little

army of wretched citizens fleeing from their broken homes. On the afternoon of that (my third) day's travel, now quite voiceless from severe cold, and very nearly exhausted, we arrived in front of a comfortable-looking plantation-house. I gave out completely when I saw its wide-open veranda doors and all the surroundings of a luxurious resting-place. Willy was sent in to ask if we could stop there, and returned with a beaming face to say it was Mr. Pierce's house, and that my husband had been there looking for me, and had gone to make further search, promising to return at night. His anxiety for my safety had been greatly increased through numerous reports circulated by the refugees from Baton Rouge, to the effect that a Federal gunboat had landed at Arlington subsequent to his hurried departure, and, failing to capture him, had taken his wife and children on board, and then proceeded to New Orleans. The rumor, reasserted in various forms, had so great a resemblance to truth that he was nearly distracted, and not till late in the evening, when he found us safe at Mr. Pierce's, did he know the facts. My heart burst with its burden of anxieties when I saw my husband again and was in-folded in his strong arms, only thirteen miles from our own home, and I had been three days making it! Arlington with all its attractions was nothing. I said then, as I say now, "I never desire to see it again." The brightest hours of my early life were spent there,

but the remembrance is blotted out by the painful incidents of the last days at the dear old home.

In consequence of the contagious nature of the illness in Mr. Pierce's house, we took a hasty departure the following morning. He gave us a small army-tent that was found on his place after the battle; it was thankfully stored in the wagon. Thirty miles farther brought us to my brother's home, where we tarried several days. Willy was reluctant to go on with us, and we needed him no longer, so he returned to Arlington with the buggy, which was also useless. The boy, months afterward, while engaged in guarding a neighbor's cotton from roving bands of self-styled guerrillas, who were as much to be feared as the enemy, was found stark and stiff with a bullet in his heart and a gun clutched in his cold hands, his face turned heavenward, whither his brave spirit had flown. Sad fate for the noble, faithful boy!

One word about Charlotte, a type of a class of slaves, one specimen at least of which was to be found in every well-governed establishment. "Aunt" Charlotte was a trusted member of my husband's family when "old miss," as she with affectionate reverence always called his mother, was at the head of the household. Her zeal in our service never flagged; she had no higher ambition than the faithful discharge of her daily duties. She superintended the details of our house with systematic precision, "achieved," as she

expressed it, from "old miss." The day after our abrupt departure, the Federals took possession of all that remained on the plantation. Our old home was quickly stripped. Charlotte—I think in the vain hope of our return—claimed certain valuable articles of furniture and my portrait, and, with William and their baby, secured a vacant house in town, and there they received Willy upon his return. This much we knew before we left Louisiana.

To a relative who saw her two years later in her own room, the poor creature with sobs told of the death of her baby, repeating again and again, "If Miss 'Liza had been here, my baby wouldn't have died." She opened the trunk I had left in the house, and with careful hands took out the faded finery and bit of silk patchwork to show how she was keeping it for "Miss 'Liza." A short while after this the poor soul became hopelessly insane. Now she rests!

CHAPTER IX.

CAMPING BY NIGHT--FORLORN WORKEN--DEAUMONT--HOUSTON.

WE were going to Texas, the great State that opened its hospitable doors to hundreds of refugees fleeing like ourselves from their own homes. We were going to Texas for many reasons.

A loving brother was there, and our slaves were there at peaceful work on land cultivated on shares. We had, besides, the feeling that the Federals could never get a foothold on its boundless prairies, though they had made an ominous beginning by capturing its most valuable seaport; but, above and beyond all, we could take refuge in Mexico if the worse came to the worst.

We had long journeys of days that ran into weeks, of camping under a tent that was scarce large enough to cover four. Every night after the day's ride, fodder, that was picked up in the fields bordering the road, was carefully spread on the bare ground, with comforts and a blanket on top, and we stowed ourselves away, each with a child to keep warm. Often we rose in the morning to find the ground covered

with frost, and the tent too stiff to be folded into the wagon. Then, crossing rivers by rope-ferries, "manned" by women whose husbands were in the mountains of Virginia or the swamps around Vicksburg—frail rope-ferries, that could only take one vehicle at a time without risk of sinking; riding by day, camping by night, occasionally in rainy weather making shelter at houses by the roadside; though never refused, the accommodations were always scant and more or less uncomfortable. Proceeding west, we found the people poorer and more ignorant, consequently more helpless. In many instances only women and children were left in the almost destitute farm-houses. One rainy Sunday afternoon we stopped at a miserable country house—the first one we had seen all that day—which consisted of two rooms and a porch perched a few feet above the ground on the inevitable six stumps which formed the foundation, and a retreat at the same time for pigs and chickens. After rapping and calling for some time, finding no response, and the door on the latch, we ventured to enter the deserted house. The rafters were hung with long leaves of partly cured tobacco, and there was a remnant of fire on the capacious hearth, with other evidences that the owner was temporarily absent. Not a living thing was to be seen around the premises but a broken-down, one-eyed horse, and an ancient rooster, that strutted around in solitary state. In the

course of the afternoon two forlorn women made their appearance with a handkerchief full of "borrowed" corn-meal, for, except a pound or two of rusty bacon, they had nothing whatever in the house to eat. It was difficult for my husband to believe they could be so destitute that they had to walk in a drizzling rain four miles to a neighbor to borrow a half-peck of meal; he freely offered to pay any price for a few ears of corn for the mules. They were not to be had.

Their husbands (they were mother and daughter) had gone "to fight Lincoln," they pathetically told us, and when they went, "now gwine on two year," they expected to "git done with the job" in a month. The poor women had eaten everything their husbands left them but the "*terbacker*," and, from the way they smoked and chewed that night, I am afraid they consumed all that before the men returned, if, alas! they ever did. We had hoped, being only twenty miles or so from the town of Beaumont, on the Sabine River, to find some variation in our own camp-diet. The poor baby had been fed on sweet-potatoes—the brave little fellow only six months old. When we asked for milk, they showed us the old one-eyed *mare*, stretching her long, skinny neck over the broken fence, as the "onlyest sho-critter" they had. In despair for ourselves and pity for them, we brought out our camp supplies—coffee, sugar, salt, and hard-tack—and the famished women enjoyed a sumptuous feast with the

hot corn-bread and fried bacon they were able to add.

We were allowed to occupy their only bed, and I think there were a million of *cimices lectuarii* in it, for Henry and the patient little baby presented the appearance of having measles when we awoke the next morning.

We parted from our wagon and its camping facilities at the door of this old cabin, sending it by road direct to Houston, proposing ourselves to take ours at Beaumont, thereby saving at least sixty miles of wagon travel, which mode of conveyance had become intolerably wearisome to the children.

The only tavern at that picturesquely located town was less adapted to the accommodation of man than of beast. There was but one guest-chamber, and its only entrance was through a combination of office, bar, smoking and lounging room, presided over by the landlord, a kindly, hunchbacked dwarf, whose wife, a comely, intelligent woman, by the way, was the first "*dipper*" I ever saw. She confined herself mostly to the kitchen, where her pot of snuff and dip-stick were conveniently at hand on the window-sill, and between dips—I refrain from describing the process—attended to her domestic duties. The universal assembly-room was the only one provided with a fireplace. As a severe storm of rain and sleet, accompanied by a sharp fall in temperature, set in on Monday, the very

day of our arrival, and continued with increasing fury until Friday, I sat all those days in a corner by a smoky fire, with baby wrapped in shawls on my lap. We were the only lodgers, so far as could be discovered, but the boarders hung round the same pitiful fire from meal to meal, reluctant to brave the inhospitable elements. They smoked pipes, talked, chewed, and expectorated hour after hour, but I was so glad of a warm, dry corner, and not inappreciative of the scant courtesy showed to the only lady in the crowd, that I had no complaints to make. No recollection remains to me regarding the time-table of the Houston and Beaumont Railroad, but a dim idea dawns that it was intended to make a round trip daily, *Deo volente*, which implied "weather permitting"; but when rain soaked the wood piled by the road-side so that it would not make steam, or when sleet made the rails slippery, travel was entirely suspended. As both these contingencies existed the week we were in Beaumont, of course no travel could be thought of.

At Orange faint rumors were circulated that Galveston had been recaptured by the Confederates. Proceeding west, those rumors became more frequent and positive; and the last day at Beaumont we had the happiness to have them verified by eye-witnesses of General Magruder's heroic and gallant act, which could scarcely have been excelled by any similar event of the war. The story, repeated again and again, with

added particulars at every recital, gave us mighty food for boastful talk, and our hearts so glowed with the warmth of excitement, that it was not surprising the sun burst out from the dark clouds then and there, and scattered the sleety rain-drops.

Master Henry had been so long confined to the smoky, stale odor of the sitting-room, that he took immediate advantage of the clearing weather to explore the town, whose mysteries he had studied for days through the grimy, rain-spotted windows. When missed, he could not be found. Beaumont is located on a high, almost perpendicular bluff, which runs sheer down to the bed of the narrow river. As the tavern was only a stone's-throw from this precipitous bank, the first thought was that the child might have tumbled into the river. Our kind landlord himself headed a search, and, when the children at the school were dismissed at recess, they also joined in. When, some time afterward, the enterprising young scamp was found, quietly watching the men at work in a saw-mill out of town, the whole population had already been aroused. Meanwhile my husband—with an occasional little inquiring trip to the door, which did not arouse my suspicions—remained with me engaged in earnest discussion of the news from Galveston, in which, as in all particulars concerning the war, I was always so easily interested as to become for the time oblivious of every other subject. So well did he man-

age the self-imposed task, that the little truant was brought back before I had felt any anxiety on the score of his absence.

After a long day's snail-like progress, the train stopping every few miles to take a load of wet and soggy wood, and every few minutes to get up steam, slipping, sliding, and sometimes refusing point-blank to budge until all the men got out in the mud and slush to "giv her a shove," we reached Houston after midnight, tired, cold, hungry, and cross, to find no conveyance at the muddy, inhospitable shed of a depot to carry us to a hotel.

One of our fellow-passengers, who had also sat by the Beaumont fire, procured a carriage from a stable near by, and in the wee hours of the morning our party tumbled into the "Old Capitol." I believe there is a new hotel of the same name on the spot now, of which Houstonians are justly proud; and, as our advance in the refinement of life is measured by the depths from which we started, they will not be offended if reminded that the "Old Capitol," in war-times, was about as wretched a hostelry as could have been found on the face of this continent.

A small bucket, filled with cold meat and sweet-potatoes by the hostess of the Beaumont tavern, to serve in case of delay, was so liberally shared with the other hungry passengers of the train, that we were famished when we arrived at Houston. Nothing whatever to

eat was procurable at that late hour. Sabe managed to kindle a fire in the grate of our chilly chamber, already filled with half-burned coals, ashes, scraps of paper, stumps, and quids of discarded tobacco, and we were made more comfortable by a cup of coffee from our own camp supply.

Upon the edge of boasted grazing prairies, where the grass furnished boundless pasturage for cattle too numerous to be counted, not a drop of milk could be had for patient baby, who had almost forgotten the taste of the only food he ought to have had, not a particle of butter to soften the dry sweet-potato he had to eat, not even a piece of broiled steak. Milk and butter, we were coolly told, were out of season (one would have thought they were vegetables and fruit like green peas and peaches), and the meat, tough and stringy, was fried to the consistency of leather.

A dark purple calico dress and black cloth sacque, my hair combed straight back *à la chinoise*, and protected from dust by a cap of chenille, a home-made palmetto hat of the "wash-bowl" pattern, with a fold of black bombazine around the crown, constituted the costume in which I had traveled and camped. The first morning in that unique hotel, decked out in my black bombazine, my hair in the broad, spreading bands over the ears, as was the fashion, I sallied out to breakfast. A freshly shaved gentleman in broad-cloth passed and repassed me with a perplexed look

that attracted my notice. Glances of inquiry were exchanged, followed by peals of laughter; the outfit of our Beaumont friend had been even shabbier than mine, and each found the other metamorphosed by change of clothes almost beyond recognition. While enjoying a hearty laugh over the affair, another butterfly emerged from the chrysalis state, and we stoutly refused to recognize my husband fresh from the barber and boot-black.

Drums were beating, flags flying, and the whole city in holiday attire, streets filled with crowds jostling their way toward a grand stand erected on a broad open space in Main Street, where, with some music, more speeches, and most cheers, a pretty young lady in a blue silk evening-dress presented in the name of the "Lone Star State" (as Texas loved to call herself) a superb sword to the gallant general whose dashing heroism had wrested their island city from the grasp of the foe, and much more to the same effect. General Magruder, whose soldierly bearing was somewhat marred by an unfortunate lisp in his utterance, conveying the impression of effeminate affectation, graciously received it, and, refusing the assistance of his aide, buckled it himself about his gorgeous uniform with a solemn oath that it should never be sheathed while the enemy was on Confederate soil, etc., all very grand, glittering, and impressive. I can not but smile now when the scene comes back to me, as I stood in

the thickest of the throng, holding Henry by the hand, my heart almost bursting with proud emotion, my eyes dim with grateful tears, and hoping the boy was inhaling patriotism with every breath, though still too young to understand and appreciate the greatness of the occasion. That the elegant sword was *borrowed* for the presentation from a veteran of the war with Mexico, and was only typical of a more magnificent weapon to be substituted later when circumstances would permit, and was to be returned with thanks to its owner that very night, did not cause a ripple of a derisive smile. Every emotion was merged in patriotic fervor.

Years after, when General Magruder became our guest in a foreign land, how uproariously we laughed at the incident when he repeated, in his peculiarly halting lisp, portions of the gushing address, and in his inimitable way went through the motions of buckling on the borrowed saber, which, by the way, the donors had never been able to replace!

CHAPTER X.

TRAVELING THROUGH TEXAS—NEARING THE RIO GRANDE.

ONCE in Texas, we moved around with our fast-vanishing *lares et penates* as business or convenience required. The dear baby succumbed to the first illness he ever had, and one beautiful April day his little body was carried to the cemetery at Houston and buried, as was our blessed Saviour, in a tomb belonging to another. The cradle that had been kindly loaned us by a neighbor, and the various little cups and mugs, also borrowed, were returned, the medicine-bottles put out of sight, and I sat down desolate and lonely in the empty room, with no heart to do any more, feeling that there was nothing now to do but to lie down and die.

My husband, whose energy was all-controlling, and who knew no such word as fail, rose above every emergency. It seems now, when I recall it all, the heavier were the blows, the stouter his resistance. I actually learned in those days to feel something discouraging had happened when he came into my presence with a brighter smile and more cheerful words

than usual. His was one of those rare natures to persevere and resist against the blows that would have prostrated almost any other man. He had contracts to move Government cotton to the frontier, which afforded him opportunities to move his own; and in following up that cotton we took more than one trip to the Rio Grande, repeating the camping out, minus the tent, which was patriotically turned over to General Magruder upon our arrival at Houston.

We now made our bed in the ambulance; only two could possibly occupy that. Sometimes Henry shared it with me, and his father lay upon the ground underneath the vehicle, and often the boy slept on Mother Earth. We still had that "prairie-schooner" of a wagon to carry our clothing, provisions, cooking-utensils, and a servant-woman. Our ablutions were performed habitually in the horse-bucket, and the towel—we were reduced to one, the others having been ruined or blown away while camping out—the precious towel, pinned to the ambulance-curtain, flapped in the breeze and dried as we rode along.

It was not always plain sailing; adventures were frequent. We had the ill luck, on the first trip to the Rio Grande, to put up in Victoria at the meanest and dirtiest hotel I ever dreamed of. It was not half so comfortable as the ambulance and the horse-bucket, but that could not be found out until it had been tried. The room assigned us was immediately over

what they were pleased to call the office, but which was really a bar-room; and one unacquainted with Texas in those days can not understand what a bar-room pure and simple was. I was too tired and sleepy to fight long with the various creatures in the bed that had previous possession, which is nine points of the law. By and by, giving up the battle, I fell sound asleep.

My husband, being a light sleeper, was easily roused by outside noises. He spent the greater part of the night with ear and eye at the cracks in the floor, that furnished a pretty good view into the bar-room beneath, and then and there heard the thirsty, boisterous couriers from General Bee to General Magruder tell that the Federals were in Brownsville, and that the place was evacuated. The ubiquitous Yankees! Even away out on the borders of the Guadalupe River we had to hear the old story—"Pickets down dat road!"

What to do was the question that concerned us now. The couriers fortified themselves with drinks, and were off to Magruder before the dawn. By the time I was awake, my husband had procured a dilapidated old map, and was studying out the situation. Our cotton was on the road to Brownsville; the news soon came, however, that General Bee had ordered all the cotton-teams back, and directed them to Laredo. To Laredo we prepared to go. At General Bee's

urgent advice, it was, at the last moment of starting, decided that Henry, my negro servant-woman, and I, should return to my brother's in the interior of Texas. My husband and a few men, on the same cotton errand, joined together for mutual protection, but they did not relish the additional care of two women and a great white covered wagon, that could be seen for miles over the flat prairie country, only broken with a low growth of chaparral and prickly-pear. All this was being discussed during the first day's ride from Fernando Creek, where we met General Bee. My husband could see, by my burning face and resolute eye, that I was inwardly protesting the whole time.

When we camped that night, the mules were chained to the wagon-wheels, to provide against a chance of stampede; the men, with loaded guns, were detailed to stand watch, with eyes and ears on the keen alert. My husband and I crept into our ambulance, buttoned the curtains closely down, and, while he held a dim candle in a bottle, I divided in half the few pieces of gold coin we had; sewed twenty pieces for him in a broad, coarse cotton belt, and twenty for me in the bosom and hips of my corset. Then began the division of our scanty bedding; his eyes were filled with tears—that resolute man, who had borne every blow so bravely! We could not talk, our hearts were too full; each dared not unnerve the other by a word. The division took place in absolute silence;

he held the candle, and I did the work. Then we lay down for the last time together; we, who had fought such a brave fight side by side, were to separate now, because the dangers to be encountered were too much for the woman. Lying very quiet, each hoping the other would sleep, oh! how the thoughts surged through my brain the short remnant of that night; how earnestly I prayed to be shown the right way; how I petitioned the all-wise God to shut from my view all feeling of *self*—myself, himself—and show me the way, whether to turn back alone or go on by his side! At the earliest dawn I took advantage of a slight move to ask if he was awake, and then told him in emphatic, plain, unmistakable terms that I was *not* going back. He pressed me to his thankful heart without a word. As we journeyed on with the rest of the little company, we laughingly proposed that all the money and watches be trusted to my keeping, for, if the Mexican outlaws should pounce upon us, surely they would not search the only lady in the party.

The next night our camp was by the ruins of an abandoned well. Only twenty-four hours after, a party of four men were attacked by Mexican bandits at that very spot, and robbed of everything, even their horses. We did not know of our narrow escape till some days afterward, when the rifled men wearily tramped into Laredo. It was a four-days' trip, and

in that exciting and perilous journey I am sure that Henry and I were the only ones that slept.

The sportsmen of our party often varied the bill-of-fare with game. On several occasions early in the journey one of the number, Mr. Dodds, brought down a fine wild-turkey. A particularly handsome one furnished me with a "turkey-tail fan," the ragged edges of which are still in my possession.

Nearing the Rio Grande, the country was so barren that the only growths were prickly-pear and mesquite, except on the banks of the few streams. Even in that desolate region an occasional mule-eared rabbit was brought to camp and made into a delicious stew.

Desiring to accomplish thirty-five miles each day, we always started at the earliest dawn, fortified with a cup of black coffee and a cracker. At noon a halt was called of a half-hour or so, and at four we camped for the night, when *the* meal of the day was leisurely prepared and enjoyed. Frequently we were able to procure a kid. One of the men, who had made the overland journey to California in the fifties, and therefore was endowed with envied experience, was very expert in finding, where no one else could, Mexican *jeccals* (huts) and kids, and preparing the meat in a variety of tempting ways; so by common consent Mr. Crussan became our commissary and *chef*. Being the only lady in the company, I was allowed to do nothing, and ate the hard-tack and salt pork, when there was

nothing better, with the relish that stimulating air and exercise always impart, immensely enjoying the savory roasts and stews. Many chats Mr. Crossan and I had while I reclined on an improvised divan and watched him stretch the kid on cross-sticks and incline it over the fire *à la barbeque*; as he turned and basted it, there arose an appetizing odor that was absolutely delightful. I was constantly reminding the kindly man by my presence, of one trip he made to California when his young wife was the only woman in the company; and the tempting, dainty dishes he contrived for me, and the laughable stories he told to while away the time, I always considered a tribute to the memory of that other woman who was so patient and brave.

CHAPTER XI.

LAREDO—MEXICAN ESCORT TO PIEDRAS NEGRAS—THE CUSTOM-HOUSE—A NORTHER—SAN ANTONIO—SCARCITY OF NECESSARIES.

ON the fourth day at noon we camped amid sand and prickly-pear, to brush up and make ourselves presentable to appear before strangers. An hour afterward we drove into the scattering town of Laredo, amid the plaudits of numberless little, half-naked *muchachos* who never had seen an ambulance, never had seen anything but themselves and the muddy river, and at long intervals a lonely wagon. So they hung on to the traces, ran by the wheels, and caught on behind, at the imminent risk of bodily injury. If they had ever heard of Queen Victoria, they might have thought she was coming to town, for I was the first *white* woman and my attendant the first *black* one the generation had seen.

I often think of the days we spent in quaint Laredo—of the old priest who three times a day solemnly issued from his adobe hut and tolled off the hours from the big, harsh-sounding bell that sur-

mounted a tall staff beside the little mud-covered church—of the courtesy and kindness of the women who brought me almost daily presents of little loaves of bread, alas! full of caraway-seed, but sweet and warm from the adobe ovens that were scattered at convenient distances through the village—of the men, wrapped in blankets like Indians, standing aside and giving me a courteous, deep salaam, *sombrero* in hand, when necessity compelled me to take the quart-cup and go to the public pen for goat's milk—of the dexterous manner with which said goats were milked, all herded in a crowded pen: the milker fastened his eye on a certain nanny, made a rapid dart, caught her by the left hind-foot, which he secured under his right arm, thereby lifting the struggling creature quite off her legs; with a quick stoop and a few lightning strokes the cup foamed over and Mrs. Goat was released. This trick was repeated with an accuracy and dexterity quite bewildering. All the animals looked alike to me, but the milker never seemed to make the mistake of catching the same one twice. I sometimes stood and watched the whole process, until the froth and foam of my cup settled down, revealing very little milk. Daily I went to the pen, both because I could ask for it in their mixture of Spanish and Indian, and because Dolia with her ebony face was such a curiosity as to excite a commotion every time she stepped out of the house, and therefore she was reluctant to go. I

need not tell of the hours I sat at the only window of our temporary home, and wrote letters that were never sent, or made entries in a diary that was subsequently lost, while a crowd of inquisitive urchins gathered about, until I was forced to retreat inside and put the writing away; nor of days that I wandered to the bluff, and met long processions of women returning from the river, with curiously shaped jars of water deftly balanced on their heads, or suspended by one hand over the shoulder, and watched other women washing clothes without soap or hot water, by spreading them on rocks over which the waters of the river lapped, and beating and turning and beating them again with queer wooden mallets, while the naked children paddled in and out, diving, ducking, floating, and splashing around as though water was their native element; nor of other days when I stood on the bank to see the long-expected cotton-wagons cross the ford to the Mexican side; nor of the startling rumor that the Federals, who seemed to be sweeping over the country like a swarm of locusts, were rapidly marching up the Rio Grande!

The alarm was premature, but we immediately crossed into Mexico. My husband's first business venture, when still a youth, was the superintendence of a "stage line" in the West, for which he had a "mail contract." In Laredo he found one of his old employés, who had drifted there after the war

with Mexico, married an olive beauty, and settled down to a life of masterly inactivity. Through his kindly offices we had been able to obtain quite comfortable quarters, but when we crossed to "foreign parts" were not so well housed, albeit we found more life and animation. The frolicsome men of American Laredo, to avoid conscription had emigrated also. Here they amused themselves with feats of horseback-riding and lofty tumbling, some of which were quite astonishing. It was a frequent exploit for a rider to lean over and pick a silver dollar from the ground while his horse was in full gallop under whip and spur. During the annual festival of their patron saint, "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe," we walked through the plaza, filled with gaily decked booths, and saw both men and women win and lose bags of money at the gambling-tables with a *sang-froid* that indicated familiarity with the game.

The repeated rumors of Federal advance soon caused the order to be issued to close the custom-house at Laredo and open one at Piedras Negras, still farther up the Rio Grande, and on the Mexican side of the river, to which point all cotton-trains were now directed. Our Confederate official procured from the Governor of the State of Nuevo Leon an armed escort, and we eagerly embraced the opportunity of safe conveyance through that wild and lawless region by joining his party. I presume there were valuables, perhaps

specie, in his train, from the extraordinary precautions observed against attack. Away in front of our *cor-lège*, the striped *serapie* of the Mexican captain was always visible, fluttering in the wind, as he rode rapidly forward reconnoitring the country, while we followed in single file, surrounded by his armed men. It was a four-days' journey, if my memory serves me. Sometimes we halted in the middle of the day, scarcely having scored a dozen miles, and sometimes rode until quite dark, in order to avoid dangerous and exposed camping-places.

Arrived at Piedras Negras, the party was directed to the only public building in the town, to which it had been assigned by the courtesy of the Mexican governor, and I believe, also, the only one that boasted a fireplace, a tiny grate in an inconvenient corner, that could hold about two chips and a handful of coals. The weather, though late in December, gave no indications, however, that even a small fire would be necessary for our comfort. The building consisted of one long, narrow room, with a small window, innocent of glass at one end, and two doors opening on opposite sides, one to the narrow, sandy lane that represented a street, and the other to an uninclosed yard, at the extreme end of which a dead dog lay swollen to the size of a calf, but so pure was the air, no odor from the disgusting object—which, of course, was now quickly removed—had invaded the premises.

Our building was stucco, with some attempt at ornamentation, in the way of whitewashed walls, with daubs of blue here and there. The floor, of Mother Earth, well trodden and quite smooth, was tessellated with an ever-moving panorama of fleas; here we spread the wagon-cover, and upon some rough boxes, collected with no small cost of energy and money, was placed our still comfortable though long-used ambulance-mattress. Chairs were so scarce that none could be procured; fortunately, I had retained in all our wanderings a little splint-bottomed rocking-chair, brought from Arlington, and this was doubly appreciated as the "woman in the case" was comfortably provided for (when we left Mexico, for the last time, I gave that chair to a friend, and twenty years after, in New Orleans, sat in it again). The scarcity of furniture arose from the fact that the natives, even when in comfortable circumstances, slept on rawhides spread upon the floor, and squatted about in uncomfortable attitudes, oblivious of the luxury of chairs.

In these quarters we remained two months. The accommodating collector gave the room to us entirely at night, but during the day it was his office. There he had a table for his papers and a store-box to sit on, and there he dispatched his business as "collector of the customs for the Confederate States." That high-sounding title meant a great deal to us then, empty as it is now. Here teamsters were paid for hauling Gov-

ernment cotton to the Rio Grande, and here permits were granted for various purposes. The collector made me feel very important at first, but I was fearfully burdened afterward by his appointing me custodian of the specie. There was no bank, of course, nor any other place of deposit for valuables in Piedras Negras, as the natives to the manor born could carry on their persons without effort everything they owned, clothes and all.

Mexican silver dollars arrived in stout coffee-sacks, consigned to the Confederate officer, to pay cartage. I opened and emptied my only trunk, and the money was rattled in like stones turned from a wheelbarrow, until the trunk was full to bursting; then I locked it, sat on it during the day, and slept on it at night, as it was dragged under the lower edge of our mattress at bed-time. I was almost afraid to wink, the responsibility of my charge so overwhelmed me. Rapidly those clumsy dollars were paid out to big-booted, red-shirted men, with pistols in their belts and fire in their eyes, who tied them in coarse handkerchiefs and heavy stockings, though mostly in bags made of pantaloon-legs. In very many instances the men, not yet ready to start on the home journey—though I was an entire stranger—begged me to keep their bags until called for.

Then traders on their own business intent, Jews, and that class of men of peace always found where

there is a chance of money-making, came out of the Confederacy to Piedras Negras, with their precious bags of hoarded gold, *en route* for the interior of Mexico, to purchase goods.

These wary men quickly learned there was an American woman in town who could be persuaded to take care of their money till they were ready to start. So to the office they came, with courteous though cautious manner, casting keen glances at my face and around the room, asking occasional questions as to its being lonesome in there, if I never went out to walk, or left the place for any length of time. Then they would slyly bring out the inevitable bag from a deep pocket and ask me to keep it "till to-morrow," adding they had to sleep in their wagons, where it was not safe to keep valuables. Two months I sat on money, slept on money, watched by money, not knowing the amount, the names, nor often the faces even of the trusting depositors.

It was not always spring-like and balmy on that sandy bank. One night we were roused by a knock at the back door, with news that Mr. W—— was frozen stiff in his wagon! There was a shuffling and a rush in the intense cold, the door hastily opened and as rapidly closed on the "good collector," in a very dazed and half-frozen condition, his overcoat and blanket wrapped about him, yet so benumbed and helpless that he could only move by the aid of two men who

supported him. Laying him on the floor, before the "two chips and a handful of coals," we retired once more to bed. Then came a big *bump* at the front door. We thought it was a belated native, and that he might as well go home; but another bump and a sharp rattle gave positive indications that he was going no farther. To my husband's call, "Who's there?" came the chattering utterance: "Simmes, just arrived; let me in for Heaven's sake! I've got lumbago, and can't stay out here!" So poor Mr. Simmes was admitted, and, wrapped up like a mummy, he lay as close to the fire as he could. The next morning, when I awoke, our thawed guests had departed. I arose, shook out my skirts, and the toilet was complete.

The provisions were frozen, eggs were solid, so was the fresh beef, and they had to be brought inside and thawed before the fire. The cold was accompanied by high winds, that blew the fine sand in blinding clouds up the narrow streets, drifting it into every crack and crevice of the house, though the shutters were tightly closed, so that a candle was needed all that day. Delia brought the kitchen-utensils inside to prepare our meals, yet, notwithstanding all these precautions, sand sifted into the coffee-pot and over the food, making everything gritty.

In the midst of our work, one of the *depositors* called to say that a friend of his was ill in a wagon outside. We immediately thawed some eggs, and with

a cup of milk made the invalid the most attractive delicacy that the circumstances would admit, and sent it, with the promise of some beef-tea in an hour or two.

During the following day the wind subsided, the room was cleared of the sandy dust, that covered everything with a whitish coat, and we were soon again quite comfortable.

Later we went into Texas for several months' sojourn, fording the Rio Grande in a terrible wind-storm. The blinding sand swept in great gusts over the river and down the level, desolate road, whirled through the ambulance in stinging blasts, and blew into the faces of the frightened mules. Starting in the forenoon after a hurried, unsatisfactory, gritty breakfast, a floundering drive of ten miles brought us to the chaparral, where we were obliged to halt and camp. The *personnel* of the party was the most agreeable we had met in all our camping experiences. Besides a very jovial, entertaining physician from New Orleans, there were two intelligent, genial young Englishmen, members of commercial houses in London, regular cockneys, on their first trip through a rough country; everything new and novel was attractive to them, and even exceedingly unpleasant occurrences were accepted with good-nature.

We halted with dry and parched throats by a brackish well, the water of which was scarcely fit to

cleansed our faces from the gritty dust, and still less desirable for making coffee, though improvised filtration somewhat improved it. While a fire was kindling, and preparations for dinner were being made, our doctor in utter despair was heard to exclaim, "I would give a thousand dollars for a good drink of brandy!" to which I promptly replied, "There's a whole bottle of cognac in my trunk to be had for less than that." My husband, knowing full well the importance of keeping a small supply on hand, looked very anxious, and shook his head; but the offer was renewed, only exacting the promise, as it was a full bottle, the cork never having been disturbed, that the contents should be equally divided among all the gentlemen. Of course, the proposition met with universal approval, and the doctor, with smacking lips, readily accepted the conditions. To the insinuation that the existence of the brandy was a myth, the ready reply came, "The collector gave me a bottle full of brandy on New Year's, with the injunction not to open it except in dire emergency. That time has come." From my trunk in the wagon was then produced, amid the intense hilarity of the crowd, a dainty toy-bottle holding perhaps a wine-glass of liquor, and the disappointed doctor was compelled to fulfill the agreement, by which each gentleman of the party received about "forty drops."

Following the old routine of travel and camping-

out, I often became stiff and weary from the tedious rides, and found the change to a brisk walk very refreshing. When the teams rested beside a stream or well at noon, I frequently walked long distances on the lonely and desolate roads before the ambulance overtook me. We halted on the pebbly bank of the Frio to rest and refresh the mules and soak the wheels, whose tires in the long, dusty drive had become loose and unsafe. I walked up the road, perhaps a mile, enjoying the quiet and relief which a change of locomotion afforded. Suddenly was perceived at the top of a slight rise a "solitary horseman" slowly approaching. While I was still looking at him, uncertain what to do, he sprung from his horse, and advanced with rapid steps, leading the animal by the bridle.

Having been so often warned of the hazard incurred by these lonely walks, I was paralyzed with alarm, till the spell was broken by the familiar voice of Mr. Crossan, our commissary and *chef* of months ago: "Mrs. —! I would have known that bonnet on Mount Ararat!"

We found San Antonio to be the most attractive and interesting town we had visited in all our journeyings. Though laid out with some regularity, and ornamented by several modern structures, its narrow streets, many low stone houses, quaint churches, and busy plaza, mark its Spanish origin.

The San Antonio River, clear as crystal, heads

from two springs a short distance above the town, and through its tortuous channel and irrigating canals the water is carried in easy access to most of the houses. The *missions* are curiosities. Those of Conception, San José, San Juan, and La Espada, are within a couple of miles of the city. Although now in dilapidated condition, they bear full evidence of the substantial architecture and elaborate finish of the immense establishments erected nearly two centuries ago to extend the power and authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

Here stands the Alamo, celebrated in the history of Texan independence as the scene of the desperate struggle between the Mexican army under General Santa Anna and one hundred and fifty Texans, in which every one of the latter was slaughtered, among them the eccentric Davy Crockett and the heroic Bowie.

San Antonio was now the business point to which all the wagon-trains from Mexico converged. Hundreds of huge Chihuahua wagons were to be seen "parked" with military precision outside the city, waiting their turn to enter the grand plaza, deliver their packages of goods, and load with cotton for their outward trip. Everything was hurry, bustle, and confusion. The major-domo, urging his train of wagons through the streets, was loud and vociferous in his language, and each driver and outrider added copi-

ously to the babel of tongues. Merchants of every clime were here, anxious to sell or exchange for cotton, or to procure transportation for their goods far into the interior of Louisiana and Arkansas.

Hearing there were men in town with a miscellaneous assortment of dry-goods, with a friend I went to the warehouse where they were stored to make some purchases. We were told "the goods were not open to be opened in San Antonio. They were imported especially for the Louisiana trade." We implored the privilege of buying some much-needed articles, and at last moderated the request to "just one set of knitting-needles." The Jew was polite, but inexorable; he protested "he did not own the goods—they were simply in his keeping; the owner lived in Shreveport; there were no knitting-needles in the stock that he knew of; and really the ladies could not be accommodated; he had not the power." My disappointed friend exclaimed, "Well, Mrs. —, we will have to give it up!" Quick as thought the man turned his searching eyes to my face. "Are you the lady who was in Piedras Negras last January?" I gave an assenting nod. "I was the sick man you made custard and soup for. You and your friend can have anything you want." A box was quickly opened, and not only knitting-needles but handkerchiefs were selected. We took only what was absolutely required, for we expected to pay at least five dollars for a set

of knitting-needles, and perhaps as much for each handkerchief. We thankfully helped ourselves, and, when we offered to pay, the grateful Jew declined, saying: "But for your kindness to a person you never knew or saw, I might have been buried in the sand at Piedras Negras; a few paltry needles and handkerchiefs are little to give in return for your goodness to me. Only," he added, as with protestations and thanks we retired, "don't tell anybody, for I *can not* open my goods here."

All household and family goods were scarce during the war, even in Texas, that had Rio Grande facilities not enjoyed by the other Southern States, as the great bulk of the importations were specially adapted to army purposes. The difficulty of procuring stockings, handkerchiefs, articles of prime necessity, was very great; those for whom I helped to provide wore for two years home-made stockings, knit of heavy cotton yarn; and I recall cutting up my only silk dress—a brown India silk, with white dots—to supply the demand for handkerchiefs, making my husband a coat of a linen sheet, and helping a friend rip up a calico bed-comfort that she might make a dress of the material. Even planters, with large tracts of land and abundant supply of workmen, often suffered for the necessaries of life other than those they could raise on the plantation. Through Southern Texas, where our wanderings led us, railroads were few and the service

poor. The "Houston and Beaumont" afforded a fair specimen of the entire system. Many plantations were situated twenty miles and more from any railroad or navigable stream, and often half that distance from a town or post-office. I spent weeks with a family that could not procure salt to put up their meat, and were reduced to the necessity of utilizing the dirt-floor of their smoke-house, which was rich in saline properties from the accumulation during a series of years of the waste salt and drippings. First leaching the earth (in the old-fashioned way of making lye from ashes), then, by evaporating the brine, sufficient salt was procured to cure a small amount of bacon. Neither lamp-oil nor candles could be purchased; candle-molds and the material to make them were extremely scarce, so that families were compelled to exercise their ingenuity in home production to meet the necessity. The dainty young ladies who played brilliant sonatas on jangling pianos, filled the house with melodious song, and read Racine and Molière in the original, spent hours over the boiling fat, striving with patient perseverance to make symmetrical tallow-dips, that for lack of adequate supply of candle-sticks would probably shine from the necks of black glass bottles. The energetic mother, with broad, flattened stick carefully tested the soap during the process of manufacture, and succeeded in obtaining a fair saponaceous compound, which had often to be used in

such a crude, immature state that it damaged the linens and faded the colored garments. On wash-stands in numberless houses little saucers of soft-soap were placed for toilet-use, salt being too precious for even a few grains to be spared to harden this domestic production.

Home-made looms were built in many back rooms, and housewives who had indistinct recollections of the industry, as practiced by their grandmothers, or a theoretical knowledge of the handicraft, labored to help black "mammy" recall the forgotten art of weaving cotton cloth for plantation use.

Many a young girl stepped back and forth to the whirring music of a big old spinning-wheel, while others with clumsy, clattering cards, costing fifty dollars the pair, laboriously prepared the fleecy cotton rolls.

A needle dropped or mislaid was searched after for hours; if one was broken, its irreparable loss was lamented. Needles, pins, hair-pins, and such insignificant articles, so common in every household that no reckoning is made of the number used and wasted, rapidly became very scarce, and occasionally vanished entirely, leaving an "aching void." Tooth-brushes were replaced by twigs of shrubs, nicely peeled, and the ends chewed into brushes. Often one comb did duty for a whole family, the aid of a hair-brush being entirely dispensed with. Breakage of china or glass-

ware was a household calamity, and, with the heedless, scatter-brain darkies who handled such valuables, one of painful frequency. Alas! it was so easy to wear out, lose, and destroy insignificant articles that could not be replaced! Garments were often patched and darned until the original material was so merged in repairs as to lose its identity. A member of the household, the winter we spent in Houston, was a valued friend of my father. Week by week I put his garments through such a series of metamorphoses that, when his wife arrived, in the spring, she could not tell his linen clothes from the cotton!

Wheat-flour was brought in limited quantities from Northern Texas, mostly for army use; very little was offered for sale, and then at such extravagant prices that hundreds of families were for months entirely deprived of its use, and, without having made the experiment, it is difficult to realize what an indispensable household article it is. "*Corn-meal pound-cake*" was one of our table luxuries; it is doubtful if even Marian Harland ever had a recipe that was so frequently copied and used: it required a peck of coarse, country-ground meal (the only kind to be had) passed through a wire sieve, a piece of tarlatan, and finally several thicknesses of muslin, to obtain a pound of corn-flour fine enough for the cake.

We stopped at many houses where there was no sweetening for coffee—and such coffee; or rather such

substitutes! Peanuts, sweet-potatoes, rye, beans, peas, and corn-meal were used; the latter was the favorite at the taverns, all of them wretched imitations, though gulped down, when chilly and tired, for lack of anything better—a hot, sickening drink, entirely devoid of the stimulating, comforting effects of the genuine article.

Tea-drinkers fared no better: weak decoctions of sage or orange-leaves served for those dependent on the cheering cup, and could only be taken in moderation, as both are powerful sudorifics. Bitter willow-bark extracts and red-pepper tea were used as substitutes for quinine by the poor, shaking ague-patients who lived near miasmatic bayous and swamps.

Paper became so scarce that many newspapers suspended publication entirely, while others reduced the size of their issues to the minimum that would contain war and other topics of vital interest. When the supply of white paper was exhausted, various grades of brown wrapping-paper met the necessity, and as a final resort, in some instances, wall-paper, figured on one side, came into use. Reports of battles, with long lists of killed, wounded, and missing, indistinctly printed on the uneven surface of this coarse, colored paper, passed from hand to hand until worn out.

Confederate notes so rapidly depreciated, their purchasing power was reduced to a minimum. In the interior of the country, where these notes were cur-

rent, there were scarcely any goods. San Antonio, the chief trading-point of Texas, had a working population of thrifty Germans, who cultivated market-gardens and raised poultry. This shrewd class, and the ease-loving Mexicans, refused to accept any currency other than specie in exchange for goods or labor; and buyers whose purses did not contain the genuine article had to lead lives of great self-denial. Women whose husbands, in the army or Confederate Congress, were paid in the depreciated paper currency, fared very badly. I recall meeting, in those trying days, a very bright, intelligent woman, born in the "White House" and educated in Europe, whose husband represented the State of Texas in the Confederate Congress at Richmond, and hearing her say that her "gude man's" monthly salary was not sufficient to supply her table with vegetables for a week! Nothing remarkable was said or thought of one family in Houston who paid five dollars every day for a measure of Irish potatoes for their dinner, as it was understood that they brought a whole bed-tick stuffed with Confederate money from Louisiana! I remember well paying thirty dollars for a pair of flimsy, paper-sole Congress shoes, that were not fit to be seen after ten days' wear. My crowning extravagance was the last purchase made in that currency, when ninety dollars was paid for one yard and a half of common blue cotton denims, to make little Henry a pair of pantaloons! He often says,

with a quaint smile, that he once owned a ninety-dollar pair of trousers, and wishes he had them now, but, alas! they were too greatly needed to keep—he had to put them on in a hurry, such was his emergency.

CHAPTER XII.

FINAL TRIP TO THE RIO GRANDE—MATAMORAS OCCUPIED BY
THE FRENCH—WAITING!—MARTHA BEFORE THE ALCALDE
—WAR OVER!

WE made a final trip to Mexico, the following September, and had almost our first experience in camping during stormy weather. From San Antonio to Laredo everything was soaked. We often experienced great difficulty in making camp-fires—more than once starting in the early morning, all damp and miserable, and without the usual hot coffee. Near the Frio we met the only American train I saw, accompanied with a woman (it was not unusual to see women in Mexican trains, making chocolate and *tortillas* for their teamster lords). A Texas teamster, with a wife and two children, returning from the Rio Grande, was camping by the road-side in a drenching rain, dismally trying with wet chips and twigs to make a fire, as they had no cooked provisions. Pitying their forlorn condition, we shared our cold coffee and hard-tack with them, for which they were exceedingly grateful. The poor woman told me that her husband was

hauling Government cotton with his only team, and she accompanied him, because they lived in such an isolated part of the country she was afraid to remain at home alone with the little ones.

The third day brought us to the Nueces River, which was rushing, boiling, and seething, from the overflow of its springs far up the country, and by the unusual rise the ford was obliterated. Here we found ourselves five miles from any forage. Teams and horsemen had been there for days waiting to cross, and their cattle had devoured all the grass. Ours were almost famished, while "green fields and pastures new" waved at us from the opposite shore.

A number of wagons on the other side were caught also by the flood; and their freight, consisting chiefly of bags of perishable goods, was being transported across the angry stream in improvised floats of rawhides, with Mexicans swimming at the four corners and guiding them. My husband at once thought that if these men could be hired to take our baggage over in the same way, we might be able to cross in the empty wagons. The banks of the stream were deep, almost perpendicular. One of the men of our party, who was riding a tall horse, at last volunteered to search for the ford by crossing back and forth two or three times. The rushing waters of the narrow stream wet the pommel of Mr. Dodds's saddle, but he succeeded in finding what he considered a safe place to

venture. In the meager Spanish I could muster by the aid of an old "Ollendorff," the Mexicans were engaged to unload and transport the contents of the wagon. After it was emptied, and the big cotton cover removed, Zell, our darky driver, seated himself behind the mules; I laid aside all superfluous articles of dress, took my seat on the very top rail of the wagon, planted my feet firmly on a soap-box, with my hands above my head, grasped the curved wooden frame intended to support the cover, shut my eyes, said, "All ready!" and held my breath. Dodds on his horse, and my husband on an ambulance-mule, each with a handful of pebbles, rode on either side of the team. "Now start!" Zell gave a sharp "click" and a cut with his whip, and down the steep bank of the river the four mules plunged. Touching cold water, there was a feint to hold back, but Zell's whip, the outriders' vigorous use of pebbles which were fired at them, and the shouts and whoops of all the teamsters gathered on the bank to see the *fun*, forced them to plunge in. For a moment they were out of sight, then their heads emerged from the water, which was pouring over their backs. They would have floated helplessly down the rapid current but for the shouting, yelling, cracking of whips, and firing of pebbles, which so confused them they could neither stop nor balk. Never for an instant losing my grip or self-possession, wet up to my knees, soap-box careering

down the tide, we rushed up that steep and slippery bank triumphant! The outriders went back for the rest of our belongings, an empty ambulance, Henry, and my colored maid Martha. Dodds brought the last two over behind him on his horse. Then my husband drove over the ambulance, while Dodds, with stones, whip, and shouts, assisted him. Loading up and moving slowly off, we were inspired by the applause of the astonished spectators, who had not the courage to follow in our footsteps.

Soon we found the inviting green, which at a distance looked so tempting, was only a narrow fringe of verdure on the bank; a few rods further revealed a wide and deep morass, covered with slimy green water, in which were several ox-teams hopelessly stalled. The tired teamsters had fought bravely to get through, but at last had given up, leaving the wagons sunk to the axles in the mud, and the dejected and hungry oxen, with yokes on, standing about wherever they could obtain a foothold.

It seemed hopeless for us to attempt the feat of crossing a bog where so many had failed, but our invincible Dodds rode its length, his horse sinking at every step up to his knees, occasionally deeper. At the distance of two hundred yards, there was a perceptible rise in the surface of the submerged land, and beyond that a pretty fair road leading to a ranch. It was unsafe to attempt to drive the mules over with

more than the wagon and empty ambulance. So, by the aid of a stump, I mounted the horse behind Dodds, and rode across the boggy marsh to dry land, descending on another stump. He brought Henry and Martha over in the same way. Then the old tactics were resorted to, by means of whips and pebbles, to encourage the ambulance-mules through the mire, which was often so deep that the traces swept the scummy, green surface. Zell's team of four had followed the ambulance so long, that it did not require very much urging to keep them close to its rear curtain. A drive of five miles brought us to General Benavides's ranch. There we camped by the side of a clear, pebbly rivulet, a half-mile from the shepherd's quarters, where there was something green for the tired, hungry mules, and a low growth of bushes affording me a rustic retreat, while I indulged in an extra wash out of the horse-bucket, and hung all the wet things out to dry.

The surrounding country was rolling and beautiful, the growth stubby mesquite, very little grass, and that only in patches here and there.

We soon had a crackling fire, some coffee, fried bacon, and hard-tack, after which the refreshed party rested a while, discussing the events of the day, and congratulating one another on the perseverance that brought us finally to such a delightful camping-spot. While the smoldering brands still glowed and the

strong odor of the frying-pan hovered over the *débris* of our appetizing supper, Henry rolled himself up in his blanket under the ambulance, and we pinned down the curtains and curled up inside to sleep. The moon shone brightly. I lay for a long time peeping through a crack at the lovely scene around me, too enraptured with its beauty to sleep. Mesquite has the light foliage of the myrtle, and grows in graceful clusters, shading the ground so that no grass flourishes beneath, here forming a slight hedge, there a bower, presenting in the deceptive moonlight all the effects of a charming piece of landscape-gardening, with even the accessory of a purling stream meandering through it in this instance. There was a bit of clearing, necessary for our camping and cooking, and the ambulance was drawn up by the side of it. In the night my husband's quick ear detected strange sounds issuing from our impromptu kitchen, and, peeping out, saw—what, tired as he knew I was, he felt I must see also—a whole congregation of prairie-wolves (coyotes) around the remnant of fire, enjoying the departing odor of fried mout, a regular circle of them seated on their haunches with heads turned up in the air like great ferocious dogs. A few preliminary low barks, and the meeting was opened by the most extraordinary long and mournful howls, all in unison; the wails gradually died down to a low, low key and an occasional snap. Then one gaunt old veteran began a solo harangue: it

really seemed that he was wailing out such a pitiful story of grievances that, before he concluded, the sympathy of the whole audience was aroused, and his plaint was joined by other prolonged and distressing sounds that seemed a chorus of lamentations. I was so surprised and startled, that I did not at first think of our boy sleeping on the ground almost at the very tail of one of the ferocious howlers. When I made a stealthy motion to rouse the child, quick as a flash those beasts slid away, among the bushes here and there, fading noiselessly out of sight, like shadows in the moonlight.

Laredo had assumed a business air since our visit of the previous year. The little *muchachos* had become so accustomed to the sight of ambulances and teams that the last entrance into town was not triumphant. Proceeding to Matamoras, on the Mexican side of the river, we found the road narrow, with the thick brushwood lining the sides literally festooned with bits of cotton from passing teams. On the first day, as we drove slowly along this monotonous country road, my husband's watchful eye perceived, in a small opening by the side of the ambulance, a huge rattlesnake coiled, with head erect, forked tongue, and glistening eyes, following in an almost imperceptible motion the fitful efforts of a large frog vainly trying to get out of his way. The snake had fastened his eyes on the eyes of the frog; the poor creature could

not even wink, he could not escape the fascinating gaze. Turning his body, though not his head, he would make a pitiful little squeak and a desperate effort to jump; but the wretched frog could not jump backward. Every motion he made was accompanied by a corresponding motion of the wily serpent. So intent were they that we alighted from the vehicle, and Mr. Dodds stood near with pistol in hand; neither the snake nor the frog seemed to have consciousness of the presence of any other object than the one upon which its eyes were fixed. At last the head of the serpent slowly approached nearer and nearer its victim, the poor creature made one despairing croak that sounded almost human in its agony, and leaped into the full distended jaws of the rattlesnake! At the same instant the watchful Mr. Dodds fired his pistol with such accurate aim that the vertebra was struck close to the head, the jaws suddenly relaxed and fell open, and out sprang Mr. Frog! If ever a frog made haste to get away, that frog was the one. He was out of his enchantment, out of the jaws of death, and out of our sight in an instant. The thirteen rattles that tipped the tail of that enterprising snake remained in my possession for many years, a memento of the incident.

In all our camping experience we found the four or five days from Laredo to Matamoras the most forlorn and depressing, partly perhaps from the accumu-

lated fatigue and exposure incident to repeated trips of a similar nature. There were not even the usual number of *jeccals* (huts) by the road-side to enliven the mournful scene. At long intervals two or three small collections of adobe huts, surrounding the inevitable dusty plaza, marked as many towns. On the scrubby bushes around these, thin, ragged slabs of raw beef hung, drying in the sun, presenting at a short distance much the appearance of red-flannel garments in various stages of dilapidation. The stiff raw hides used for beds were tilted against the sides of the *jeccals* to air, and to afford the multitudes of fleas opportunity to stretch their legs. A few frowsy women with stone *matets* were laboriously grinding corn for *tortillas*, while the lords of creation sunned themselves in the doorways, or majestically strutted before the dingy shops that surrounded the plaza. At these uninviting places we usually halted for fresh water and hot *tortillas*. At Mier, the chief town on the route, there was a rest of several hours. After leaving, Zell, our driver, told us that our old Delia, who was so afraid of going for goat's milk on the first visit to the frontier, and who disappeared the morning we left Piedras Negras to return into Texas, had drifted down to Mier, and was living there.

On the narrow roads leading from one of these dirty towns to the next there was little to break the monotony save the frequent meeting of Mexican

trains, generally composed of twenty large Chihuahua wagons, each drawn by twelve mules, returning from Matamoras, where they had delivered loads of cotton-bales brought from the interior of Texas. The vociferations of the gayly decked drivers and the loud cracking of whips could be heard long before they were in sight, affording us ample time to turn out of the way, among the trodden and dusty bushes on the road-side.

We know that Maximilian was occupying the city of Mexico, and that the flag of the French army floated over the centers of Mexican civilization. The ignorant and apparently apathetic people whom we met on the Rio Grande border did not seem even to know this much; still less were they able to give us any information of the progress of the invasion. Our last custom-house transactions were with the officers of the Juarez government, who conducted their business and collected their fees in apparent blissful ignorance of national complications.

Arriving at Matamoras early in the afternoon, we drove like tired, travel-stained emigrants straight to the plaza—direct, as though we had been there a dozen times before, for the cathedral and public buildings that surrounded it were conspicuous sign-posts that indicated the spot to which all the chief streets converged. We were surprised to find the city in the hands of the French, garrisoned and picketed by an

invading army! Only a short time before our arrival, Mejia, the brave Mexican-Indian general, who embraced the cause of Maximilian, and thereby forfeited his life by the side of that ill-starred prince, had, by a forced march from Monterey with an army of French and Mexican troops, surprised and captured Cortinas, who held the garrison at Matamoras.

A few miles away, on the south bank of the Rio Grande, the Mexican Government held possession; the opposite bank was under Confederate control. Here the French were exulting over the capture of the city; and across the river the Federal army occupied Brownsville — the flags of four nationalities floating almost in sight of each other, amid the

“Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.”

The first night we secured a room facing the plaza. It was found necessary for me to make a personal appeal to the proprietor of the *posada* adjoining it, coupled with a promise to procure other quarters the next day, before he would consent to vacate it for our temporary use. We might as well have sat up in the ambulance all night, tired as we were, so far as rest and sleep were concerned. The *posada* did not close its doors till a very late hour, and if the stamping of feet, clicking of glasses, odor of liquors, and hum of voices, were not commotion enough to disturb our rest, the success was rendered complete by the steady tramp

and challenge of sentinels passing and repassing with military precision all night long. Glad enough were we to find, on the morrow, a small, one-story stone house of two rooms, remote from the noises and disturbances in the garrison buildings, near the grand plaza. Here we spread once more the old ambulance mattress over boxes and trunks, where we could rest our weary bones and aching heads.

Dodds was the only man I saw who walked around fearlessly night or day. He was as brave a specimen of manhood as ever lived, and, though in a foreign country, in the midst of a revolution, and wholly unacquainted with the language, he moved about as independently as if on his native heath. How we laughed one night when he walked in upon us, and, being asked if he was not afraid of the sentinels that were at every corner, replied: "No, I have the password; why! when one of them lightning-bug fellows" (alluding to the lanterns they carried) "ses to me, '*King Beebe!*' ('*Quien vive!*') I jes ses back to him—'*Lem me go!*' ('*Amigo!*') and they let me go right on."

In a few days I was surprised in my obscurity by an invitation from Messrs. Hedd and Fromm, the leading German merchants of the city, to witness from their balcony a review, by General Mejia, of the French troops. Much as war had been the topic of thought and conversation for almost four years, and painful as had been our experience of the effects of it,

I had never seen a review of troops that had been in active service.

General Mejia, short, broad-shouldered, compact, with strongly marked Indian physiognomy and unusual dark complexion, was every inch a soldier, having a bearing that was almost majestic.

His bold stand carried great moral force with it. The apathetic inhabitants of Matamoros, familiarized with political excitements, *pronunciamentos*, and revolutions, which kept their unhappy land in a vacillating state of unrest, either ready to accept another form of government, or overawed by the display of military force under the French banner, quietly reconciled themselves to the inevitable. Surging swarms surrounded the plaza, and gazed upon company after company of brilliantly uniformed French soldiers, with the no small contingent of swarthy natives, as they marched past the reviewing general and his staff. The review was no doubt a most imposing spectacle, but the brightest picture of the day, that recurs to me, was the unbounded courtesy and hospitality of the wealthy merchants on whose banner-draped balcony we were seated. The delicious French confections and wines they so freely offered their guests, delicacies of which we had been so long deprived, I remember, after the lapse of more than twenty years, with greater distinctness than the evolutions of the military that we were invited to witness.

Many and earnest were the conferences held between a sweet little Texas woman, who occupied quarters near our own, and myself on the subject of costumes suitable for the ball given after the review, on which occasion General Mejia was host or distinguished guest, I quite forget which, but he was *the figure par excellence* of the ball-room.

My dainty young friend had a pink gown that had done service before the war, and had already been twice refurbished for banquet occasions in Houston, where she had mingled much in gay military circles, her husband being one of General Magruder's staff. This was brought forth again, carefully inspected and freshened up with such bits of lace as we could muster; while I, being entirely destitute of finery, purchased a modest white tarlatan, with lace flounces. I opened, for the first and only time in all these wanderings, my caskets, which were two large pockets made of stout linen, containing not only my own and my husband's jewels, but the pins, studs, and chains of four soldier brothers, left with me for safe-keeping when they marched to the front. All these valuables were separately wrapped in soft cotton, and stitched into the pockets, secured to strong belts, I wore on either side often for weeks at a time, day and night, never feeling that they could be laid aside even for an hour during the dangers of camping out and temporary residence, in strange and more or less exposed

places. So it was on this festive occasion; while resplendent with my own jewels, I carried those of others concealed on my person. The ball over, we Cinderellas returned to the brick floors of our humble homes and the cotton gowns suited to those surroundings. My neighbor folded away the pretty pink silk, to be opened when we met again under the Spanish flag many months thereafter, while I carefully quilled the diamonds into the pockets from which their shining facets did not emerge for a long, long time.

Finding our quarters, besides being too remote from business centers for my husband's convenience, were rather cramped, as we were limited to two rooms, and without an out-building that could serve for a kitchen, another house-hunt was instituted, and eventually we succeeded in making ourselves very comfortable in comparison with the rough life that had been ours whenever we had previously been on the frontier. We had one long, narrow room, that had been a storage-place for saddles and harness, but the temptation of high rents put it on the market as a "desirable residence." Another move was made. The first day was spent in flooding the brick floor with pails of scalding lye, in order to rid the building of fleas, that were so numerous that they hopped around like animated dust as we walked over the floor. When the hot-lye application was made, they jumped up the sides of the walls, till we had a well-defined dado of

fleas! Preferring a stationary white one, they were mopped out with whitewash-brushes. That vigorous campaign rewarded us at last with as complete a rout of the enemy as could have been expected; but, so long as we held the fort, an occasional scout was captured and mercilessly put to death. Thoroughly tired of our wandering life, circumstances now arose that made a lengthy residence in Matamoras quite probable. So a bed, two cots, and a wire safe were bought, and a little reed-hut in the yard repaired for a kitchen; a carpenter rigged a light scantling quite across one end of the room, to which was tacked brown sheeting, thus making a partition. Then we had two rooms. Turkey-red draped across the top of the partition, and lambrequins of the same over the windows fronting the narrow street, made us feel quite civilized. A store-box on end was a bureau, and the plain deal-table served for dining and ironing by turns. We settled down to housekeeping, with our wagon-driver, Humphrey, and a little darky-girl about fourteen years old, for servants. Humphrey was cook—the Southern negro is a born cook. Beef and onions, onions and kidneys, liver and onions, stocked the Matamoras market; so his culinary skill was not greatly taxed. Bread, made by the native women, and baked in adobe ovens, was always light, wholesome, and easily procured. If one was not too dainty, and did not witness the manipulation necessary, *tor-*

tillas, baked on flat iron plates, made a very acceptable variety with the everlasting fried beef and onions, and kidney-and-onion stews, that formed our chief diet.

We could get clothes washed and delivered to us rough dried, for the amazing pittance of one dollar a dozen in good Mexican silver. The monotony of my indoor life was varied by acquiring the useful knowledge, and then teaching Martha how to starch and iron clothes. The faithful young girl made herself doubly useful by often doing what I had not the physical health to attempt. My husband had business to attend to (one can readily understand this was no pleasure-trip), so that he was all day long occupied, while I sat and waited, as thousands of women have to do sometimes in their lives—waited! waited! One stormy, fearfully dark night in early February, when, in the narrow, unpaved street that fronted our door, the mud in places was almost knee-deep from the long-continued rains, my husband returned at a late hour from a grand banquet given in honor of Prince Polignac by a committee of the leading business-men in Matamoras. He found all quietly sleeping at home, but presently there was excitement and commotion in our little room. The next morning Henry heard he had a baby sister. I can never cease to gratefully remember the lovely young Texas woman who, stranger though she was, trudged through almost impassable

streets to make me a helpful visit every day for a week.

Business was booming in Matamoras; large warehouses were opened and filled, vessels of every size and nationality unloaded at the *Boca*—several miles below the city at the mouth of the Rio Grande—and goods were hauled to Matamoras in an endless stream of wagons. A regular fast stage-line was in full operation also for business-men to travel to the *Boca* and back again. The whole sleepy little city woke up and rubbed its eyes one fine morning to find that it was inspired by new life, and was fast becoming a busier and noisier place than it had ever dreamed of.

The Confederate Government made stupendous efforts to procure army supplies through Mexico; but the great distance, scarcity of transportation, lack of harmony between the several branches of the service, and the unscrupulousness of speculators, interfered with well-laid plans, diminished anticipated results, and subjected the officers of the department to severe criticism for their failure to furnish the army with everything needed, and vituperation from every contractor who did not get the pound of flesh demanded. Traders shipped hither merchandise of every description, with the expectation of selling to the Confederate authorities at such fabulous profit as would warrant taking proportionate hazard in regard to securing payment, all tending to wild speculation,

reckless business methods, and amazing complications.

Such a promising trade sprung up in a night, as it were, with Havana, that some enterprising New Yorkers actually started a line of steamers between the two *neutral* ports, to facilitate the business with the Confederacy. The pioneer steamer of the line was advertised to sail from the *Boca* on a certain day toward the latter part of February. My husband had urgent business in Havana, where some of his blockade-run cotton had been landed under very suspicious circumstances. He determined to take passage in the new steamer and ascertain the exact situation. Here arose another discussion. Weak as I was, I did not propose to stay behind, and pleaded my ability to go, pointing to the past as evidence that I could endure the journey, having borne greater perils than a short voyage on a comfortable steamer with a baby only three weeks old. Of course, these arguments prevailed. A very energetic man, who in the great rush of business in Matamoras had not been able to find a place to store himself and his constantly increasing stock of goods, eagerly purchased our elegant belongings, lambrequins and *bureau* included, at original cost price—all but the splint-bottomed rocking-chair. We packed up our trunk and Martha's bundle. The wagon found a ready purchaser. Ever since the driver of the same sent us word, one morning, that he was "too sleepy

and tired to go to market, and we had better go ourselves" we knew that he proposed leaving our employ; therefore, no arrangements were made that included him.

All dressed and bonneted, I sat in the little rocking-chair, waiting for the *Boca* stage, when, lol in walked two Mexican officials, piloted by our late Humphrey, who, with an air of great importance, pointed out my servant, and Martha was arrested and conducted before the *alcalde*. My husband followed, in a quickly gathered crowd through the streets, and, being entirely ignorant of the whole business, and unfamiliar with the language, called our physician—a long-time resident—to his aid. Humphrey had complained that Martha was about to be taken to Cuba without her consent. By the aid of an interpreter, the *alcalde* questioned the young girl closely. At first she was thoroughly alarmed and confused, being, as she afterward told me, utterly unaware of the conspiracy; but when the idea dawned upon her mind that it was a matter of separation from us, she burst into tears and implored to be permitted to "go with Miss 'Liza." His honor, being convinced that she was under no compulsion, dismissed the case. Humphrey departed with his new-made Mexican friends, and Martha was hurried back, to find the stage impatiently waiting at the door, baby and I already inside; the others were rapidly hustled in, and, amid crack of

whip and the nameless shouts and yells of the driver, we soon lost sight of "La heroica Ciudad de Matamoros."

Within the following six weeks the Confederacy fell. Lee gracefully surrendered his heroic sword, the weary, foot-sore soldiers returned to desolate homes. The busy traders of Matamoros scattered panic-stricken, and the city itself lapsed into sleepy insignificance with a suddenness that made the army of the French and the lazy natives stare. The line of steamers to run weekly to Havana began and ended in the wheezy little craft in which we made the trip—I have forgotten its name, but, as Toots says, "it's of no consequence," for its name is written in water: it went to the bottom the first time it attempted a more ambitious feat than crossing the Gulf.

Thus faded the Confederacy. We prayed for victory—no people ever uttered more earnest prayers—and the God of hosts gave us victory in defeat. We prayed for only that little strip, that Dixie-land, and the Lord gave us the whole country from the lakes to the Gulf, from ocean to ocean—all dissensions settled, all dividing lines wiped out—a united country forever and ever!

CHAPTER XIII.

HAVANA—HÔTEL GUBIANO—OUR HOME ON THE CERRO.

No pencil can give an adequate picture of Havana as one enters its harbor. It is the loveliest gem of the ocean. To us, who had so long dealt with the rough realities of life, it was as a bit of fairy-land, where everybody was happy, sailing, driving, and gliding about, for very lack of work-day occupation. Entering between the beelling heights of El Morro on one side and the frowning guns of La Punta on the other, as we steamed up toward the queen city of the "Ever-faithful Isle," the panorama that gradually unfolded itself in the golden rays of the rising sun was gorgeous in its enchanting beauty. The water of the landlocked, tideless bay, made foully offensive by receiving the drainage of a very dirty city for a century or more, and on whose capacious bosom float ships from every clime, was nevertheless the bluest and most sparkling ever seen.

The solid, substantial public buildings and warehouses that bordered the landing were relieved of all work-day, business look by the surrounding airy struct-

ures in red, blue, and yellow, with light, graceful balconies and turrets; while here and there tall, waving palms, cocoa-palms, dark-green orange, and other tropical fruit-trees hedged them in, shading them even to the water's edge.

The rising ground beyond, the *cerro* (hill) crowned all with its Oriental quintas and pleasure-gardens, and gradually faded away into the ethereal distance of the loveliest skies that bend over tired man. Church spires and belfries, very Moorish in design, diversified the whole landscape, and the clang or chime of church-bells was ceaselessly wafted on the air.

How prosperous and rich Cuba was in those days! How happy the people! how animated and gay! We arrived when it was at the very acme of its opulence, when fairly drunk with the excess of wealth and abundance.

The reaction upon us was almost stunning. Arriving at the hotel, it was very evident I really and truly had "nothing to wear," where ladies sailed in and out the marble-floored drawing-room, in long, trailing garments of diaphanous texture, with flowers in their hair and jewels on their bosoms. We were at Hôtel Cubano, kept by an enterprising American woman, whose genial hospitality, exceeding liberality, and excellent table, had for years attracted the best American visitors, and now the house was overflowing with Southerners. The building was of stone, five stories

in height, extending around a paved court, the only entrance to which was a massive gateway sufficiently ample to admit a coach and four. On the ground-floor were the carriage-rooms and stabling for horses of mine hostess, who rode in the most stylish victoria that frequented the *paseo*. The second floor, being *entre suelo* (half-story), its low apartments were devoted to the uses of servants and inferior offices. On the third floor were the parlors, dining-hall, a few bedrooms, and kitchen. The two stories above were occupied as bedrooms. All these apartments opened upon broad balconies that surrounded the inner court. The upper tier, which received some of the sun's rays at noon, were embellished with pots of gay blossoming plants and festooned with vines. The front of the house had deep windows leading out upon narrow balconies, whereas the other rooms had only small openings half-way up to the ceiling which afforded ventilation with limited light. The flat roof, laid in cement and protected on all sides with high, stone parapets, furnished a charming evening promenade, whence an extended view of the ocean and harbor could be had; and it also overlooked the *azoteas* and courts of neighboring houses, affording glimpses of Cuban interiors that were often very amusing. The laundry occupied a portion of this *azotea*, but its area was so ample that the domestic operations did not interfere with the enjoyment of the guests. One broad marble stairway,

with massive balustrades of the same material, wound from bottom to top of the building, providing the inmates with the only means of communication with its different stories. Bags of charcoal, barrels of flour, and other bulky articles, were secured by ropes in the court and hoisted by main strength to the wash-house on the roof, or the kitchen on the third floor, as required; refuse was lowered at night by the same hand-labor. Sweet memories cluster around this quaint hotel, for it was a haven of rest for us as long as we lived in Cuba. We became extremely attached to its generous hostess; and to her cordial hospitality and kindly courtesies, continued through a decade of trying years, we were indebted for some of the brightest days of our residence on the island.

The *salons* and balconies were thronged with Confederates as homeless as ourselves, but I found difficulty in recognizing in some of the belaced and be-frilled beauties gliding about, the women who scarce had stockings and handkerchiefs when I last saw them in Texas.

Though having no plan that involved even a temporary residence in Havana, we never for a moment contemplated a return to the United States until peace was restored and quiet assured. The confinement in the hotel soon became, however, intolerably irksome to the children and servants. (Zell, who drove our mules through the rushing Nueces

River, had arrived previously with my brother.) Martha's experience before the *alcalde* in Mexico had made her so timid that no amount of persuasion would induce her to venture upon the strange, narrow streets unless I was at her side and almost holding her by the hand. Henry had led such a vagabond life that, while he did not go on the streets, the corridors and balconies were not half big enough for him, and his restless enterprise was forever getting him into hot water. One day Patrona, the black chambermaid of the hotel, electrified me by appearing at my door, one hand filled with slit and jagged shirt-collars, and, moving the two forefingers of the other to represent scissors, explained, in her broken, almost unintelligible English, "Do *muchacho*, dat Hbleo man, yo' littee boy, do *dis!*" and she gave a vicious snip at a fragment of collar with the improvised implement. Master Henry had found a lot of soiled linen collars, belonging to a guest of the house, which had been freshly marked and spread in the sun on the balcony floor. Remembering a description I had once read to him of the manufacture of paper collars, he cut these to bits, and was surprised, he innocently explained, to find what a splendid imitation of the genuine article could be made of paper! The owner was a red-haired *colporteur*, or missionary of some sort, established in Havana to receive and forward to Matamoras Bibles and tracts for the use of the Southern

army. The custom-house authorities had seized the very first installment, as in Cuba, Bibles are contraband. The poor man was so roiled and outraged thereby, that Henry's unfortunate raid on his wardrobe was resented in what the child considered very unreasonable and ungenerous terms.

The surrender of our armies, long expected though it may have been by the clear-sighted among us, was none the less a severe blow. We at once realized that a return to our own country must be delayed. A search was instituted for a small residence on the *cerro*, outside the old city walls, where the streets were wider and each house had "space to breathe." To our great surprise, a small house was not to be found. Mostly of one story, they seemed small from the street, but they all straggled back into an indefinite, almost unlimited number of apartments. The location of the one finally decided upon was almost its only attraction. The English consul lived directly opposite, the German consul within a stone's-throw, the Russian representative around the corner, and a few American and English-speaking merchants and business men near by, forming a most delightful and congenial *entourage*. We did not hesitate long, though the domicile did not quite fill, or rather, I should say, more than filled, our requirements. Having lived so long in one or two rooms, the thought of ten or a dozen appalled us. Like all houses in that voluptuous

climate, the windows, stretching from ceiling to floor, and innocent of glass, were only protected by stout iron bars, that might have suggested an insane-asylum or prison had they not exposed such gay and cheerful interiors, where the inmates moved about as freely, talked as gayly, and enjoyed their elaborately spread banquets as unrestrainedly as though they were not the observed of every idle passer-by. The three front rooms of our exposed castle opened upon a broad veranda, situated immediately upon the street; but there was a brave yard in the rear filled with mammee, aguacate, and bread-fruit trees, which interlaced their boughs, forming a shade so dense that the sun's rays never penetrated. It was soon found that even a damp towel hung there mildewed before it dried. At the foot of this yard was a rushing, tearing, noisy stream of water—perhaps six feet wide—that made as much tumult and transacted as much business as some pretentious rivers; for, as it dashed and hurried along with great speed, it received and transported refuse and *débris* from all the houses on its banks, whither I know not, but I presume the noisome freight was deposited in the beautiful bay of Havana, the foulness of whose depths is a reproach to Cuban civilization. A few rooms of this house were scantily furnished, for, to use the words of Susan Nipper, we were “temporaries.” There, with Zell and Martha, we kept house, in accordance with our means, for a year.

With the first news of surrender came several Confederate officers, induced by fear of imprisonment to leave the country. Hon. J. P. Benjamin and General Breckinridge were the first to arrive. They were quickly followed by others; some came in small boats from the Florida coast, others *via* Mexico. Scarcely a day passed that news of fresh arrivals did not reach us, and we met many friends on that foreign shore whom we had not seen since the first gun was fired at Sumter. Generals Breckinridge, Toombs, Fry, Magruder, Bee, Preston, Early, and Commodore Maffitt, were at Hôtel Cubano about the same time. Many were accompanied by their wives. Exiles though all were, they enjoyed to-day, not knowing what the morrow had in store. One by one, as assurance of personal safety was secured, they drifted back to their old homes.

My husband set about with his wonderful energy to find a business opening in this foreign land, where matters seemed to be settled, though not on the best principles. He mingled as freely as possible with the people, cultivated the acquaintance of bankers and business-men, the most energetic and successful of whom were foreigners, and made various visits to the interior, always to return enamored of the soil and resources of what is really the most prolific spot on the globe.

Governor Moore, of Louisiana, joined us in our

cerro home for weeks; and when he left, grand old General Toombs, "the noblest Roman of them all," with his lovely and devoted wife, took the apartments vacated.

General Toombs joined in many of my husband's trips over the island, and shared his admiration of its unrivaled agricultural wealth, while Mrs. Toombs and I sat in our marble-floored parlor or on the broad, gas-lighted veranda, and enjoyed the *dolce far niente* so much needed to restore our overtaxed and enfeebled constitutions.

CHAPTER XIV.

STREET SIGHTS AND SOUNDS—EVENINGS IN THE CITY—SHOPS
AND SHOPPING—BEGGARS—VACCINATION.

THE new, unfamiliar, and ever-varying street sights were an unfailing source of entertainment. The bulk of commercial business is transacted in the early morning. Clattering *volantes*, carrying merchants and bankers from princely homes around us to city offices, were the earliest sounds. Then followed a succession of peripatetic venders all day long. The milkman, with one poor little cow and straggling, muzzled calf, was our first visitor. In response to his shrill call, "Léché" Martha ran out and watched the dexterity in milking so as to overflow the cup with foam that subsided long before he turned the corner, revealing very little milk for a *real*.

The vegetable, fruit, and poultry men, with various jingling harness-bells, discordant cries or whistles, seemed to pass in an endless procession, with long lines of heavily laded ponies, the head of each tied to the closely plaited tail of its leader, the foremost one mounted by a *guajiro* (native peasant), his shirt worn

outside the pantaloons, and belt ornamented with a broad knife. Poultry, generally tied by the feet in great bunches and thrown across the pony's back, or attached to various parts of the saddle, dangled in a distressing condition until a purchaser was found; when released, it was often hours before they could stand. Sometimes the ponies were laded with *meloja*—young stalks of green corn, that had been sown broadcast—and one only saw great heaps of green, with the tips of the ears, switch of the tail, and stumbling feet of the weary animal visible. The water of the city, conducted from house to house in pipes, was so foul that even the poorest families denied themselves other necessaries to afford drinking-water brought from the springs at Marianao, nine miles distant, and carted in ten-gallon kegs all over the city. We paid a doubloon (\$4.25) a month for it, delivered to us tri-weekly in those kegs. About noon, *dulceros*, with tinkling triangles or shrill calls, that always attracted children and servants, passed with large trays deftly poised on their heads, bearing little bowls and cups of freshly made sweetmeats, preserved guavas and mammees, grated cocoanut stewed in sugar, and a very delicious custard made with cocoanut-milk, besides various other fruit-preparations. Families daily supplied themselves with dessert from these *dulceros*, who walked the streets with their wares exposed, oblivious of sun or dust.

Volantes were generally kept inside the houses, and the horses stabled next to the kitchen. I have dined in elegant houses in Havana where as many as four vehicles were ranged against the dining-room walls, and the noise of stamping hoofs could be distinctly heard. In the cool of the evening, *volantes* and victorias sallied out of the houses. The fair occupants in full evening costume, already seated, their trailing robes, of brilliant colors and light, gauzy material, arranged to float outside the open vehicles, with shoulders and arms bare, and raven locks crowned with flowers, among which were tiny birds mounted on quivering wires, made a display of striking and unusual elegance. The coachman in full livery, silver-laced jacket, silver-buckled shoes, and immense spurs of the same metal, the horses prancing under the weight and jingle of silver-mounted harness and light chains, all proceeded in gay trot to join the endless procession that made the *paseo* in Havana the most animated and bewitching sight imaginable in those affluent days of Cuba.

At night, doors and windows of houses were flung wide open, showing a vista of rooms, from the brilliantly lighted *salon* through bedroom after bedroom, until the line of view vanished at the kitchen; bright lamps swung from all the ceilings, even that of the veranda; and in long rows of rocking-chairs, in never-ceasing motion, the *señoras* gayly chatted and sipped

ices; while idle strollers in the streets paused to admire and audibly comment upon the elegant ladies or listen to the light nothings that were being uttered with so much spirit and gesture.

I never knew when the shops in Havana closed, nor when they opened their doors, nor saw them with all the shutters up, even on Sunday—except during the last three days of holy week, when business of every nature is entirely suspended. Returning after midnight from opera or bull, one found every store brilliantly lighted and thronged with jostling crowds. In the hot days, two or three hours' shopping before breakfast was not unusual. The same men stood behind the counters day and night, many in their shirt-sleeves and smoking; though the most overworked human beings in existence, they always appeared fresh, and were exceedingly amiable and accommodating, even to the extent of leaving their own counters and accompanying strangers to other stores to act as interpreters. The leading merchants had men in their employ who spoke both French and English.

The Havana *señoras* generally made purchases from samples sent to their houses; if they visited the shops at all, it was after early morning mass, or the evening drive on the *paseo*, when goods were brought to the *volante* for their inspection. They were quite as critical as any other shoppers; so the obliging merchant often brought to the narrow side-

walk, where there was scarcely room for a person to pass, roll after roll of elegant goods, and patiently waited while the ladies with calm complacency examined them.

At Miro y Otero's (our grocers) I often found the whole establishment at breakfast. A long table was spread down the middle of the store, the members of the firm and every employé, including the porters and cartmen, were seated around the board; if a customer entered, some one would rise, wait upon him, and then resume breakfast. There were no dining-rooms or lunch-counters where business men and clerks "stepped out" at meal-times. In offices, ware-rooms, banks, commercial houses, and stores, meals were served to all employés. Numberless little *bodegas*, and cheap, dirty shops were scattered about the purlieus and back streets, where white and colored laborers side by side ate fried fish or garlic stew, and drank *aguadiente* (native rum) or red wine. In some of the *bodegas* of the lower order asses were kept tied to the counter, to be milked on the spot, for invalids and people of delicate digestion. The coffee served at these very *bodegas* was rich and delicious. Often after we moved to the country and visited Havana, I fortified myself for the early start home on the train, at one of these places, with a cup of coffee, "fit for the gods," and a sovereign preventive of headache so sure to follow three hours' ride in a close car filled with tobacco-

smoke. Smoking is so universal that every car is a "smoking-car."

All Saturday the streets were thronged with beggars, many of them dirty, diseased, deformed, and repulsive; a few, healthy in appearance and handsomely attired, were followed by attendants carrying bags to receive alms. They visited shops, and were invariably rewarded with contributions mostly of small wares, a spool of thread or cheap handkerchief. One mendicant, with his license conspicuously exposed (all beggars in Havana are licensed), passed frequently up our street ringing a small bell. Servants came out from the various houses, and, by giving him a piece of money, had the privilege of kissing a blest but dirty picture that hung on his breast. I was frequently surprised by a call at my veranda-window, from an elegantly dressed lady, her flowing train, of fine linen lawn, decorated with elaborately fluted ruffles, and her stylishly dressed hair partly concealed by a scarf of rich Spanish lace. I was utterly at a loss to understand a rapid formula she repeated in a low, musical voice. To my perplexed look and shake of the head, she always bowed and gracefully moved away—only to return and repeat the performance the following week. Subsequently I learned she was a licensed mendicant. Every Saturday—the only day they were allowed to ply their calling—she was in the habit of leaving her two nicely dressed

little boys at the house of a count on the *cerro*, and begging.

In the courts of many aristocratic and wealthy houses, food was distributed in generous quantities to all who applied, and even comfortable seats were provided for those who desired to rest while they ate. This was generally done in fulfillment of a vow made to the Virgin or a saint in time of distress. A lady living near us, when her children were ill, made a vow to keep the *cerro* church in perpetual repair, if their lives were spared. It was the daintiest of little churches, all pure white and gold inside, with an elaborate altar of marble decorated with flowers and tall silver candlesticks, and a noticeable absence of tawdry display and wretched daubs of pictures which disfigure so many Catholic churches. Although the family was subsequently exiled from Cuba for political reasons, and for years resided in Paris, the vow made long before was religiously kept. Though now restricted in means, their great wealth squandered and confiscated, no doubt the church still receives their careful attention. I had a fine opportunity to admire it.

Vaccination, like baptism, is compulsory in that much-governed country; while the former, performed by surgeons appointed by the government for that especial service, is absolutely gratuitous, the minimum pay for the latter is two dollars, the church rendering

no service without an equivalent. The morning papers each day announced the church where vaccination was to take place, as our journals furnish the weather indications.

At the appointed day for the *cerro* church, Martha and I presented our baby at the vestry, where were already four little darky babies. The surgeon was kind enough to quiet any anxiety I might have evinced by announcing that he had *white* virus and *black* virus, and he never got them mixed. Our addresses were registered, and we were told to report the following week at same time and place. Martha and I, after the operation, followed the colored party into the church, and as the French express it, "assisted" in the baptism of the little Africans. I was nervous about the *white* virus and *black* virus, and was greatly relieved to find it did not "take"; but the next week the polite official presented himself at our door. He was kind enough to believe we did not appreciate the importance of vaccination, and when the second application of the lancet proved successful, our little lady was furnished with a formidable certificate necessary for admission into any school in Cuba.

CHAPTER XV.

A POLYGLOT—ZELL—BEATRIZ'S SCHOOL—IGNORANT GUAJIROS.

HENRY went to a little school a few doors off, kept by a Danish woman, who conversed readily in their native tongue with the French, German, Russian, Italian, and English consuls, all of whom lived in the neighborhood. There Henry, now nine years old, was taught to read in French and Spanish, and, with the quickness of intelligent childhood, soon learned to speak the latter quite fluently. Zell did our cooking and ran on errands, and, as the darky also readily acquires a foreign lingo, it was not long before he could master enough Spanish for any occasion. He was considered such a *savant* that he applied for permission to give English lessons at the corner *bodega*. "Dey'll give me four dollars a month jist to go dar and talk evenings," he explained; "tell em de names of things, jist like I was a-buying. . . . I jist go dar and look at it and say, 'What's price dat ar coffee?' or I p'int at de box and say, 'What you ax for dat sugar?' and den tell 'em what to say back." Zell did "go dar," though I never knew the result of his teachings, pecuniarily or

otherwise. He prided himself on his attainments, and once was heard to tell a man—who, hearing him speak both languages, inquired where he learned to speak English—that he was an Englishman!

In time he mentioned his need of a watch, and at Christmas found a big silver one in his stocking, which he ostentatiously sported when in full dress; but on several occasions my husband warned him that it was being left carelessly about the kitchen, where it was liable to be stolen. Zell came to me one morning in considerable agitation. “Miss 'Liza, you seen my watch? Well, it's done gorn. I left it on dat nail, and now somebody is tuk it.”

“What's that? Your watch gone, Zell?”

“Yes, Mars Jim, I just step out a minute, and lef it on a nail in de kitchen, all kivered up wid de dish-rag, and now, when I look again, it's gorn.”

“Didn't I tell you so? What's to prevent anybody from walking into that kitchen and taking anything they find hanging on a nail?”

“Don't say anoder word, Mars Jim, I know who's tuk it; dat big nigger at Miss Bollag's is got it. Kase I never lay eyes on dat ar fool but he ses to me, ‘Hay! Zell, *que hora san?*’ Dat menna, ‘What's t'ime o' day?’”

“Now listen to me; don't say another word on the subject; you deserve to lose it, and it's gone.”

For several days Zell was downcast and miserable,

ceasing to show interest in his *classes*; but one morning the watch was found on the nail; and Zell, with eyes gleaming like torches, said, "I know'd Mars Jim had dat watch all de time, kase he ain't de kind er man to let no nigger steal outen his yard and never *persecute* it."

Henry's school was an endless source of interest. Señora Bollag (the children all called her Beatriz) kept the school in her own bedroom, although she occupied an entire house. In the very early morning the pupils began to assemble. Before the sun was fairly up, *volantes* arrived at Beatriz's door, and sable maids deposited their little white-frocked charges, and the *volantes* drove off. Boys in panama hats, and full suits of spotless white linen from tip to toe, their piercing eyes and coal-black hair giving the only touch of what the artist calls character to the picture, rode up on ponies with white-robed attendants; and so, long before our American hours for breakfast, Beatriz's school was under full headway. I could distinctly hear the murmur of voices, varied by Beatriz's sharp reproof, and the patter of little feet on the uncovered floor. About ten o'clock *volantes* and servants on foot with breakfast-trays began to appear. In the order of their arrival the children retired to a rustic bower in the back yard where there was a rude table surrounded by a bench; there, with a snowy spread of napkins, they ate breakfast, with servants to replenish the

claret-glasses, and break the eggs over the rice, spread the fried bananas over the *tasajo* or other meat arrangement; in short, perform such menial service as was required by all well-bred children in that voluptuous land. One by one they went to *almuerza*, and returned to lessons smacking their lips and picking their little teeth. Waiters and *volantes* severally vanished with empty dishes and trays. At two o'clock servants were seen crossing the street from up, down, and directly opposite, with napkin-covered glasses of *refresco*, made of orange, pineapple, tamarind, or the expressed juice of blanched almonds, for the thirsty little ones, who lived near enough to share refreshments with their mammas. Funny stories reached us of Beatriz's discipline. If a child presented itself with an unclean face, Beatriz's own maid was summoned, with a huge sponge (such as was used for mopping floors) dripping with water, to wash it; and a frouzy head was made smooth with an enormous comb kept for the purpose.

Beatriz Bollag had a flourishing school somewhat on a crude Kindergarten pattern, for there were little ones learning to spell with blocks, who spent most of their time playing with dolls. All who offered were received, however; even Ellie, a grown niece of ours, who joined us in Cuba, and desired to study Spanish, was not refused. The school had no opening nor closing hour. The children came when they were

ready, and left when Beatriz had a headache or was tired. She was at her post every day in the week; there was no regular day for holiday. The *dias santos*—holy days—of the ecclesiastical calendar, only were observed; their occurrence, although frequent, was irregular. She had no license, therefore presented no bills. Each month Henry was told, "To-morrow is the seventh." And that meant he must bring his *tres doublones* (\$12.75) when he came again. And when Ellie was dismissed, with "To-morrow, my dear," she understood that to imply her *onza* (\$17) was due.

The laws were so peculiarly rigid, that it was almost impossible to obtain a license to teach in Cuba. That parental government is so zealous on the score of education, so dreadfully afraid that the pupils would not learn the right thing, or be taught the wrong, that a teacher's certificate is hedged about with obstacles almost insurmountable. Possibly the lives of the saints and church dogmas bristle around conspicuously in the barrier. No mind can grasp the lives of all the saints and holy men, and know every *double-cross* day and its wherefore in the Spanish calendar, and know much of anything else. An American woman of my acquaintance secured a teacher's situation in a regularly licensed school on the *cerro*. Upon her refusal to obey the orders of the inspectors to discard her text-books and substitute others so antiquated and replete with errors as to be almost usc-

less to the present generation, she was debarred from teaching.

The wealthy class, in order to have their children taught some of the solid branches besides music and the languages, frequently secure governesses in the United States. We were often amused at some of the specimens that came under our observation. A wealthy marquis, who owned an estate near Havana, had as teacher for his children a coarse, showy-looking woman, with a broad Irish brogue. She fairly murdered Lindley Murray. "Me and him," "They be aither going," etc., fell from her lips every time she opened them. So I was not surprised to learn that she had been a hotel-chambermaid. The marquis was ambitious, and spared no expense on his daughters, and, when he pompously congratulated himself on having secured a governess who did not speak Spanish, I longed to tell him that she was equally ignorant of English.

The priests in the interior villages gather the children together and teach them that "Nuestra Señora de Cobre" is a patron saint of Cuba, because she miraculously appeared to two negroes who were paddling about in a skiff, and pointed out to them valuable copper-mines on the coast. They are also taught their Paternosters and Ave Marias; occasionally a pupil is graduated who can read and write; but, as a rule, the class that inhabit the country towns are

very ignorant. An intelligent officer of the Spanish army, who had been stationed in the extreme eastern part of the island, told us he was astounded to see, during some raids upon insurgent camps, how primitive, indeed, how near to Adam and Eve, the country people remote from settlements were. He saw women, with even less adornment than Eve was constrained to wear, picking wild rice and digging roots in the wilderness. When they do not live in rocky caves, their abodes are rude huts that scarcely deserve the name. Literally existing from hand to mouth, "they toil not, neither do they spin."

CHAPTER XVI.

PLANTATION PURCHASED—LIFE AT "DESENGANO"—AT WORK
ONCE MORE.

AT last my husband found a sugar-plantation for sale—"positively to be sold." It would be hard to toll how many he went to inspect, and found the titles imperfect. This one was encumbered by a minor's lien. The old man who owned that one was crazy, and could not make a title. A third belonged to a whole family of heirs, who had fallen out among themselves, and would not agree upon terms of sale. Another was in the merciless grasp of the city merchant, who would ultimately sequestrate it. And so on, through an appalling list of disappointments. At last a plantation was found, so hopelessly in debt, so wretchedly managed, in such bad repute from lack of energy and care, that the owners (three brothers) offered to sell it, or rather consented to allow it to be sold, under the heavy mortgage. As it had been settled originally by their ancestors, and descended in unbroken line, the chain of title was perfect. We closed the bargain, and in May moved our little ho-

longings, Martha and Zell included, to "*Desengaño*," sixty-five miles from Havana. As the lives of these two devoted and faithful servants were interwoven so closely with our own, it might be well to give them a more personal introduction. Martha was a mulatto whose profile, albeit no beauty, strangely resembled that of the famous St. Cecilia; while Zell was a full-blooded creole negro, black as ebony, tall, broad-shouldered, with a big mouth, full of dazzling ivories—one of the best-natured, jolliest souls that ever lived.

In Cuba the laws are so complex, the officials so full of dishonest trickery, that oftentimes the laws seem framed to obstruct rather than to facilitate justice. We were permitted to take possession in May, though the final transfer was not completed until August. While Lamo (a contraction of *el amo*, the master, as my husband was now called) had entire possession in the field, I had not similar advantages in the house, which was still full of the furniture and other movables of the Señores Royo, the late owners. Wretched pictures of "*Nuestra Señora de Cobre*" hung in every room of the house; and we were told, whenever the engine broke down, or the cane-fields were on fire, and the whole neighborhood was responding to the tones of the alarm-bell, the Royos prostrated themselves in agony of prayer before the "*Señora*."

The dwelling-house at *Desengaño* was the most pretentious and substantial in the Matanzas district.

Eighty feet front, one hundred and twenty feet deep, of one story about twenty feet in height, built of stone and cement, the walls were three feet thick, with immense beams of solid cedar sustaining the ceiling. The floors of concrete, covered with a preparation of clay and milk, admitted a high polish. From a wide veranda you entered the parlor; the dining-room, back of this salon, was inclosed its entire rear width with venetian blinds; there was a series of rooms on each side the parlor extending back six deep, forming a square court when the great gates in the rear, reaching from side to side, were closed. No wood-work, except the heavy doors and solid window-shutters. The windows were protected by strong iron bars, extending from top to bottom, and imbedded in the stone walls. The veranda, of solid stone, protected by an iron railing, commanded a view of the avenue a third of a mile, with stately palms a hundred feet high, bordering the drive on either side.

Never can I forget the horrors of the early days at Desengaño. When the black woman, in a dirty, low-necked, sleeveless, trailing dress, a cigar in her mouth, and a naked, sick, and whining child on one arm, went about spreading the table, scrupulously wiping Rayo's plates with an exceedingly suspicious-looking ghost of a towel, the prospect for dinner was not inviting. I had eaten kid stewed in blood, crawfish, frogs, and *chili colorado*—and nobody knows what's

in *that* mess—in my journeyings, so one might have thought my stomach had no weak point in it; but its weakness developed that day, and I dined on boiled eggs and roast sweet-potatoes.

Until a tidy Chinaman was installed in the kitchen I was very dainty, and thought and talked more of what I was eating, or intended to eat, than in all my previous life or since.

“Martha, that water has a wretched taste.”

“Miss 'Liza, I b'lieve dere's something in the bottom of dis *tenajo*, but, bein' as it ain't ourn, I don't want to meddle wid it”—and she pointed to the inevitable water-cooler, the rotund jar of porous pottery, so indispensable in that climate. I ventured to have Royo's jar scalded: out came fragments, legs, bodies, beards, and heads of cockroaches, that had formed such a solid mass at the bottom that nothing less than scalding water and a thorough shaking could disintegrate and bring it forth! We never drank from a doubtful *tenajo* after that.

Among the belongings was an old-fashioned piano, with faded and somewhat damaged pink silk flutings over the upright front. One day I raised the cover, dusted the old yellow keys, and ran my fingers up and down with a loud rattle; out sprang myriads of cockroaches from all the folds and crevices of that faded, dingy silk; the unwonted noise roused them as nothing else had ever done.

There was no cleaning house, no settling down, with all that dirty plunder cumbering the floor. Many and active were the scampers we had after great horny cockroaches, that glared at us in a way almost human, their backs so hard that, when we got a fair rap at one, the shell broke with a loud crack. The evenings were rather dull and listless. Lamo was too tired with his day's occupations to entertain us. The heat, together with mosquitoes and all manner of flying bugs attracted by the light, kept us remote from lamps. I do not know what we should have done, but for the ubiquitous cockroaches. In the dim light of evening they sallied forth from crack and crevice; from the silk-covered piano to the humble foot-stool they crept out. Ellic, Murtha, and I, each armed with a flexible slipper, watched, jumped, slapped, ran, and laughed to our hearts' content. The hunt was the more vigorous as the game was so wary. An old grayish fellow would glare at you with glistening, beady eyes, and wave his long feelers like a challenge; you ran, made a dashing slap with the slipper, and, like the Irishman's flea—he wasn't there! The vigor and voracity of these pests were beyond belief. They scampered all over the house; sometimes strayed into mouse-traps, and were caught by the neck like a mouse. Books, papers, and clothing they nibbled and destroyed freely, as though regular articles of diet. Driven by persistent and vigilant warfare from the

dwelling-house, they seemed to increase about the adjoining buildings of the plantation, and were intolerable even at the *infermeria* where medicines for plantation use were kept, devouring quantities of ipecac, Dover's powders, rhubarb, and even lucifer-matches; in fact, anything and everything that could be reached. On one occasion a package of pulverized borax, intended to be mixed with sugar and scattered about their haunts, for the express purpose of destroying them, was partly devoured in a night, indicating conclusively that the internal organs of a Cuban cockroach are fearfully and wonderfully made. By reason of their intolerant, pugnacious, omnivorous nature, which leads them to make warfare upon every other insect that crosses their path, the negroes refrain from molesting them, as they are less objectionable in their estimation than a multitude of others, and their barracons are strongholds from which they issue to colonize wherever and whenever vigilance is relaxed.

Royo's furniture was carted off at last; the unsavory water-jar, and the untidy house-maid in whose care the belongings had been left, disappeared together. Our scanty furniture was soon disposed to the best advantage, and quickly that dirty house was scalded, scrubbed, and whitewashed. With all things made clean, floors washed every day, and a deal of turning up and out, the horrid cockroaches had no rest, day nor night; and the rapidity with which those

sly old scamps disappeared from about our feet challenges belief.

We soon settled down to a life that was almost as new to us as if we had dropped from the moon. The mixture of bad Spanish and African jargon of the negroes I never did understand—nor did Lamo—but in time they understood me. Henry and Zell, and by-and-by Martha, could interpret for black and white, while Ellie and I could talk to and understand the whites. We worked with an energy, born of a more vigorous clime, that amazed our apathetic neighbors. The money had to be dug and plowed out of the ground to pay for that beautiful place. We had never dug nor plowed, but Lamo knew how it ought to be done; so, while he was in the field teaching the stupid negroes and dazed Chinese to dig and plow, I was busy in the house with its manifold surroundings and dependencies. Not an idle hour did we have, we so greatly enjoyed the new excitement of work with the certainty of reward. Lamo was in the fields before the first blush of day tinged the sky, and I was up with the sun's first slanting rays—busy all day long, and tired enough to sleep soundly at night.

CHAPTER XVII.

RAINY SEASON—CULTIVATING ABANDONED FIELDS—DON FULGENCIO'S MODE—FIRST SUMMER AT DESENGAÑO—BOOKS.

SUMMER on a sugar-plantation is what is known in common parlance as the "dead season." The days are long and hot. Work begins before the dawn, pauses at midday, and ends when it is too dark to see. And the latter is an uncertain hour, for the radiance of the moon in that latitude is quite surprising. The middle of the summer's day is devoted to rest. From the tap of the great bell at noon, to two taps at 3 p. m., no work is done, everybody eats and sleeps. When it is unusually rainy, and summer is the rainy season, still less work can be accomplished. As the day waxes and the heat becomes so intense that it seems impossible to be hotter, the rain, the blessed rain, descends in torrents, often from a cloudless sky.

We frequently walked fifty yards to the garden, when the sun was glowing with tropical fervor, to enjoy the shade of the umbrageous fruit-trees, and in five minutes there would descend such a flood of rain that we would be drenched before reaching the house.

It was never comfortable or safe to ride on horse-back ever so short a distance without umbrella and extra coat—water-proofs they had never heard of. Portable sheds were erected at suitable distances in the fields for refuge from showers that were due at any moment from noon to sunset. Many a time, from the garden, I have seen the laborers in the field, working under the broiling sun, suddenly drop their hoes and run to shelter; it was raining on them, and not where I stood. We frequently looked out from our veranda while all was bright sunshine about us, and, pointing to a gray belt on one side, "It is raining at the Lima," to a belt on another side, "It is raining at the Josefita"; another belt midway, "Now, see, it rains at Palos," just as distinct little belts of falling water as though they were gray ribbons stretched from sky to earth, and all around and between a clear blue sky and a blazing sun.

There was a large field near the house that, after years of cultivation, had been pronounced exhausted, and was abandoned to the weeds. Lamo, feeling confident that, with proper treatment, it could be made fruitful, imported from Louisiana subsoil plows, and, with four yoke of heavy oxen to each plow, set about breaking up the land. Horses and mules are not used for plantation purposes. Oxen are the sole beasts of burden. A heavy beam across the nape of the necks, secured by rawhide thongs passing around

the horns and across the forehead, attaches the animal to the plow (or cart), and the draught comes upon the head. Lamo's immense plows were unheard-of innovations, and so at variance with any cultivation ever before seen, that the strongest field-hands could not manage them, and my husband himself had to run a furrow to show what could and must be done. Once thoroughly understanding, the stalwart men, with ebon backs glistening with moisture, drove the plows deep into the earth, the teams were started, and, as the straining oxen slowly moved, furrows of rich earth were rolled up, fully confirming Lamo's faith in the latent wealth of the soil.

We rode from our fields to see how one of our near neighbors was cultivating, and paused in the shade of a zapote-tree to see Don Fulgencio plow. The old planter said he was eighty-four, and he looked every day of it. His weazened, weather-beaten, tobacco-smoked face was so seamed with thready wrinkles that it scarcely looked human; but Don Fulgencio had some energy, and was plowing the poor, rocky field that he inherited from his father, and that had never known any better cultivation than it was receiving then—a stake that raked the ground producing very little more impression than the broom-stick a boy rides on a dusty road. An ox, attached to the stake by a rope fastened around its horns, walked sleepily along, with scarcely energy enough to switch its tail.

Don Fulgencio pushed the primitive plow, while a little blackie ran by the side of the animal, clicking and occasionally poking it in the well-defined ribs with a long stick when it went entirely to sleep. In the distance was the cot of the patriarch, a simple, home-made, palm-thatched cot, with neither chimney nor window, and with dirt floors. Wide-open doors led out to a covered veranda, where his two pretty-faced daughters were sewing, with a half-dozen little naked negroes playing at their feet. The old mother, deaf and almost blind, sat in the doorway and smoked, smoked, smoked strong, home-made cigars till she was perfectly stupid, and dried like a herring. The sons—there were several of them—were probably at a cock-fight or in the nearest *bodega*. As the aged Don approached with his plow, we exchanged salutations. In his slippered feet and coarse linen shirt hanging outside the pantaloons, he had the graces and courtesies of the most polished gentleman. "Wouldn't we alight? Wouldn't we accept a cup of coffee, the day is so warm, or a lemonade? His house, himself, all he owns is at our disposal." This with a bow and a wave of the toil-stained hand that almost confused us with its lordly style. We were not quite familiar with such high-flown speeches, and simply paused to exchange the courtesies of the day, then rode back to our own well-cultivated fields.

It was a hard task to get comfortably through the

first summer at Desengasfo. It was an unusually wet season. Sometimes for days we saw the sun only when it rose in ethereal fields of glory, and when it descended amid billows of gorgeous golden and crimson clouds. All day long the rain fell in torrents, and the waters poured and rushed in the furrows through the fields. The negroes huddled under the broad eaves of the sugar-house and other farm-buildings; and Lamo walked restlessly about the dwelling, noting great patches of grass here and there through the fields, that had sprung up like magic since yesterday, choking the tender young cane. It either poured in a deluge or dripped, dripped, with a damp, splashing sound that made one almost shiver, though the atmosphere was hot and musty.

On those days we had to rub mold off the shoes every morning, and wear damp clothes—and sometimes move the table into the parlor, when an unusual down-pour flooded the venetian protected dining-room. On those wet, miserable days, cunning little green lizards crept in from the dripping vines that garlanded the iron-barred windows; ants swarmed in from their flooded nests, and there was unusual visitation of the insect life that crept or flew about us more or less all the time. Milk foamed and scythed like yeast in the pans before the cream had had time to rise to the surface. Meat cooked one day was sour and rancid the next. Oh, those wet, summer days, how long and

tedious and uncomfortable they were! In Cuba there are no fireplaces or places for fire in the houses. Cooking is done in small charcoal furnaces set in solid masonry, arranged so as to concentrate the heat beneath the cooking-utensils, and radiate as little as possible. Thus, even the kitchen afforded no facilities for drying clothing or warming one's self. There was no glass in the windows; when it rained in on one side, we closed the solid wooden shutters, and moved to the other side with our sticky sewing and rusty needles. The table-linen, bedding, books, everything became damp and clammy, with the peculiar odor of mold. There were two weeks of such weather at one stretch, preceded and followed by showery, sunshiny days, when the rains were short, sudden, and partial, so that field-work was not entirely suspended.

In our spring rambles down the avenue and through the fields, Ellie and I picked up a number of dainty little white shells; and Henry returned from his explorations in the woods with pockets full of red and yellow beans, such as are now brought in quantities from Florida, whither they have been borne by the Gulf Stream from the tropical zone, and scattered along the sandy beach.

When that dull, rainy spell set in, we amused ourselves by ornamenting a tall, three-cornered, home-made stand of shelves that was found in the infirmary. A portion of each day was spent gluing the beans and

shells in pretty combinations of color and design all over the *étagère*, as we now called it.

In due time we produced a piece of furniture that was really a beauty; the wood completely covered, so that the entire exterior was a mosaic of odd forms and varied colors. It was proudly moved into a conspicuous corner of the parlor, a few vases and knickknacks arranged upon it, and there it stood, the admiration and wonder of every one that entered the house so long as we remained at Desengañó.

Of the china, pictures, books, etc., sent to various supposed places of safety when our Louisiana home was threatened, nothing could be found, when we had once more an abiding-place, but a box of books. The house where the pictures were stored was robbed in the absence of its owner, and years after I heard that some of our family portraits had been seen in the cabins of neighboring negroes. The china—a wedding anniversary gift, and therefore doubly prized—had never been wholly unpacked; the few sample pieces that were taken out at Arlington were carefully replaced, and the cask sent to my widowed sister's plantation on Bayou Fardoche. While General Lawlor was in command in the vicinity, the enterprising colonel of a New York regiment "captured" it while passing through the plantation. Some efforts were made for the recovery of the china, but they were unsuccessful, and later my sister was informed that it had been

shipped North. When the books arrived, we felt very much like the parson whose hat was passed around and returned to him empty, "thankful that nobody took the hat." In the general and indiscriminate custom of "appropriating" that prevailed during that exciting period we were thankful that nobody took the books.

Rejoicing to see their dear old faces, we planned a tier of shelves in the parlor for their reception. With the exception of a fine French and Spanish library in the office of our merchant in Havana, ours was the only receptacle for books that I ever saw in Cuba. There were scattered volumes about the houses, but barely enough to make it necessary to provide a place for them. The universal exclamation of visitors, on entering the parlor at Desengasno, was, "*Ay! que libros!*" ("What a number of books!") No Cuban woman could understand why we read so much. Her everyday literature consisted of simpering "to be continued" stories in the daily newspapers, which were so completely under government espionage that their news consisted of an editorial laudatory of Spain; a paragraph relating the killing of, perhaps, one insurrectionist and the capture of two others, and a horse, in some engagement of the previous week; some legal notices, arrivals and departures of steamers, notices of funeral services, where any "visiting priest desiring to *assist* would receive the gratuity of *un escudo*

(\$2.12½),” etc. Our private mail, on steamer days, was greater than that of all the neighbors combined; besides numbers of letters, we regularly received papers and periodicals from the States. Twice a week the whole family assembled on the veranda to greet Zeli, with the anxiously looked-for mail-bag! American engineers in that vicinity, even miles remote, availed themselves of every opportunity to borrow newspapers from us; apparently caring very little how old the dates, so long as they brought tidings from home. We willingly obliged them, and the courtesy was so thoroughly appreciated that at any time, when accidents to the machinery rendered skilled mechanical labor necessary, we could command the best talent in the *partido*, often without recompense. In fact, the rumor that the engine at “Los Americanos” had broken down would bring with dispatch volunteer aid for leagues around. Oftentimes persons whom we had never seen, brought their own introductions, and expressed themselves as gratified at being able to make some return for the rare pleasure they had derived from the newspapers and magazines we had so freely circulated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE LABORERS REQUIRED—HENRY SHOOTS WILD DOGS—MILITARY RULE—EXTORTION.

THE first year crept slowly by. We fought a brave fight against odds; sometimes sick at heart and almost discouraged, as petty annoyances rose here and there, thick about us. Our slight knowledge of the language, our utter ignorance of the habits and ways of the country people; the strangeness of the negroes, who feared and distrusted us; the trickery and untruthfulness of the white men we had to employ; the grand *hidalgo* airs and graces, and hollow professions of friendship, of our few visitors—made us suspicious and timid, bold and self-asserting, by turns. We realized, all the first year, that we were strangers in a strange land, misunderstood and unappreciated. People who said “yes” when they meant “no,” could not understand us who meant what we said. Their *mañana* (to-morrow) never came, never was intended to come; *our mañana* came, the bill was paid, the business transacted, or the pledge fulfilled, just as surely as the morrow’s sun rose. The beginning of

the second year found us unscathed by the fires of suspicion and distrust, while the mists of doubts and fears slowly vanished from our own minds, for "truth is mighty and will prevail."

Lamo soon found that the pressing need of more laborers compelled him to visit Havana, in order to secure the only kind available—Chinese coolies.

In his absence, Henry went up the mountain (which we called a steep hill back of the house) to shoot wild dogs, that had been raiding old Cinto's chicken preserves.

Vegetation is so vigorous and rank, through cane-fields as well as uncultivated land, that animals wandering into the thicket any considerable distance become bewildered. Cane sprouting year after year from the same joint, sends up, with fantastic irregularity, bent and crooked stalks, whose interlacing leaves cover the furrews, so that they are almost obliterated, while the forest-trees are draped with luxuriant vines reaching from tree to tree, and the undergrowth forms an almost impenetrable barrier to human footsteps. Cur-dogs, that abound all over the island, wander into these seclusions, making their beds and rearing their young. In time the woods become infested with these semi-wild animals, that rarely venture outside the fastnesses, except when driven by hunger to the hen-roosts of the clearings. We heard firing here and there for a few hours, and Henry returned, all aglow with the sport,

to say that those he did not kill were scared to the woods, and old African Cinto would not have cause to complain again.

Before night there was a visit from *el capitán*—our district captain, who was stationed at the nearest village. We always knew, when he came clattering up the avenue, armed to the teeth, with a whole staff at his heels, that he “meant business,” which, so far as our experience extended, was the collection of a fine, or fee. In those days (twenty years ago) Cuba was in the merciless grasp of the military. The civil guard, as it was called, promenaded the rural districts in pairs, dressed in striped blue linen with scarlet trimmings. Year in and year out, in fact week in and week out, for I am sure at least four times a month, two *guardia civiles* crossed our fields in some direction, with no apparent purpose; but they walked past with wonderful regularity, rarely pausing for even a drink of water, or speaking unless spoken to. What they were after, what good they ever did, what good they could have done, I do not know. At every railroad-station—and between us and Havana, stations were almost in sight of each other—when the train halted, a couple of *guardia civiles* walked through; there was a fiction that their business was to examine the *cedulas* (passes) of strangers and suspiciously appearing persons—a document that every soul in Cuba was required to procure, and have renewed yearly, paying a round sum

every time—but in all my journeyings I never saw the *guardias* speak to any one, much less ask for a paper. Our *capitan* had nothing to do with the *guardia civiles*; his was another branch of the service, whose ramifications, like the octopus, spread and squeezed the life out of the people, and drove them at last to desperation and a sickly revolt. The rural captains were advisers, counselors, exponents of the law, registrars, judges, and executioners, besides being military commanders. Their power was almost absolute; but the pay was so small (I believe it was only two *onzas*—thirty-four dollars—a month) it could not house and feed the man, much less his wife and children, mother and mother-in-law, sisters and sisters-in-law, and a stray cousin or aunt; for it was not only a disgrace for a woman to earn her own bread, but a stinging reproach upon every male relative, collateral or otherwise she had. It is apparent, therefore, that these poorly paid men had a hard time make ends meet; and they resorted to many devices that in any other country, or with any other people, would have been a disgrace far beyond allowing an able-bodied woman to make her own living. I presume the home government believed, or pretended to believe, that a captain's salary was all he needed and all he received, but everybody knew that the wealthy planters were black-mailed and unjustly fined to an outrageous extent; and there existed a system of ex-

tortion and oppression that no honest government would have countenanced, and to which none but an ignorant, down-trodden people would have submitted.

To resume: before night our *capitan* came clattering up. Leaving his mounted staff at the door, he entered, and, after depositing sword and pistols very ostentatiously on the parlor table, proceeded to business. "There was firing on this plantation to-day."—"Yes, Henry shot some wild dogs on the outskirts of the field." We were then informed, by a recent decree (they had a recent decree every day, and for every emergency under the sun), that no private individual was allowed a gun or pistol. To my startled question, "But, in case of self-defense?" the reply came, "They can have a sword or knife."—"One can't hunt wild dogs, that threaten to overrun us, with swords and knives!" He was inexorable: we must deliver to him all the fire-arms on the plantation, to be sent to headquarters at Matanzas. I had a feeling that Mr. Captain's pretended mission was not his true purpose; but, being disgusted with his way of doing business, woman-like, I acted with more haste than discretion.

Henry stood on the veranda with tearful eyes, and watched the procession gallop down the avenue. "What will papa say when he finds all the guns are gone?" he asked. I was too exasperated to care.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEW CHINESE—COOLIE REBELLION—ZELL'S BRAVERY—CHINESE
LABOR CONTRACT—VICIOUS INSECTS.

IN a few days Lamo returned, bringing Zell, whom he summoned to Havana to interpret from English into Spanish; and Ramon, a Chinese, whose term of service on the plantation was drawing to a close, to interpret from Spanish into Chinese; also thirty-five newly imported coolies. The new crowd presented a grotesque appearance. Beardless, and with long pig-tails, loose blouses, and baggy breeches, they looked like women. Stolid, quiet, and undemonstrative as Indians, they tumbled out of the wagon that had been sent to the depot for them. Having been months on the voyage, packed in a coolie-ship, and fed on light rations of tea and rice, they were in no physical condition to work, or to endure the showers that were already beginning to be of daily occurrence; so some light occupation in the vicinity of the house was assigned to them, and when a poor fellow rubbed his stomach, rolled up his eyes, and patted his head, he

was forthwith marched to the infirmary and dosed. From long privation on ship, with the stimulation of climatic change, they were so voracious that, if permitted to eat all the food craved, they would have gorged themselves to death.

A moderate allowance was meted out three times daily, which disappeared with marvelous rapidity, leaving them muttering and discontented. Coming as they did from various districts, and speaking different dialects, they could not always communicate intelligibly with each other, and it required under the best of circumstances two interpreters to reach the ear of Lamò.

For many days the Chinese, now giving unmistakable tokens of refractory discontent, were our chief topic of thought and conversation. We could not understand their constant complaints, and so worried along, hoping that time, which heals most things, would adjust matters. Unwilling to allot them any regular occupation, we dared not allow them to saunter at their own sweet will under the mango-trees, now laden with unripe fruit; so, on the whole, life was almost as much of a burden to us, with this new discontented element, as it was to the Chinese themselves.

Long ago formal application had been made, through the grasping captain, for the return of our arms from Matanzas, but without any response. We

watched with ever-increasing anxiety the gradual recovery of strength, coupled with angry insubordination, in the new ranks. The climax arrived, as is usually the case, in an unguarded moment. One morning Lamo and Henry, who for weeks had hovered around the house, rode off to visit a neighbor.

Suddenly our ears were assailed by a low, rumbling noise in the distance, which rose rapidly to shouts and unearthly yells. Before I could rise from my seat to make inquiry, Zell rushed in breathless. "Chinese is riz! Don't be skeered—I'll git my gun." And from under his own bed he hastily pulled out an old blunderbuss. The doors and windows of the house were quickly barred, and with a calm self-possession—the thought of which almost makes me turn pale now—I stood outside the rear door. The Chinese were in full rebellion: stripped to the middle, their swarthy bodies glistening in the hot sun, they rushed with savage impetuosity up the road, leaped the low stone fence that surrounded the cluster of plantation-buildings, of which the massive dwelling-house formed the center, brandishing their hoes in a most threatening manner, and yelling like demons, as with hastily grasped rocks from the fences they pelted the retreating overseer. Ramon rushed from his bench at the carpenter-shop, and did his best to stem the tide; but they brushed him by in their determined assault upon the overseer, who, while issuing them full rations, would

not yield to their demand for an unlimited supply of food.

When the howling hords had completely invaded the inclosure, and showed no abatement of their frenzy, I called to Ramon to ring the bell. Seizing the rope, he gave it a succession of rapid strokes.

The plantation-bell, weighing nine hundred pounds, and mounted on a high frame, was tolled for all ordinary purposes—calling the hands from the field, changing the watch during sugar-making, marking the hours for meals; but a pealing, rapid ring was the signal of danger, to which not only the district captain but neighbors responded.

Zell headed off the crowd as best he could, but rocky missiles fell thick about the *mayoral*, frequently striking his frightened horse. Seeing no sign of cessation of hostilities, I called upon Zell to fire! Strange to say, they knew nothing about a gun, and were only afraid of a sword; so the presence of Zell with his blunderbuss had not in the slightest degree intimidated the furious crowd. At my command, he fired at random; but one man received the charge in his hip, and with a wild shriek fell over. This produced some consternation and confusion, in the midst of which the terrified *mayoral* made good his escape. Lamo and Henry, hearing the alarming peals of the bell, put spurs to their horses and came galloping up. The insurgent rebels, finding the overseer gone, and one of their num-

ber wounded, began to quiet down, gradually strolling to the veranda of their own barracoon, where they assembled in groups and fanned themselves, apparently waiting to see what we were "going to do about it."

The alarm-signal had been heard at the village, and very soon the captain and his merry men made their appearance on the scene. Swords were drawn, and the insurgent army slapped by the glittering blades into line, in short order. The captain asked their complaint, and it required a blow or two from his sword to elicit any response; but in time, through Ramon, they made their grievances known. He then read their contract to them, Ramon repeating it sentence by sentence in Chinese. They stood in a double row—thirty-five of them—sullen but somewhat defiant, straight upright and a bit arrogant. The soldiers with drawn swords, at the order of *el capitan*, walked up the ranks, taking each by the long pig-tail and with one blow severing it close to the head. How quickly they wilted! how cowed they looked! The captain then prepared to chain them in couples, but Lamu interposed, begging that no further punishment should be inflicted. That official reluctantly yielded, protesting that they did not seem at all submissive, and he was sure he would have to make another visit before they would be content.

Gradually order was restored. Fortunately, the

wounded man was only slightly injured, for the blunderbuss was loaded with bird-shot. The valiant *mayoral* returned and marched the cowed and sullen ranks back to their work in the field. Martha "calkerlated she'd go and gather up all dat har, and sell it to some of dese here señoritas." She collected a basketful of tightly-braided tails, and hired another darky to clean them. Black as is the hair of a señorita, that of a Chintaman is many shades blacker. Chinese hair, besides, was a drug in the market, and so I think she eventually made a pillow of it.

We commended Zell for his prowess. Lamo, with a sly glance in the direction of the *mayoral*, said that he felt quite safe to leave Miss 'Liza in his care, for he was no coward. When asked how he happened with a gun when we did not know there was one on the place, he answered: "Soon as dat dar ole captain open his mouf 'bout guns, I know'd what he was arfter dat time, and I jist run in and hid mine and little Mars Henry's fur back under my bed, I never sed nuthin' 'tall 'bout it, nudder; I know'd we warn't safe here stripped of every impliment, so I jist hid a couple, but I didn't say nuthin', for I ain't forgot de trick Mars Jim played on me 'bout dat watch."

The Chinese were intelligent, and it seems almost incredible that any people could be reduced to such abject poverty as would lead to selling themselves or some member of their family into servitude, but such

was the fact. No doubt, however, many of them were felons and dangerous characters; for we heard that numbers were landed in Cuba with only one ear, and some without any, and these were perhaps sold by their own government to the importing company. Even in this low and depraved class it was rare to find one so ignorant as not to be able to read in his own language and keep his slender accounts. Each man, before embarking from China, subscribed to a printed contract, one page in Spanish and the other in Chinese characters, setting forth that Ah Sin (Christian name José), province of Macao, is contracted with his own free-will and consent to—"La Alianza y Co."—to do field-labor, to be granted one day in seven for rest, two full suits of clothing, one blanket and one overcoat annually, twelve ounces of meat and two and a quarter pounds of vegetables—yams or rice—per day; medical attendance and medicines; comfortable living quarters, and four dollars in gold monthly; the privilege also of complaining to the captain of the *partido*, in case of non-compliance with these terms. The Spanish law, in regard to the management and treatment of Chinese coolies by the contractors for their labor, was very explicit and generous to the laborers. One of their own race only, or a white man, could oversee their work. No punishment but confinement in the stocks was permitted. If the planter found them insubordinate, and requiring

severer discipline, they must be reported to the captain. The Chinese, when once acclimated and accustomed to the routine, were docile and industrious; they could not stand the same amount of exposure as an African, but they were intelligent and ingenuous; within-doors, in the sugar factory, in the carpenter-shop, in the cooper-shop, in driving teams, they were superior to the negro. They were orderly and cleanly; the poorest, lowest coolie carried his contract on his person, and never hesitated to assert his rights, but sometimes had to be reminded that the planter also had rights; and it generally happened that each new lot arriving on a plantation had to be interviewed by the captain of the *partido* two or three times, to reduce them to a proper regard for the discipline of a well-managed estate. After the first season they became acclimated and accustomed to their duties, and when their contract expired their experience rendered them very valuable, and they readily commanded higher wages, though few chose planting as an occupation. Before the insurrection in Cuba there was no restraint placed upon the movements of that class from one domicile to another. They were allowed to flock into cities and villages, where they became wonderful peddlers or small shopkeepers, and readily found employment as brakemen on railroads, or in any occupation other than digging in the ground.

Nostalgia was frequent among the newly imported. Like all diseases of a purely mental and emotional nature, its symptoms varied, usually tending to distressing melancholia, though sometimes to the desperation of suicide. The superstition of the lower classes of Chinese leads to the belief that when *felo-de-se* is committed without mutilating the body or shedding blood, the spirit is wafted back to the Flowery Kingdom, and we heard of some shocking instances of suicide by hanging and plunging into wells, resulting from this irrational faith.

We had one case of nostalgia which deeply touched our sympathies. Epifanio (they were christened and named *by the cargo*, upon landing in Cuba, for which the Church received \$4.25 for each *convert*), a tall, well-made, robust Chinaman, gradually faded away to a shadow. Never speaking, or taking any interest in his surroundings, and seemingly without any physical ailments, he was pronounced unfit for active work—daily dragging his reluctant feet and wasted body from the hospital to the *infermeria* to be examined, and as he had no tangible ailment, to be remanded back—he soon lay flat upon his cot, with the wooden pillow he had brought from home, under his head, unable apparently to rise, abject misery depicted on his every feature, Lamo soon saw that Epifanio would die if something was not done speedily to rouse him. It was during the dull season, when all

the hands were in the fields, and quiet reigned about the premises, that my tender-hearted husband had the melancholy creature brought daily under the shed of the sugar-house near the window of our room, and by his bedside, with books and work, we sat a portion of every day. At first he took no notice whatever of our movements and voices; mutely he lay upon the bed, with open eyes and a far-away look upon his pinched face, that was unutterably painful. Unable to persuade or tempt him, we had almost to force him, to swallow a few spoonfuls of soup from time to time. With this patient care, little by little he revived, and by November was able to undertake some light work about the sugar-house; in time he mastered the mysteries of sugar-boiling, and could tell "to a turn" when the bubbling sirup had reached the granulating point and was ready to be thrown into the coolers. Epifanio voluntarily remained at Desengaño long after his term of service had expired, though he had the option of returning to the home for which he had suffered and pined so long.

We had no further trouble with our laborers, who soon saw that we treated them with justice and all proper consideration, and they were intelligent enough to appreciate it. They became expert in the occupations to which they were assigned, and many remained in our employ after their contracts were fulfilled.

Some years later, two of their number, after accumulating what they deemed a competency, returned to their native land, and called on us in New York, to express their kindly feeling, and receive our congrat^ulations on their prosperity.

The negroes, direct descendants of imported Africans, were more or less stupid and stolid, like "dumb-driven cattle."

The sad experience of our predecessors, the Royos, with small-pox, when they lost forty of their laborers, one year's entire sugar-crop, and suffered months of complete isolation from quarantine, which precipitated their destruction, already imminent from long years of prodigality and mismanagement, made us anxious to protect ourselves as far as possible from the loathsome disease that ravages Cuba, notwithstanding government precautions. We applied to all the physicians in the neighborhood, but none were licensed to vaccinate; then sent to Havana for virus, but our merchant replied that it could not be procured, as it was in official hands. Not to be baffled in our humane undertaking, some was obtained through a friend in New York, and my brother seemed likely to raise another rebellion when he applied the lancet to every one on the plantation.

Our good-natured doctor was surprised and amused when he called, a short time after, and was shown the array of swollen and scarred arms in the hospital. He

said he presumed, as we were foreigners, that we could do as we pleased, but no Cuban would have dared disobey the law. The patients recovered, however, and nothing was said or done about the committal of such a flagrant act.

There is an infinitesimal insect in the tropics that bores into the toe at the very edge of the nail, producing by that action the very slightest sensation of itching; but if the owner of that toe does not employ *instantly* a pair of keen eyes and a fine needle to extract the vicious insect that is entering the flesh, wo to him! Once under the skin, all sensation of uneasiness ceases, but in a few days the toe becomes inflamed and swollen to twice its normal size, and a sac of matter forms that must be cut open and allowed to discharge. The poor sufferer hobbles around for days, unable to put the injured foot to the floor. Sometimes, neglect of warning leads to fearful results, even lock-jaw supervening. One of our earliest experiences at Desengafio was to stand helplessly by and see a child, twelve years old, die of that surpassingly horrible disease tetanus, utterly unable to account for its cause until a physician's examination revealed the condition of her feet. Application of coal-oil was considered the best preventive, disagreeable as it is. The care of seventy feet belonging to the Chinese gang, who did not appreciate the danger of neglect, was a worry. Every morning they were

marched to the infirmary, their feet examined, and then dipped into a pail of coal-oil. The coal-oil foot-bath is a very simple thing, but, as the oft-referred-to *contract* did not include that ceremony, it was always attended with remonstrances and threats.

CHAPTER XX.

CIRIACO—PLANTATION GARDEN—TASAJÓ—NEGRO MUSIC AND DANCING.

FROM that band of Chinese, one with a good countenance and neat appearance was selected for a cook: It is surprising how quickly and accurately the Chinese imitate. Before Ciriaco could understand the language, he had already learned to cook quite well. A cloth, some ashes, and a rub or two from Martha, explained that "cleanliness was next to godliness," and that we delighted in clean pots and pans. Martha made a pot of soup; solemnly and silently he watched every ingredient and every motion; the next day he made soup, and the only mistake was a seasoning of dog-fennel which he mistook for parsley! He was given a portable grate once used to heat flat-irons. Martha measured the coffee into the pan, tempered the heat, and showed him with a stick how to stir the coffee till it was properly roasted. To the last day at Desengaño that fellow three times a week put the grate in the same spot, measured the coffee into the same pan, stirred it with the identical stick, and I

doubt not gave it the same number of stirs each time. I never saw any servant so systematic, so methodical, so quiet, so solemn, so intent, so clean. During the eight years he was in the kitchen, there was not an hour in the day when Ciriaco could not be found. He brought his wood from behind the sugar-house at the same hour every afternoon, drew the water from the cistern with the same regularity, carrying it Chinese fashion in pails swung at each end of a pole.

The meals were always promptly served. He was like a machine wound up when he kindled the morning fire, and run down when he turned the key in the court at night.

There was a large area on the mountain planted in yams, malangas, bananas, and other vegetables for plantation use. Wagon-loads were brought to the store-room daily, to be weighed out to the cooks, of which there were three—one for the house, one for the Chinese, and one for the negroes. Green bananas of a very large and coarse variety, such as are rarely seen in the United States, roasted in ashes, and a thick mush, called *funcha*, made of yellow-corn meal, were the universal substitutes for bread, and thousands, both white and black, in Cuba never had any other. We ground corn daily in such a mill as Sarah used when Abraham bade her “to make ready quickly three measures of meal and make cakes”—i. e., a big stone worn hollow by the operation of grinding: the upper

stone is grasped by both hands, and the weight of the body brought down upon it as it moves over the lower stone, producing golden meal of excellent flavor, that was daily very acceptable on our table in varied forms. Cuba is no corn country, though there is no month in the year when green corn can not be had; but the stalks are low and spindling, the ear small, somewhat tasteless, and invariably yellow. We planted white corn of various kinds obtained from both the Northern and Southern States; experimented with broom-corn and pop-corn; but never succeeded in producing an ear from any other seed than the native yellow corn of the island. We endeavored to introduce a change of diet among our hands by making a portion of the meal into bread to vary the regular rations of mush, but neither negroes nor Chinamen relished it. More success, however, attended our importation of navy-bread from the States for the same purpose.

Rice of a cheap grade was imported from India, and frequently issued to the Chinese in place of mush. The meat used was *tasajo* (jerked beef) cut in great slabs a half-inch thick, and sun-dried on the elevated table-lands of South America—baled like skins, tied with rawhide ropes, and sent to Cuba by ship-loads. It is cut into chips and stewed. Hashed very fine and prepared with tomatoes, it makes an appetizing diet, found on every table. Flour was from seventeen to twenty-five dollars a barrel, and always of inferior

quality. Large bakeries in the cities supplied the inhabitants with crusty little rolls; but I was unable to procure yeast, or any preparation of yeast-powders or cakes that would keep in that climate. Ciriaco sometimes succeeded in making an eatable though tasteless loaf of bread, by a mixture of new milk, flour, salt, and sugar, fermented in the sun. Bread made with this yeasty preparation, and also "raised" by a couple of hours' exposure to the sun, was "fair to look upon," and in lieu of better, we ate it. One enterprising member of the family electrified us on several occasions by presenting buckwheat-cakes of marvelous lightness for breakfast. The secret of the "raising" power that produced the delicacy was strictly kept; even Ciriaco, who had the honor of cooking them, was not initiated into the mystery of their preparation. When the sedlitz-powders gave out, the secret was "out" too! The first attempt at these buckwheat-cakes caused a great laugh. We had been prepared for a feast, the nature of which was kept a profound secret; but Ciriaco baked the batter and served it in a pudding-dish!

Besides granting small patches of land to the negroes, where a few thrifty ones cultivated tobacco, and such vegetables as they desired, they were permitted to raise hogs. A piece of ground was set apart for that purpose directly behind their barracoon. Each negro had his own pen, and during the year fat-

tened his animals, and every facility was afforded him for an advantageous sale. But such arrant rogues were they, that frequently they stole each other's hogs during the night, carrying them off on Lamo's horses! So we had to appoint, every night, two of their number to watch the pens, and one to watch the horses.

Even then, whenever a tired and blown horse was found in the morning, it was *prima facie* evidence that a hog had disappeared from the pen during the night. We could not, with all our endeavors, find watchmen equal to coping with the thieves.

Holiday afternoons the negroes were permitted to dance on the hard and firm *patio* in front of their barracoon. Their music consisted of two *tombos*—hollow logs with skins stretched tightly over one end, somewhat like a drum.

The heavy instrument is suspended by a strap from the neck of the player, who strides and beats upon it with the flat palms of his hard black hands, occasionally scratching variations with the tough thumb-nail. The two *tombos* make a mournful, monotonous thrumming, beating time in regular cadence, and are accompanied by a dry bladder containing a few shells or stones, which is rattled by an old, tattooed African woman, whose cracked voice adds a melancholy wail, producing a peculiarly penetrating repetition of the same dull sound, that lingers in the ear long after the vibrations have ceased.

The musicians ready, and the circle formed, a woman glides into the arena, and, catching her flowing train with each hand, sways round and round with a shuffling, half-sliding motion, turning her face from side to side, and sweeping the long dress clear of the ground at every step.

After making the circuit once or twice, one of the men bounds into the circle and follows her from side to side with outstretched arms, as though offering her an embrace. She deftly eludes the advance, casting backward glances from the corners of her eyes to tempt him on. Occasionally he falls, first upon one knee, then upon the other, throwing himself into the most amazing attitudes, sometimes falling prone upon the ground and rolling over, to catch the hem of her dress as she passes, both dancers with every step and gesture keeping wonderful time with the weird *tum-tum* of the *tombos*; when fatigued, or another ambitious couple step forward, they retire. The same performance was repeated and repeated; the same sliding, shuffling, and postulating in rhythm to the atrabilious noise, that often drove me with aching nerves to the far end of the avenue of palms, and there, long after the tap of the bell—a signal that the dance must be over—the diabolical *tombo* beat a devil's tattoo in my head.

The Chinese did not mingle with the negroes, either in their work or socially, though subject to the

same rules and regulations in regard to their hours of labor and hours of rest. On Sundays they would array themselves in clean clothes, add the ornamentation of a string of tweezers and ivory tooth-picks around their necks, and in groups of twos and threes saunter about in a listless manner, scarcely pausing to see the Africans dancing, and often giving little evidence of animation save the perpetual use of large fans. In their own barracoon they were inveterate gamblers, and, if two or more were seen squatting together, they were surely at their besetting vice. If one "lay out" or "outfit," or whatever it may be called, was taken from them, another was quickly substituted.

They gambled with a few little sticks, or grains of rice, or lemon-seeds. And frequently, Monday morning, a Chinaman presented himself to work clad in a coffee-sack, the scamp having risked and lost the very clothes off his back; and it was next to impossible to make him tell which one of his countrymen had won the garments.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GOOD OLD PRIEST—RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION OF THE NEGROES—THE SEÑORA'S GHOST.

THE old *cura* (priest) in the village had the spiritual surveillance of all the inhabitants of his *partido* (district); and we were often notified to discharge certain duties we owed the church, of which, being heretics, we were ignorant. I think the fine for failing to have a slave child christened before it was six months old, was nearly one hundred dollars. Every six months the *cura* admonished us to send to the village church the babies with their mothers, and an *escudo* (\$2.12½) for each child. The kindly old man then sprinkled the little blackies, gave the *escudos* back to the mothers, and perhaps never saw the new church-members again until they went up with the next generation of babies. The good old priest is dead now; but he saved many souls that way during the thirty-five years he was *cura* at the village, and sprinkled several generations, for in Cuba they marry early and often. Many stories reached us of his

kindly, priestly offices to the poor and distressed, as well as to the wealthy, in their hour of need. When the former owners of Desengañó had forty cases of small-pox on the plantation at one time, and the place was rigidly quarantined—not even a physician being permitted to minister to them—the *cura* went to perform his religious offices; he said no human authority could keep him from that stricken family, and the blessed Virgin, or his patron saint, or some supreme power, I do not remember now what, would shield and protect him. So he went and staid with them, and when the long agony culminated in the death of the aged mother of the family, the *cura*, in defiance of law, carried her body to the village cemetery to be deposited in consecrated ground.

No one ever went to him in the hour of need, black or white, that his benevolence did not assist. He never came to Desengañó after it passed into heretic hands; but he had long been accustomed to get the lime from there to whitewash the church and his own house. And every year or two when we fired the lime-kiln, he wrote us to send enough lime to whiten the sacred edifice and he would in return pray for us, and, when we died, say a mass or two.

On Holy Thursday he never failed to notify “los Americanos,” as we were often called, not to sound the bell, neither the plantation-bell out-of-doors or dinner-bell in the house, from Thursday night to Sat-

urday morning, as it was in violation of civil as well as ecclesiastical law.

Though devoted to the church and its duties, the jolly old man was not averse to the amusements in which all classes indulged. He was the owner of the best fighting-cocks in the whole neighborhood. As Sundays were the days of *fiesta*, he prepared his birds for the fray and deposited them, safely secured in the folds of a silk handkerchief, on the church-porch during morning service; and the celerity with which that divine disposed of his sacerdotal vestments after celebrating mass, and hastened with the crowd to the cockpit, was something quite extraordinary!

Such of the coolies as were true to the wholesale christening they received upon arrival in Cuba, and all the negroes, were furnished with codfish in place of *tasajo* during Holy Week. Numbers of the Africans fasted by abstaining entirely from food on Good-Friday, and by many acts indicated their reverence for the church. At *vesperos* (evening bell), wherever they might be, and whatever their occupation, the older ones stopped for a moment, uncovered their heads, made the sign of the cross, and repeated a short prayer.

Frequently a woman at the *tombo*-dances would seat herself beside a small table covered with a white cloth, on which was placed a lighted candle and a cup. Those who felt disposed dropped a coin into the re-

ceptacle, and the amount thus collected was sent to the *cura* to pay for a mass for the repose of the soul of some relative.

There was a strange combination of African superstition and church formula in the attention paid by the negroes to the dying. Two things they were particular about—that their friends should depart from the world naked, and with a lighted candle in the hand.

A blessed candle is kept in every Cuban family, to be placed in the hands of their expiring friends. The same one is used from generation to generation. There is something touching and pathetic in the sentiment that the same lighted emblem, typical of the faith, is placed and held in the hand of grandfather, father, son, and grandson in the supreme moment, to light them through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

Señora Royo was eighty years old when she died of small-pox. Although her body was well sprinkled with quicklime and interred in the village cemetery, the negroes had a superstition that the señora's ghost visited the garden every night and took its seat on the bench beneath the zapote-tree where she had spent so many hours during her life. The old lady must have been, like many Cuban women, a hard task-mistress, for the negroes who remembered and had served her, were mortally afraid of seeing her again.

The garden was large, and in many places the shade was dense. There were arbors draped with flowering vines; zapote, aguacate, and guava trees—all of which have low-spreading branches—lemon and orange, too, and palms, besides many varieties of shrubs. On one side of the entrance was a parterre devoted to flowers. The beds, arranged in a series of graceful geometrical designs, were inclosed within stone walls kept dazzling with whitewash and raised about two feet above the promenade, thus rendering it convenient for the aged lady to touch and admire her flowers without being compelled to stoop. The garden was surrounded by a dense growth of banana-trees, only broken by the tall, narrow gate which led into the inclosure. Now, the Chinese had never known the awful señora, and so were not afraid of her ghost. They made predatory raids upon the garden, often robbing it of unripe fruit.

One night, seated on the veranda with the children, enjoying the tropical radiance of the moon, I noticed something white moving at the entrance to the garden—moving, moving—in a mysterious will-o'-the-wisp way. Sometimes the tall white figure was in full view, and again in profile. Now and again it vanished, as if to rest on the zapote bench in the dark, but quickly to reappear. Under the waving palms it seemed to bow, courtesy, and even beckon. We all watched the slow-moving, weird, white object with con-

jectures and surmises. At last I tested Henry's courage by asking, "Would you dare go to the garden and touch that thing?" After some bantering from the others he went half-way down, and returned to say that it was the tall gate left unfastened and swaying in the evening air. Zell, who was always hovering around after the day's work was done to hear some of the stories by which I endeavored to entertain the children, at once suggested a plan to play ghost and "skeer dem Chinese, fur dey done got dat bad we can't get no decent orange outen dat garden now." So he hastily tucked a sheet under his arm, and, stealthily creeping around the back way, entered the inclosure over the rear wall. When all was ready, I called Ciriaco from the kitchen and ordered him to close the garden-gate. He walked down in the glittering moonlight, utterly fearless. As he placed his hand on the gate, Zell, enveloped in white, rose from the bench under the dark-foliaged tree, and slowly and solemnly bowed. There was one wild, unearthly yell, followed by a succession of piercing shrieks, as Ciriaco fled toward the house with the speed that fear imparts.

Quick as a flash all the other Chinamen appeared. Ciriaco had gained the house, almost paralyzed, when his alarmed countrymen met him. With gasps and groans he told the fearful tale. After a rapid debate among themselves, a few of the bravest agreed to go

in a body and investigate the supernatural specter that barred the entrance to those delicious fruit-groves. Zell had retired, to await results. About a score of wary braves proceeded cautiously and slowly toward the spot, peering with keen and anxious eyes as they advanced. When they reached the gate, Zell slowly rose from out the darkness and seemed ten feet in height in that white shroud, as with outstretched arms he made one step forward into the moonlight. The brave band broke ranks and fled with woful yells and shrieks. The fun was too much for Zell. The overwhelming success of the pantomime so convulsed him with laughter that he rolled over and over on the ground, trailing the winding-sheet after him. The nut was cracked with a loud explosion, but the kernel was lost when the good-natured negro's unmistakable "guffaw" rose above every other sound.

CHAPTER XXII.

CATTLE—BUTTER AND CHURN—OVERRUN WITH OATS—CURIOUS
VOLCANO—MAJA AND JUTIA.

ALTHOUGH the draught cattle on the island are large and well-proportioned, the cows are poor milkers, partially from the fact that the cane-tops on which they are fed in winter are not productive of milk. The scanty product of five cows furnished us with a small pat of butter daily. Of course, nobody there ever saw a churn, and Lamo had to go to the carpenter-shop, make a dasher, and fit it to the top of a two-gallon stone jar, to provide me with one. With great care, keeping the milk-pans placed in cold water, skimming the little film of cream, and churning before the sun was up, we managed to have the unheard-of delicacy of butter.

In return for a neighbor's courtesy in sending me pineapples quite out of season, I sent her a pat of butter. Immediately she called in her *volante*, and was so earnest in her inquiries that I showed her the bowl of cream and the churn, and explained the process. Butter was to be obtained in Havana in small

glass jars, with open mouths; occasionally it was brought to the plantations, but during the transit, through lack of facilities for protection from heat, it was reduced so nearly to a liquid state that a broad knife or spoon offered the most convenient means of removing it from the jar.

Families relied greatly upon goat's milk as nourishment for their children; so they were frequently trained for wet-nurses. While calling on a family in our neighborhood, the young baby cried; immediately a goat ran into the room, laid itself on the floor in a convenient position for the child to get its nourishment, and the baby availed itself of the opportunity as readily as it would from its own mother. After the goat had fulfilled the maternal duties, she walked carefully over the child and disappeared. A goat so well trained is greatly appreciated, and is passed from family to family like a monthly nurse.

Native sheep have no coat of wool, and at a little distance look like a pack of cur-dogs. We imported a few Southdowns from New York, hoping to improve the breed; in two or three generations they, too, lost their wool, and presented no better appearance than the old stock. The flesh deteriorated with equal rapidity, and was little prized for the table. The securing of variety of meats for table use was a constant household care. At certain seasons Henry's gun furnished us with quail, wild Guinea-fowls, and occasion-

ally venison. Chickens were always abundant, but beef and mutton were poor; and the great reliance was pork, which was really more savory than one would imagine it could be in the tropics, with the mercury at 90° in the shade. The hogs are fed almost entirely on grass and the berries of the palm-trees—a food easily obtained, each tree yielding a cart-load—and the pork was so rich and delicate that it was the *pièce de résistance* at every household feast.

One obstacle in keeping fresh meats was the intolerable nuisance of cats, that had their retreats in crevices of the stone fences, and, as any number of rats lived thereabout, I think they fraternized. They never came about the house during the day, but were seen scudding and scampering over the fences and darting into the cane. They broke up hens' nests, destroyed the eggs, devoured the young chickens, and often made night hideous with battles and concerts while roaming through the house, to which the open windows afforded free access, knocking china off the sideboard and lamps off the table, and doing so much damage in the kitchen that Ciriaco's life was made a burden.

In a fit of desperation I offered to pay five cigars for every deceased feline that was brought to the house. It was fun for Zell and Ciriaco. Zell had his old blunderbuss always loaded and conveniently hidden, and between times took quiet little hunts. Ciri-

aco, like a patient Chinese as he was, would sit for hours at night in a dark corner of the court, immovable as a sphinx, with a few billets of wood ready, and he rarely hurled a missile that missed its mark. "Here's dat ole yaller cat; I hit him dis time: he's de very varmint dat broke Marthy's lamp—you kin smell de ile on his fur yit." And Zell proudly held up to view a magnificent feline. "Ciriaco 'lows he kin tan dese skins, and, I tell you, some is beauties." So Ciriaco soon had the west side of the cooper-shop adorned with skins in process of curing. When about fifty of the choicest were ready, I determined to make a rug, and for days had them spread over the veranda floor, fitting the various shapes together like a dissecting map. Some were quite complete, even to the head; others were minus a leg or a tail. They were of every conceivable color—"ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted"—some young and little, some old and big. This sewing of cat-skins was not a dainty job, albeit Ciriaco had cured them very thoroughly; but I persevered unto the end, stimulated by the admiring remarks of the various members of the family, who were more liberal in their suggestions as to tones and contrasting colors than willing to lend helping hands. Soon the rug was completed; it was both curious and beautiful. Bound and lined with red, and spread upon the dark polished floor before an inviting sofa, it challenged the instant admiration of every one

entering the parlor. But, alas! when flea-time came in the spring, and those intolerable pests were so numerous that even the dust in the fields furnished a quota, the soft, thick fur became such a resort for the nimble acrobats that it had to be entirely discarded.

Legions of bats came about the building in the witching hours of night. We rarely saw one, but the disagreeable odor pervading the veranda in the early morning gave unmistakable indications of their visits while we slept. We were for a long time at a loss to know whence they came, for there was no appearance of bats' nests in the buildings. Several evenings at dusk, when Henry chanced to be on the mountain, he noticed from a distant point a small, smoky column rise, gradually increasing in circumference as it ascended, till it floated away like a cloud. One of the neighboring *guajiros* gravely informed him that it was a volcano, that smoked only for a few moments every evening.

Not content with this explanation, Henry's curiosity tempted him to visit a volcano that performed its operations with such strange and unaccountable uniformity. So one summer evening he rode in the direction, timing himself to arrive at "the rising of the curtain," and found a bat-cave. Every night at dusk the animals rushed out by myriads, with a whirring, pouring noise, in so dense a mass that the column rose

straight in the air a considerable distance before they could disentangle themselves. As they became free, they spread in every direction, flying over miles of territory. They lived in this cave during the day, hanging together like a swarm of bees, were on the wing all night, gradually returning toward morning, and by the first light of dawn were again within their rocky home.

It is generally conceded that every animal on the island was brought there, except the jutia and the maja (pronounced *hootia* and *mahar*), the first a species of mammoth field-rat, the latter a snake; both live in the rocky crevices and infest the cane-fields. Both are occasionally used for food by the poorer classes; the Chinese, especially, enjoying them.

The maja is an immense serpent, of the boa-constrictor species, destroying his victim by constriction. We presented one, sixteen feet long, to the Central Park Museum in New York, and it was not an unusually large specimen. The Chinese were fearless and expert in capturing them for food, frequently coming in from their work dragging a monster with a rope. They were sometimes kept in store-rooms, to rid the place of rats. A peep through a hole made for the purpose, to see that the serpent was not coiled, was all the precaution necessary before entering the room. We had one in a long, narrow box, secured by slats across the top; before we were ready to ship it to

a friend in Havana, the maja disappeared; how he escaped nobody could conjecture—the box was intact, but no snake inside. Several nights after this mysterious disappearance, there arose a series of agonizing yells in the court-yard. All rushed to the spot, to find Ciriaco prancing around in the most frantic manner. We thought he had some kind of a fit; when suddenly Zell spied a very suspicious-looking object protruding from Ciriaco's baggy pantaloon-leg, and bravely catching hold, with a pull, out came Mr. Maja! Ciriaco had gone with a candle into a dark closet where were odd pots and pans, and the maja glided up his leg to escape the sudden glare of light.

Later we procured a larger one, and, while in our possession, one night he quietly slipped or crawled out of his skin. The thin cuticle about the head became loose, and he worked his body out as you would turn a glove-finger off, beginning at the head and finishing with the tip of the tail. While still moist, Ciriaco turned this skin right side out. We had this tissue-like cuticle for years after we left Cuba, and, as it was fully fourteen feet long and very perfect, much regret was felt when moths eventually destroyed it.

Some weeks after, I had occasion to visit our invalid merchant in Havana, and was shown a jar filled with a substance resembling corn-meal, and tasting like dried shrimp. It was our maja, that had been

killed, sun-dried, and pounded in a mortar; the poor sufferer was taking it, a spoonful at a time, for his disease. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that he derived no benefit from this rather peculiar medicine.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HARASSED BY THE MILITARY—LAWLESS SITUATION—MEN
DRIVEN TO THE MOUNTAINS—RESTRICTED WALKS.

I RETURNED from a flying visit of six weeks to New York, to find Lamo harassed by the exactions of the military almost beyond endurance. The insurrection in a remote southern part of the island had furnished excuses for innumerable taxes, forced loans, and impressments of horses and cattle from the planters in every district. We, of course, did not escape. There were war-taxes, church-taxes, taxes to repair bridges we had never heard of, and to make roads we could never travel. Uniformed men lighted down upon us almost daily, armed with orders we could not understand and which they could not explain. When Lamo resisted, he was politely informed that they had the power to seize negroes or sugar to the amount demanded. So it was when I returned Lamo was almost daft.

During my absence I chanced to spend a few days with friends in Connecticut, who gave me an elegantly engraved breakfast invitation they had previously re-

ceived "to meet the President and Mrs. Grant." I carried it home as a souvenir, and to show the latest style of invitation-cards, little dreaming what a valuable souvenir it would prove to be.

The next collector that called had the pleasure of meeting the señora just home from the States, and, before he had time to divulge his business, was shown the invitation. He evidently inferred I had been the recipient of numerous courtesies from that august quarter, in fact was on the most intimate terms with the occupants of the White House. Moreover, we assured him that our ideas of proper allegiance would not permit citizens of the United States to pay the war-taxes of a foreign government; that we had been cautioned to maintain strict neutrality with Spain and her colony, and much more to the same effect, quietly adding that assessment bills against Desengaño must be presented at the office of our merchant in Havana, to be approved, if necessary, by the American consul.

In our ignorance of the laws and customs of Spain and other despotic governments, and knowing full well the venality of all the officials we had any business with, we naturally entertained serious suspicions that we were being imposed upon.

Lamo actually worked himself into the belief that a lot of impecunious knaves masqueraded as tax-collectors, and raced to Desengaño every time they wanted money. About the time the elegant invitation

was thumbed and soiled, letters of a purely personal nature began to arrive for my husband in the consul's private mail-bag. "Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C., R. M. Douglas, Private Sec'y," conspicuous on the official envelope. The innocent missives were laid away, but the envelopes were ostentatiously spread over the parlor-table and exhibited to visitors and officials, who regarded them as unmistakable evidence of our constant communication with the home government.

The *ruse* worked a miracle. We paid no more *claims* at the plantation, and very few were ever presented to our merchant.

Matters were rapidly assuming a more unsettled state, and in the lawless condition of affairs even life was becoming unsafe. Our fire-arms had not yet been restored to us; so, except Zell's clumsy blunderbuss and Henry's small shot-gun, we had nothing more formidable with which to defend ourselves than the swords worn by the *mayorals*.

The order to disarm all civilians was deemed necessary by the Government, as it closed one avenue of supply availed of by the insurgents.

The tax-collectors, not content with all they could wrest from the wealthy planters, were driven by the exigencies of insurrectionary trouble to seek every possible means of raising money, and at length invaded the *sitios* of the poor and lazy *guajiros*, where

often there was nothing but a horse that could be levied upon, and their horses were as dear to them as their children.

No doubt many a man would have remained quietly at home but for the threatened seizure of his prized animal. To save this he fled to the fastnesses of the mountains and hid in caves, often drifting gradually into a lawless life. The *guajiros* earned from seventeen to twenty-five dollars a month during the busy winter season. It is pitiful to call these meager monthly earnings by the comprehensive title of *income*; but the tax-collectors now began to claim that a percentage of *all* wages must be paid into the government coffers.

Several brothers, who owned a few acres of land adjoining us, were dependents on our estate. For years they had been employed as teamsters by the former owners, and we continued to hire them. So exasperated were they at the demand for a portion of their incomes that they refused to work. Earning barely sufficient at best for their modest needs, if they had to divide with the tax-collector, they might as well *strike*, not for higher wages, but for no work. Hundreds acted in this way, finally becoming utterly idle, hopeless, and miserable. In many instances desperation drove them to follow an abandoned, vicious career on the road.

Soon our doctor, who on account of his calling was

allowed the special privilege of carrying arms, came on his errand of mercy, followed by a lusty attendant, and had to disembarass himself of a belt and sword, and remove the formidable pistols from his holsters, preparatory to visiting the bedside of his patient. It was not safe for him to travel, even in broad daylight, without these preparations for defense, and no emergency ever called him out after nightfall.

Ellie and I were repeatedly warned not to walk over the fields or up the mountain-side, as had been our daily custom, so our promenades were gradually confined to the broad avenue in full view of the house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MURDEROUS ASSAULT—COMPLAINTS TO THE CAPTAIN-GENERAL—
CARLOS GARCIA.

My husband, who never knew the meaning of the word *fear*, rode bravely about our own domain, sometimes alone, but more frequently accompanied by an interpreter, whose services were often needed. Early one autumn morning he rode unattended to a remote part of the plantation, quite a mile distant from the house. While he could see, by the rustling of the long, slender leaves, that the plows were busy in the midst of the tall cane, and could hear the mournful creak of the wheel that was slowly drawing water from a neighboring well, two mounted men, of rather diminutive size and questionable appearance, suddenly presented themselves on each side the narrow roadway and politely asked the time of day, emphasizing their request by pointing to the sun and to Lamo's watch. He intuitively knew they were on deeds of evil intent, and while repeating his stereotyped phrase, "*No intende*" ("Don't understand you"), by motion

invited them to the house, whose white façade terminated the long vista of the straight road.

Before he could advance a step, one of the men wheeled his horse across the narrow pathway in front of him and, pointing menacingly at the tempting fob that hung from his pocket, repeated the *demand* (as now appeared) in a low and threatening tone. If my husband had previously entertained any doubts regarding their intentions, he had none now. He made a desperate rush to advance, when a pistol was quickly drawn and two shots fired in rapid succession. Each time the hurried aim was rendered ineffectual by blows from an open umbrella, and the bullets flew wide of the mark.

Meanwhile the accomplice, armed with a machete (a large, broad-bladed, short-handled knife, used for cutting cane), pressed forward. Lamo, by a dexterous whirl of his horse, was enabled to catch him by the waist and hurl him to the ground. The unexpected, bold defense, and the fall of one of the men, produced a moment's confusion, which Lamo, never for a moment losing his presence of mind, availed himself of to ride rapidly away. Two shots followed the retreating figure, and my brave man received a bullet in the side of the neck. All this occurred so quickly that the men plowing in the tall cane, alarmed by the shots, rushed to the spot only in time to see Lamo wildly riding toward the house, swaying from side to side,

unable to steady himself in the saddle. The assailants had already disappeared around the first corner, concealed by the towering growth of the fields.

I was leisurely sewing in my usual seat by the window, when the clatter of horse's feet and a rapid running toward the front of the house, coupled with exclamations of wonder and alarm, brought me breathless to the veranda to see my husband's fainting, and, as I then thought, lifeless form, bathed in torrents of blood, fall from the horse into my brother's open arms.

He was stretched, gasping, upon the sofa. The wound, which had swollen his neck alarmingly, was tenderly wiped with damp cloths. My brother, who had some knowledge of surgery, and great presence of mind, cautiously felt for the missile, and, by a dexterous pressure, dislodged a large conical bullet that had missed the jugular vein by the sixteenth of an inch. Pitcher after pitcher of cold water was poured over the wound until the swelling gradually subsided. Messengers were dispatched at the earliest moment for medical aid, and to notify the captain of the *partido*, who immediately sent his clerk to take the deposition of the supposed dying man. Lamo was found able to give sufficient explanation to satisfy all that it was a case of murderous assault; whereupon a *posse* of the captain's men were sent in hot haste to pursue and arrest the highwaymen.

The village doctor did not receive the summons

until after the officials had departed, and, being afraid to venture without an escort, was unable to make his appearance until our patient had received all needful attention. Finding the bullet on a shelf and the swelling reduced, there was nothing left for him to do but to go into an exhaustive explanation of the *law* that governs such cases, by which it appeared that all we had the legal right to do was to lay the sufferer down and summon a surgeon. We had no right to remove the bullet, or even to wash the blood from the wound! I will here add that, if one finds a man lying wounded and bleeding on the public road-side in Cuba, he must on no account touch the body himself, but call a physician, or notify the captain at the nearest available station, for, if he should act the part of the good Samaritan, he would surely be arrested on suspicion. The way of the priest and the Levite is the legal and therefore the only safe way in that land where the Bible is contraband.

By the first mail we dispatched letters, written under intense excitement, giving alarming accounts of the whole affair to the American consul, to our merchant, and to a friend, a wealthy and influential citizen, President of the Bank of Commerce in Havana. Each, not knowing but that he was the only one whose good offices were invoked, repaired immediately to the captain-general's palace. They were admitted by turns to the presence of that august official, who, after giving

audience to three prominent persons on one and the same business, realized the necessity of taking active and immediate steps in the premises, and gave our zealous friends every assurance to that effect.

Then followed days of slow but steady convalescence. The old village doctor kept us in alarm by repeating at each visit that lock-jaw—a very common disease in Cuba—was almost sure to follow a wound treated, as this had been, with cold water! Lamo united caution with bravery, and kept quietly within doors long after he felt well enough to resume his busy life. Our tranquillity was disturbed every few days by official visits. A surgeon, with a consulting brother, was sent from Matanzas (our estate being located in that district) to examine and report upon the wound. He was followed by some Matanzas officials, whose exact business we did not fathom. The assailants had not been captured, and there began to be doubts whether our *partido* captain had been as efficient in the matter as the law required; hence higher authorities were ordered to investigate. The long and tedious deposition was repeated over and over again, through the aid of government interpreters, whose knowledge of English was so imperfect that Lamo kept Henry at his side, to listen to both languages and detect errors that might creep in, with a tendency to invalidate his statement. Every article of clothing my husband wore on the occasion

had been taken by our captain, to which was afterward added the broken and ragged umbrella found on the field of battle.

Then followed a visit of surgeons from Havana, armed with orders to examine the wound, which was by this time so far healed that only the scar remained as evidence. Our neighbors could not comprehend the bravery of a man who, assailed by two armed highwaymen, would make a sturdy defense with an open umbrella for his only weapon, when, by emptying his pockets and relinquishing his watch, he would have been allowed to ride gracefully away. The watch was opened, turned over, and critically examined by our incredulous visitors, as though seeking in its intricacies for a confirmation of the brave story.

The description of the assailants which Lamo gave, on the day of the occurrence, to the pursuing party, was so accurate, that several of them, including the lieutenant, declared they recognized the men. Subsequently we had reason to know they had no intention of compassing their capture. Zell, whose loyal heart was bursting with vengeance, had mounted his horse and followed the uniformed men who raced down the avenue and disappeared in a twinkling in their apparent hot haste to overtake the scoundrels. The party did not return to Desengañó, but Zell did, and he secretly imparted valuable information to Lamo. "Dey know'd dem men better'n dey know you, Mars Jim.

And when a 'ooman at dat *bodega*, by Valera's field, tole 'em she had jist seed 'em cutting for all dey was worf down Valera's Lane, dat ar white-livered lieutenant ses "'Tain't dem—it's no use,' and dem fool cowards dey jist tuk tail and rode back. De minit dey smoll de scent, dey drap'd de trail."

Of course, "negro testimony" was not admissible; but Zell's word was always received in our family without a doubt or question. We imparted this information, in the garb of strong suspicion, to the officials in Havana, whence a company was now sent to scour the Matanzas district and capture those bandits, of whose identity there remained no doubt. They were so closely pressed now that surrender was inevitable; and, without even a semblance of trial, they were immediately shot. Upon their persons were found *cedulas* such as the *guardia civiles* are required to demand of suspicious persons on the highways, as evidence of good standing. These passes had been lately *viséed* by our "white-livered" lieutenant, and his knowledge that these *cedulas* were in their possession accounted for his unwillingness to arrest them; so he was involved in a net of his own weaving. The last heard of that unworthy official he was journeying over the rough country roads between plantations and through tangled woods to Matanzas, handcuffed, strapped astride his horse, with his face turned to the animal's tail, and surrounded by a howling escort. Whether

that unique mode of punishment was the only one inflicted we never knew.

We had reason to hope that the decisive action of the government would relieve us from the possibility of any further aggressions by roving bands, and for a long time we were undisturbed. The two outlaws referred to were not highwaymen in the fullest acceptation of the term. They were *guajiros*, who worked for planters around us, and doubtless driven to desperation by government oppression, had become bold and lawless.

There were bands of freebooters—not a result of government oppression—who made robbery their only pursuit. They swept over the island with the fleetness of the wind; here to-day and there to-morrow, possessing such a thorough knowledge of all the wild country around that a place of concealment or an avenue of escape was always open to them. They did not go in detached parties, but in well-organized bands, and were a law unto themselves, bidding all government defiance, long before the insurrection was in existence. Indeed, marauding bands of like nature have flourished since the earliest days of *civilization* in Cuba.

The Spaniards claimed that the rebel army was composed of these outlaws. No doubt some did join, as affording a wider field for their daring, and others became purveyors for the rebels; but the professional

brigands generally retained their organizations, and recognized no allegiance superior to their captain. In course of time our plantation, in the absence of Lamo and myself, was visited by such a band, and I can not better describe the affair than by the introduction of a letter written some time after the event :

“The world breathes easier hercabout. Carlos Garcia, the renowned freebooter, has at last been sent to his final account. Five captains-general pardoned him at as many different times in his career, but a pardon to return to the field of his exploits Garcia will receive no more. Long before the insurrectionary war in Cuba, Garcia, though a young man (born in 1832), was a desperate, fearless, and noted highway robber. Always accompanied with a band of from ten to twenty men, he rode when and where he pleased, overcrawed the planter on his large estate, cursed the poor peasant in his hut, took the fine horses and carefully boarded doubloons of the humble farmer. His followers were well disciplined, and obeyed his every look and gesture. If one showed too little zeal or too much mercy, behold him stretched upon the road-side with a bullet in his brain, and a paper pinned to his breast, penciled ‘*no sirve*’ (no account).

“‘You are a gentleman, sir; if I can serve you in future, command me: my name is Garcia—Carlos Garcia.’ These were the parting words of the scoundrel as he took leave of me, after selecting the finest

horses, all the saddles, etc., ransacking the dwelling, and securing all the coin that could be found. While he and four of his men were searching and stealing, six others, with cocked pistols, stood guard over me and the white men in my employ. They did their work systematically, accomplished all in twenty minutes, and the politest gentleman that ever cut a throat rode off at the head of his troop, offering me, with all the airs of a Turveydrop, his *services* at any time! What could a man do, but turn back into his house, pick up the scattered and rifled bureau-drawers, shut the plundered desk, and estimate the losses? This elegant gentleman always respected the presence of ladies. A raven-haired *señorita* in the house was a protection that no weapon could insure; her flashing eyes did the execution denied the Minié rifle, for not a man of them would enter a dwelling to rob it when a timid *señorita* met him at the threshold with her low, musical '*Buenos días, señor.*'

"For years this state of things existed. Once in a while a captain-general would order the arrest of the party, but the *partido* captains had neither the men nor the courage to meet Garcia. In fact, they seemed inclined to keep out of his way. After his visit to me, I, being a foreigner, and claiming protection of a flag that was not red-and-yellow, made formal complaint to the captain-general at Havana, who at once issued orders and furnished men to hunt the outlaws. Garcia,

finding himself closely beset, appeared in person one morning at the captain-general's palace at Havana. After a short interview with that vice-regal dignitary, he mounted his horse and proudly rode off, unmolested. The next day a free pardon to Carlos Garcia was proclaimed. It is whispered that Spanish ounces did the work. The clink of gold is as sweet to the ear of the Spaniard to-day as it was to Cortes and Pizarro in the proudest days of Spain.

“Meanwhile he became harder and less merciful in his outrages. His cruelty soon excited the whole people. Cubans submit with good grace to robbery, they are used to that, but cruelty is revolting to them; they are a kind-hearted, sympathetic race.

“Later, Lersundi became captain-general, and one of his first official acts was to dispatch from Havana three hundred men, under efficient and reliable officers, with peremptory orders to capture Garcia. They were divided into various detachments. In a few hours the country in the vicinity of Garcia's last exploit was alive with the red-and-yellow uniforms. He fled, almost unattended, to the Guanamon swamp, which was quickly surrounded, and soldiers ambushed at every possible outlet. A soldier gave me an account of the final act of the tragedy. ‘We took our position at the pass of El Jobo, at 9 P. M., thirteen in company; saw nothing until 7 A. M., then we saw three outlaws riding toward us. At the command ‘*¡Fuego!*’ we all

fired. One fell dead; another reeled a moment, holding his rifle with both hands, then tumbled dead over the head of his horse—this was Garcia; the third rode rapidly off, turned suddenly, and, with deliberate aim, fired, killing one of our men. Again ‘*Fuego!*’ and the bold woman, as she proved to be, fell dead.’

“Garcia had three women in his band, one of the others has since presented herself for ‘free pardon,’ according to custom.

“Garcia’s right arm was broken years ago, and he never quite recovered its use; so he had to discard his heavy Winchester rifle and use a Smith and Wesson, which was the handsomest article of the kind I ever saw: the stock was solid gold, exquisitely carved, and fretted with precious stones. This, besides a pair of Colts, of extra size and finish, and a rifle, were in his possession at the time of his death.”

Garcia was a type of a class of freebooters infesting every highway, and lurking in obscure and unprotected city streets—while the others sneak like thieves in the night, he was bold and daring. All this in a land of military and priestly rule, where few live more than five miles from a captain’s headquarters, or beyond the jurisdiction of a *visible* church!

CHAPTER XXV.

“BEHOLD A MAN FULL OF LEPROSY!”

OUR merchant in Havana was a leper. Poor Don Anastasio had had the disease in increasing loathsomeness for fifteen years before we knew him—a native, I believe, of Central America, a man of wealth, cultivation, and refinement, and one of the clearest-headed, best business men in Havana—best in every sense; for, with great tact and shrewdness, he combined perfect honesty and integrity, rare virtues in those business circles. Leprosy was the inheritance of Don Anastasio; until he was thirty years of age no symptoms of the poison had manifested themselves. And his portrait, taken in early life, that hung in his office, represented a very handsome man. Our dear friend was confident that the disease was stimulated into activity from large doses of quinine prescribed to save his life while suffering from a congestive chill, and he often regretted that he had not risked the consequences of refusing the medicine.

In the incipiency of the disease he placed himself

in a hospital in France, in the hands of specialists. From there he visited noted springs in the Pyrenees, bending his whole energies and invoking the best medical skill to eradicate, if possible, the fearful malady that was beginning to consume his body. The disease steadily pursued its course, its steps were never arrested. The patient's condition was never alleviated; there were no days when he felt that he was better, no hours when he had even a flickering hope that he might remain as he was, much less recover. No solace came to him that he looked better to-day, even if it was to look worse to-morrow. He never looked better. Neither medicine, springs, nor treatment ever brought relief. When we first saw him the poison had been creeping through his frame so long that he was a pitiful sight to look upon. How much more pitiable he became no tongue can tell. In his office, which opened into a small parlor on one side, and into a couple of bedrooms on the other, Don Anastasio lived day in and day out, season after season, year after year, with his faithful friend and partner, who attended to all the out-door business of the firm. Don Anastasio very rarely ventured outside the walls of his abode. He could only walk a few steps, and every movement was painful. It followed, therefore, that all our business transactions with him were conducted in his office. There the poor sufferer, in loose clothing and thickly wadded dressing-gown, con-

fined to his chair, was always to be found, with a clear brain and an honest heart, ready with keenness and intelligence, counsel and advice, to help us in our perplexities, and show us the way.

His hands in mittens, his head covered with a thick cap, his feet muffled in loose slippers, not a hair on his head, eyelashes, eyebrows, and beard all gone; tips of his fingers gone, so that, even with a three-sided pen-staff strapped to his hand, it was with the utmost difficulty that he could sign his name.

The kindly old man gradually crumbled away. His face became swollen, livid, and mottled by turns. The cartilage of his nose vanished by slow degrees, till that feature, with seams and scars, and vivid blotches, sunk to a level with the cheeks. His ears dropped away little by little, as though pieces had been snipped out of their ragged edges; his fingers perished, joint by joint, until he could no longer turn the leaf of a book. By and by his senses began to decay, his sight became dim, hearing dull; and when, after a twelve months' absence from Havana, I saw Don Anastasio for the last time, he had already become so blind that he could only distinguish light from darkness, and so deaf that the familiar voice of his partner and life-long friend was the only one that reached him; his voice was so low and grating, so hollow and unlike anything human, that no one but the same devoted companion could catch and interpret its meaning.

Touch went with the earliest ravages, for leprosy is a skin-disease. Even when Don Anastasio had fingers to hold a cigar, the odor of burning flesh was the first indication that its lighted end had touched his hand.

I frequently cast inquiring eyes upon the portrait of the vigorous, dark-eyed young fellow with bright smile, ruddy glow, and clustering curls, that hung upon the wall before me, with a painful effort to trace any resemblance in it to the pinched and shriveled wreck of humanity that sat muffled in quilted garments at my side. The little, flickering spark of life remaining, while still illuminating his grand intellect and imperishable soul, had not sufficient power to impart warmth to his decaying body. While others were all aglow with the heat and moisture of a tropical day, he sat shivering in his cushioned chair, with skin dry and unresponsive as parchment.

Don Anastasio had been more than business agent to us; more than buyer and seller for the plantation. He had been our unwavering, steadfast friend, an adviser whose advice was always the best, a counselor whose counsels were always the wisest. Through more than twenty years of living death Don Anastasio maintained his position among the prominent merchants of Cuba, daily transacted business that required the utmost foresight and caution, and was intrusted with negotiations of the most delicate and confidential na-

ture. When scarcely enough of his body remained to serve as a casket for his generous soul, he retained his mental faculties unimpaired, was as kind in his thoughts and sound in his judgment as ever, and to the end "nobly bore the grand old name of gentleman."

CHAPTER XXVI.

SUGAR-MAKING—DINNER AT "JOSEFITA'S"—DOMESTIC SERVICE—POOR DON PEDRO.

DURING the sugar-making time in winter all was excitement and confusion on the plantations, suddenly, as if by magic, awakened from the summer's sleepy quiet. Owners, who had city homes, came from Havana, Matanzas, Guines, and Guanabacoa, to *el campo*; and then we, who had no city home, and had long vegetated in seclusion, enjoyed a little society.

On those lovely winter days, when the roads were dry and smooth, and the skies cloudless, and the sun warm, the air redolent with the nameless odors of tropical fruits and flowers blended with the all-pervading aroma of boiling cane-juice, there was much visiting and entertaining, much galloping about in gay cavalcades from house to house, calling and extending invitations to breakfasts and dinners, and offering one's home with all that therein is to each other.

Ladies in flowing robes of every bright color, gracefully seated on elaborately decorated *left-sided* saddles of similar pattern to those used by Catharine of Ara-

gon and her maids of honor in their triumphant entry into London four centuries ago; their gallant cavaliers in spotless linen from top to toe, Panama hats, and clanking silver spurs—the party, all mounted on blooded stallions, came galloping up the long avenue of palms. Caridad and Pancho, Manuel and Reglita, Leon and Felicia, and so on to the number of fifteen or twenty, alighted for a moment, accepted a cup of coffee, and off again like a bright vision of brave knights and fair ladies.

A dinner at the *Josefita's* was the social event of the year to us eagerly accepted. When we arrived, resplendent in our best clothes, the house was already filled with guests. The Josefita family and their city visitors numbered a score, with a score more of the neighbors, and perhaps a half-score of the plantation dependents. It reminded one of the feudal feasts Scott so loved to describe, where the honored guests sat above, and the followers of the chief below, the salt. The long table was spread on the front veranda; so, in order to avoid a sight of the preparations, guests were invited to enter at the rear of the house—a table was pieced out by various devices below the salt, as it were, some lower, some wider than the table proper; but the food was the same, and the boundless hospitality of the host reached all. The entire dinner was placed upon the board before the company was seated. The odor was not quite appetiz-

ing to us, where every dish had a dash of garlic or the unsavory scent of crude olive-oil.

Great heaping piles of blood-colored rice, dressed with a vegetable that imparts that vivid tinge, glistened with lard; chickens, garnished with olives, raisins, prunes, and blanched almonds; sausages, no larger than one's little finger, in dear little links, served with a fringe of garlic; beautiful dishes of omelet, streaked with the blood of all the fowls sacrificed for the banquet, with just enough garlic to impart to them the prevailing flavor; slices of meat, fearfully and wonderfully prepared with red wine and sugar; various salads, served in oils; ripe bananas, stewed in wine and sirup; green bananas, fried dry and crisp like Saratoga potatoes; a whole roast pig, decorated with ribbons and brilliantly colored, impossible paper-flowers; vegetables, whose unpronounceable names I have forgotten; varieties of tropical fruits, all juicy, all delicate, all more or less insipid, all tasting somewhat alike; sweets of cocoanut, guava, sweet-potato, pineapple, marmocilla—no end of sweets; no end of delicate Spanish wines; no end of cigars; no end of cigarettes; no end of gay, little, feathered tooth-picks, made from the plumage of the most brilliant birds; no end of talk. A confusion as of Babel—so fast, emphatic, loud, and so full of gestures, of *Ave Marias!* "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" bursts and ripples of laughter that we, not to the manor born, had not half an idea

what was being said, and not the remotest idea what we were eating.

The custom of helping another at table, and then smelling of the plate; the custom of raising a dish to one's nose, and, with an audible sniff and a shrug, replacing it untouched, or, if favorably impressed, helping one's self, arose, I presume, from the desire to know by the surest channel if the right quantity of oil and garlic were present.

Don Pancho sat by Ellic, and it seemed his duty to assume charge of her and smell of her plate, and, when he found a particularly appetizing *morceau* in his own, to transfer it to her mouth; she playfully resisted, telling me afterward that she hoped they did not think her rude, but she could not eat from Don Pancho's fork. Caridad, the hostess, placed me at her right hand, and hospitably heaped my plate with the choicest of the viands.

And so we dined. At the improvised end of the table sat the *mayoral* and his assistant, the *boyero* (herdsman), the little, old, dried-up doctor, who administered herb-teas and foot-baths at the plantation hospital, the two sugar-makers and two engineers, of various dusky, olive shades, all clean and orderly, quiet and voracious. They took their seats with a dignified salutation, and retired when cigars and tooth-picks were passed around, accompanied with coffee.

A score of darkies, in various stages of inexperience, waited upon us, under the vigilant, outspoken directions of the host and hostess. There was no attempt at style or ceremony, no whispering of orders or sly hints as to duties, no gestures or winks; everything was free and open, every order given in an unmistakable key; so that there was an *abandon* at one of these country festivals absolutely bewitching.

Scarcely a country that boasts of the luxuries and elegancies of life had so poorly performed domestic service as Cuba. Servants, moving leisurely about, were seen everywhere, but there was no running to do one's bidding. A lady's-maid did not serve more than one in her capacity. A nurse cared only for one child. One cook could not prepare the meals unaided, be they ever so simple. One scullion was not sufficient for kitchen-cleaning. A seamstress could only do the sewing and repairing for one señora. A family, a type of the best, though not the wealthiest, of the island, that I visited, at their *quinta* at Madruga, had twenty-five servants about the house! a much smaller retinue than in their city residence, and therefore considered themselves rather unattended and uncomfortable. The family consisted of a mother and six children, ranging from eight to eighteen, and an intelligent American governess, gifted with an infinite tact and the convenient attribute of ubiquity, on whom the burden of the entire establishment seemed to rest,

and her cheerful presence and systematic rule were everywhere visible. The father for political reasons was banished to Spain, and for social reasons the mother, still a young woman, could not go into society in his absence. Their domestic arrangements were a never-ceasing wonder to me. The mother and two daughters each had a maid in constant attendance, to pick up a handkerchief or arrange a stray ribbon when not employed in dressing and undressing their ladies, whose principal occupation was the toilet. The ebony butler had three white-coated assistants. One cook prepared the meats, another made the sweets and *refrescos*; neither of them had time to wash a pan or wipe a cup; so several scullions were sitting around *waiting* to help. There was a laundress for household linens, another for skirts and dresses, a third for servants' washing, and a Chinaman who only laundried pantaloons, vests, and coats. None of them had time to make fires or bring the water they used, servants of lower degree doing this for them. Washing and ironing were in progress from one end of the week to the other. Servants, servants everywhere and very little done. All seemed acting their parts in a comedy of "how not to do it."

One of our neighbors, Don Pedro, with so limited an estate that an ox-mill was used to grind his cane, had to hire a large percentage of his force in order to make a few hogsheds of sugar, and frequently wound

up the season by selling the remainder of his crop standing, because he had not sufficient labor to cut and grind it. Don Pedro had a wife and several grown-up daughters, and fourteen servants about the premises to wait upon the ladies, oftentimes the house servants outnumbered the field-hands. A visit to their hospitable home revealed an untidy parlor with a dog curled asleep on each chair—vicious game-cocks secured by long strings, roosting on the window-shutters, or strutting in their red and naked splendor about the veranda, a half-dozen frouzy, half-clad negroes standing at open doors whispering their admiration of the visitors. Nobody seemed to be working, every living thing had a lazy, idle air, and poor Don Pedro who belonged to a race that could not economize time, labor, or anything else, was harassed because he could not get his cane cut, for lack of help. When plans involving economy of time and curtailment of domestic service were suggested, to help him out of his financial difficulties, his doleful answer was ever “*No se puede!*” (“Impossible!”).

CHAPTER XXVII.

A PARADISE—A GUAJIRO BALL—OUR NEIGHBORS—A DAY WITH
THE MARQUIS.

CUBA is a paradise for those who are too lazy to do anything but exist, as one can live there without labor. The tall, straight palm-tree, of which the poorer houses are built, can be split from end to end with wedge and axe, the pith easily removed, and the crescent-shaped sides, weighted down with heavy rocks upon the ground, will dry as flat as planks. The trunk, split half in two, makes excellent troughs and gutters, the feathery branches thatch their dwellings, the berries furnish food for their hogs, and the core of the pinnacle is as delicious as cauliflower. One palm-tree will furnish material for a *guajiro's* house complete, sides, roof, door, and eaves-troughs included.

The *jiçory*, a large gourd that the *guira*-tree bears not only on its branches but its trunk from the very ground up, makes all the table-ware necessary for the modest palm hut; divided in twain, and the mossy interior removed, then slowly dried in the shade, it furnishes plates and bowls; with only one small aperture

at the stem-end, it is a jug; and if a coarse netting of the strong, fibrous aloe is knotted about it, behold a demijohn (of one or two gallons capacity), that can be easily slung over the shoulder and carried about! The cordage, ropes, and bridles of *pita caruja* are strong and durable; oftentimes the latter are very ingeniously and elaborately braided and twisted. Any *guajiro* can make the rude pottery required in their cooking, for which clay is always easily procured, immense amounts being used in the manufacture of certain low grades of white sugar; none of the indigenous fruits and vegetables require more cultivation than the *machete* affords, and those most generally prized and used, have only to be replanted at intervals of years. Very little clothing is required, and that of the thinnest and lightest material. In the country, children run about *au naturel* until they are eight or ten years of age. Even in cities, with well-to-do families, a child, until it walks, wears but one thin, short covering, and that, in order to afford more freedom to the limbs, is often knotted around the waist.

I have more than once alluded to a family of *guajiros*, who lived near us, and were somewhat dependent on Desengaño. They owned an acre or two of land, planted in sweet-potatoes, melangas, and other edible roots. Their simple dwellings consisted of one or two rooms each, and were shaded by a few palms and a clump of banana-trees.

The aged mother and one unmarried son occupied the principal hut, and it was surrounded by those of three married sons with their wives and hosts of dusky little black-eyed children; here they had lived "even unto the third and fourth generation," probably not one of them ever having been out of the *partido*. The men were employed in hauling our produce to the depot for shipment from December until May; the remainder of the year they did nothing but attend to their own patches, and one man could easily have done all that and had time to spare. During the summer, when pressed for plowmen, we made frequent tempting overtures to them, which were invariably refused. The women raised chickens, but none for sale; fattened hogs, but they were for home consumption; and braided a few Panama hats for their husbands and sons. We paid each man seventeen dollars in gold, and an *arrobe* (twenty-five pounds) each of rice and *tasajo* a month, while they worked for us, and were in the way of continuing the rations, to a limited extent, during the idle season, if there was sickness or want with them. If Panchito came to tell me his *mama* was sick, I sent her some rice; and if Pio or Manuel, the two boys who were Henry's attendants on his *jutia*-hunts, had a *mal de cabeza* (headache), Henry was sure to think a little *tasajo* would make him feel better, and it generally did. *Per contra*, when they heard—which they were sure to do, for some one of them

dropped in at Desengañó every day—that Ellie was not well, or Lamo had a twinge of rheumatism, immediately Pio would present himself with a chicken or a few eggs tied up in a *listado* handkerchief, with the compliments of his *mama*. Once when Pauchito, in awkward handling of a hogshhead of sugar, received a hurt, I rode over to their *sitio* with Henry to express in person our regret at the accident, and to take him a cup of jelly. I so often rode in their direction without crossing the boundary, that my appearance produced no commotion until I had gained the center hut and offered to dismount. The scattering of the children of all ages and sexes to the friendly shelter of the banana-bushes, and behind the coffee-sack curtains that hung at the doors, was amusing.

They were entirely naked, but one by one, as they gained the assistance of their mammas, they appeared arrayed in the thinnest of muslin slips, the merest shadow of an excuse for a covering.

One of the women was braiding a hat in one piece. She began the work at the center of the crown with several very narrow strips of *palma téa*, gradually adding more strips as it increased in circumference, until the top of the crown was complete, then shaping the sides and brim. It was amazing to see the precision and dexterity with which her slender fingers accomplished the intricate work. I became so interested, that several subsequent visits were made to learn the

art. Though the woman was painstaking and patient in her endeavor to teach, she failed to impart the mysterious skill she so deftly exhibited. The hats Ellie and I made were long strands of braided palmetto sewed into shape; those of Carlota had the appearance of imported Panamas. That family was a fair type of innocent, harmless, kindly peasantry, sufficiently numerous to constitute a marked domestic feature peculiar to the island. They were law-abiding, and in their humble way useful, but with scarcely a spark of enterprise. Panchito wanted to marry, but the little patch of land they jointly owned was not sufficient to support a fourth family, so he traded his interest to his brothers for a horse with *aparejo* (saddle, etc.), two oxen, and a wagon, the creak of whose clumsy wooden wheels could be heard rods off, and prepared to emigrate to the adjoining *partido*, perhaps ten miles away; but the captain refused to issue him a *permit* to change his domicile, therefore he could not go. About that time military exactions, of which I have made mention, drove Panchito and his brothers to the desperate resolve to sit down in abject idleness.

The families of the wealthy planters spent so little time on their estates that, for a large portion of the year, we were deprived of their pleasant society, and soon learned to take interest in the occasional entertainments of our more humble neighbors, who were always courteous and friendly. Don Pedro's four

pretty daughters, though lacking in education and cultivation, and quite unused to the best urban society, were amiable, sprightly girls, who talked agreeably, danced gracefully, and played by ear on the piano or guitar the pretty Cuban *danzas* that, by reason of the peculiar accentuation, are so difficult to learn by note. Several times they had proposed to Ellie, of whom they were very fond, to accompany them to a *guajiro* ball in the village of Cabezas. One day Félicia called with her father to urge me to chaperon the whole party, as their mother was unable to accompany them. I consented, simply to oblige, and at dusk the four girls and *papaito* (as they affectionately called Don Pedro) arrived on horseback, followed by an attendant with a pack-horse carrying their wardrobe in hampers. Ellie and I, already dressed for the occasion, seated ourselves in the *volante*, our escort mounted a horse, and we drove rapidly off. A *volante*, the most unique of vehicles, is a chaise-body swung low on leather braces between and a little in advance of two enormous wheels—the peculiar construction giving it a swinging motion seemingly independent of the propelling one, that makes the riding exceedingly easy and comfortable. One horse is harnessed between the very long shafts, and the other, the “near” horse, outside, hitched by stout traces to the body of the vehicle. The *calisero* rides the trace horse and leads the other by the bridle, and on every occasion, except a

funeral, proceeds at full gallop. The picturesque *volante*, the only style of vehicle equally suited to the city streets and the rugged country roads (for it is impossible to upset it), and the graceful mantilla, so well adapted to that voluptuous climate, have gradually yielded to the encroachments of the clumsy cab and the hideous bonnet.

Arrived at Cabezas, we followed the Don to a friend's house, where the señoritas proposed to unpack the hampers and array themselves in full evening dress. Ellie and I with the gentlemen of our party, and a few of the villagers who sauntered in and out as freely and unrestrainedly as if the house was their own, waited until the young ladies were ready, then we adjourned *en masse* to the ball. It was given in a building especially designed for the purpose. Besides the ball-room proper, was one adjoining, used as a retreat for the *duennas* to smoke a cigarette and take a gossipy cup of coffee, and for the young mothers who had not graduated to the position of wall-flowers, to retire and nourish the babies that were apparently about as numerous and demonstrative as any other class of guests; then a third apartment, where the *caballeros* occasionally vanished to enjoy a roast rib of pork and a glass of red wine or *aguadiente*, and whence cigarettes and coffee were dispatched to their respective señoras. The Dons did not have to withdraw to smoke; many of them danced with cigars in

their lips. Each of these rooms had long windows; and the heavy bars, extending from top to bottom, were availed of by the guests as hitching-posts for their horses, thus giving the equines ample opportunity to gaze upon the scene.

As the younger ladies were mostly sought for partners, I found myself relegated to the back tier of seats, and the captain's faded wife came out from the nursery with an invitation for me to join the coterie of gossips. Although I neither smoked, nursed, nor talked, my presence was no manner of restraint on the other occupants of the room, who pursued these various diversions with perfect *abandon* and innocent composure.

The assembly was thoroughly representative of Cuban rustic life, and, though occupying different grades of social rank, mingled freely and unreservedly in conversation and in the dance. Ellie soon discovered that a formal introduction was not considered necessary to assure her every attention from the beaux, but she was able to decline the solicitation of numerous aspirants on the score of ignorance of the *danza*. I imagine Don Pedro's exceedingly pretty daughters were the *crème de la crème*, but there were others, in low russet-leather shoes and plain *listado* dresses (a striped linen worn by the poorer classes), with escorts resplendent in cotton-velvet jackets and gorgeous chains and pins, who were the most willowy and graceful dancers. All the *danzas* peculiar to Cuba are slow

and gliding, the quintessence of voluptuous ease and grace. The music is *pianissimo*, well accentuated, and the animated throng keep exquisite time, and are untiring. The violins were replaced by a *bandurria*—a small guitar of native construction—and the ball concluded with a *pas-de-deux*: a couple in *listado* and cotton-velvet appeared in a typical Cuban dance, "*El Zapateado*"—a most graceful, courtly, and symmetrical measure, that perfectly illustrated the bewitching poetry of motion.

It was almost morning when we stepped into our own rooms again, fresh from our first and only experience at a *guajiro* ball. For days we talked about it, recalling the many unique and amusing incidents of the occasion, none of which impressed us more fully than the thoughtful courtesy and perfect decorum that prevailed during the entire evening. Not a loud or noisy voice was heard; not the slightest indication of undue exhilaration from the frequent visits to the roast pig and red wine, nor a single occurrence to remind us that we were witnessing the festivities of an abused and down-trodden peasantry who had no opportunity or hope of rising above the humble station that had been their lot for generations.

Don José Brito lived on the mountain. The lines of his plantation joined ours; and my husband always thought him the best manager in the *partido*, from his careful supervision of many important mat-

ters not appertaining to the one absorbing industry of sugar-making. He had a rope-walk, and manufactured from the aloe all the cordage and rope used on his place; besides, he had better pasturage, and therefore finer stock, than any one else.

Don José was genial and sociable, and the gentlemen of the two families exchanged occasional visits. He was a representative of rural Cuban grandeur, rare even then, and now entirely passed away. His favorite steed was a large, milk-white Andalusian mule, with shaved tail terminating in a little tuft of hair tied with a bright ribbon, and cropped mane; the equipment was an elaborate russet-leather Spanish saddle with cantle almost as high as the back of a chair, and huge holsters on each side of the pommel, from which gold-mounted pistols projected. A broad crupper extended from the saddle to the switch-like tail, and a band of variegated leather and fringe hung in a graceful festoon across the breast of the animal from side to side. All this leather-work was richly embossed, stitched in brilliant colors, and glittering with silver mountings, wherever a place could be found for them. A superb Toledo blade, full thirty-two inches long (the regulation length of a Toledo), in an ornamented scabbard, completed the equestrian outfit of this gorgeous gentleman. Don José was stout and swarthy, with a most gracious and winning manner, and a pleasant smile, revealing magnificent teeth. His

small brown hands sparkled with numerous jeweled rings, and two heavy gold chains crossed his breast, both attached to watches which nestled in the pockets of his spotless white vest. A more friendly, accommodating neighbor we could not have found in any land. With all this love of display, he was thoroughly practical; and long experience with the small details of plantation-work, that are generally so irksome to the average Cuban planter as to be avoided altogether, made Don José's advice and counsel valuable, and he was so obliging that we often feared we were imposing on his good-nature. Although there were other neighbors more accessible, Don José Brito's horse (the Andalusian mule was for festive occasions) was the first one seen approaching when the peals of our bell announced fire or other danger at Desengafio. La Señora, his wife, was so obese that she was afraid to descend the steep mountain-road in her *volante*, so was unable—as her genial husband told us again and again—to extend to us the courtesy of a visit; but she was very neighborly in her feelings, frequently sending us little bowls of delicious *dulces* of her own make, and kept Ellie abundantly supplied with *cascarilla*, a powder made of egg-shells, for the complexion, and universally used by the Cuban ladies, to whose olive faces it imparts a chalky, ghastly tint.

We became greatly attached to Don José's nephew, the "little doctor," as we called him. He was such a

diminutive specimen of manhood, that the embroidered shirt-bosoms and dainty, perfumed handkerchiefs he exhibited seemed quite appropriate; not so the massive watch-chains and charms, which were better fitted to a man twice his size. Don Tomas was such a genial, whole-souled gentleman, and was so cultivated and refined, that we were always glad to see him enter and deposit his formidable pistols and sword-belt on the parlor-table; it was the signal of a bright, entertaining visit. Ellio and I often wondered why we never met him at any of the social gatherings; and he rarely called on us, unless sent for professionally. As he had never married, and always seemed confused and uncomfortable when bantered on the subject of being a bachelor, I found myself weaving romances in which he figured as the disappointed lover.

One day Don José, arrayed in all his elegance, paused on his way home from the *paradero* (railroad-station) to tell us that Don Tomas would return on the morrow, and then to us was revealed the kindly little doctor's heart-story. When a young student, in Matanzas, he became enamored of a pretty señorita, who reciprocated his love, and they were to be married after he had graduated in his profession; but a dashing Spanish officer appeared upon the scene as a rival, and the young girl was forced by her parents to accept what appeared to them the most advantageous offer. After a short honeymoon, the officer an-

nounced that he had received an unexpected summons to Spain, and proposed that his wife remain with her mother during his temporary absence.

Intelligence reached them, after his departure, that he already had a family in his native country! In Cuba, both by civil and ecclesiastical law, she was still a wife, and such she must remain so long as the deceiver lived. As it is not *comme il faut* for a married woman to participate in society unattended by her husband, her life became one of entire seclusion. The heart-broken young doctor withdrew to the country, and lived on a plantation with his uncle, in the utmost retirement, refusing all social pleasures, and devoting himself exclusively to his profession. "Now," added Don José, with a radiant smile, "after seventeen years of waiting, news has arrived from Spain of the death of that officer, and Don Tomas has gone to Matanzas to marry the only woman he ever loved." In due time we called upon the new señora, and were presented to a faded, shy little body, with a daughter taller than herself. She was not particularly attractive, and her manner was somewhat constrained, as would naturally be the case with one who had lived years under anomalous and grievous repression; but she was all the world to the faithful little doctor.

One of our neighbors was a marquis. He was in the habit of visiting his plantation once a year, and then he entertained in a most lavish and hospitable

manner. My husband had made his acquaintance in Havana, and shortly after we arrived at Desengañó he called to welcome us, in a superb *volante* with prancing white horses, whose harnesses glittered with elaborate silver ornaments. The *calisero* and outriders in livery, wearing (in lieu of the conventional knee-boots of other lands) low black slippers with enormous silver buckles, and glittering spurs of the same metal. No one else in all that *partido* moved about in such royal state, for no one else could display such a gorgeous crest as that proud *hidalgo* of Spain. On one occasion, when his house was filled with city guests, he came in person to invite us to what he called in his quaint English a "peck-a-neck." We were promised a *déjeuner à la fourchette* in a grove, to be followed by the ascent of a mountain, from whose summit a view of unrivaled extent could be obtained. Ellie and I were charmed to accept a gracious invitation that promised such an attractive episode in our monotonous lives. When we arrived at the rendezvous, which was the marquis's lawn, other guests were already assembled in *volantes* and on horseback. A brilliant cavalcade we presented on the route to the grove, which was located on the side of a dashing stream of clear water. Here an arbor covered with fresh palm-branches had been improvised to shelter us from the sun's rays. And in this shade the banquet was spread, a right royal feast of wild Guinea-fowls

garnished with olives, quails served with raisins, roast ribs of fresh pork, and bananas cooked in a variety of tempting and delicate ways; salads, garlic, and unlimited fruit *dulces*, any quantity of Spanish wines, and stronger Cuban drinks made of cane-juice and bitter-orange peel—all sumptuously served, and partaken of with a relish that invariably attends an outdoor feast. Nothing was omitted by our titled host that could add to the perfection of the occasion. What a happy time Ellie and I had! We did not understand all that was said, everyone talked with so much volubility and gesture, and often we detected a perplexed look in bright and kindly faces when one of us ventured a remark that from defective idiom or pronunciation blundered into incoherence. No matter if the courtly marquis himself failed in his attempt to read “Hamlet” to Ellie from an English edition of *Shake-es-pere*, and she did not understand a word. It was all delightful, and gave us ample theme for thought and conversation for many a quiet hour. The marquis, who spoke English “as she is spoke,” acquired his pronunciation from an Ollendorf or something worse; but, confident of his fluency in the language, of which theoretically he was a master, he was by no means timid, though often making most ludicrous mistakes. Notwithstanding we were in a foreign land, and floundering through the embarrassment of making ourselves intelligible in a language

we had not learned even from books, we were, at times almost forced to turn aside and smile at his absurd mistakes.

His native Castilian, which was pure and free from the idioms that abound in many Spanish-speaking countries, we could perfectly well understand. A thorough education and extended travel, as befits a wealthy nobleman of proud Spain, had greatly improved a naturally good intellect; and, being a gentleman of elegant leisure, he was able to devote much time to the translation of English and French classics into his native tongue. I am informed that his published translation of Shakespere's dramas, notably "Hamlet," evinced marked ability.

After the feast came the walk up the mountain; and, to provide for occasional refreshment as we paused to admire the distant landscape, we were followed by a pack-horse, with hampers of green coconuts, and juicy, ripe pineapples; the first universally used in its immature state, when a dexterous stroke of a knife makes an aperture into a sphere of limpid water, clear and sparkling, possessing a slightly sweet and slightly saline taste, mingled to perfection and wonderfully cool and refreshing. The pineapple, easily stripped of its rough coat, is rich and succulent, with an indescribably luscious flavor. In Cuba a single ripe one fills a whole house with its incomparable fragrance.

We mounted by winding paths through a never-ending bower of dense foliage, with blossoming shrubs and vines on every side, and, when the apex of the *monte* was reached, stood on such an elevation that a magnificent panorama opened upon our vision.

A broad plain of waving cane, broken by towering palms and dotted by plantation-houses, lay at our feet. In the remote distance, clusters of white and yellow buildings surrounding tiny church-spires and crosses, indicated the two neighboring hamlets of Palos and Cabezas. Away and beyond were woods and fields on either side, stretching far as the eye could reach; and at the very horizon were narrow threads of sparkling blue, which the marquis assured us were the Caribbean Sea on the one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. We lingered to rest, and admire a scene so grand and beautiful, until warned by brilliant clouds and freshening breezes that the day was almost spent; then turned our backs on the lovely vision and reluctantly descended.

It was during this expedition that Ellie saw the haunts of the veiled owl, a rare and handsome bird with a dusky shimmer over its white plumage, like a gossamer web. The gallant host eagerly offered to secure her a pair of young ones for pets, little dreaming, perhaps, how difficult the task—their nests being constructed in such inaccessible and inhospitable places

that even a *maja* or *julia* (the serpent and the mammoth rat) would scarcely venture to intrude.

It was night, and the moon was flooding the whole landscape with a brilliant light, that made visible every inequality in the narrow road that led to Desengañó, when we bade our courteous host *adios*; and, while he gallantly raised the broad top of the *volante* so as to exclude all the light possible, charged us to be careful not to "receive de moon." On one occasion he "did receive de moon, and it turn de features of his face quite a—round."

Ellie and I with difficulty restrained our merriment over the quaint conceit, until we were quite beyond the hearing of the marquis, who stood on the veranda watching the *volante* until it vanished from sight. But Zell, our *calisero*, assured us that it was really very dangerous to expose one's self to the direct rays of that luminary. "Why, I am keerful to kiver over my hog-pens dese nights, I is. If a hog even lays in de moon all night, next mornin' his snout is turned clean 'round under one ear! No, I never seed one dat way, but dat's what dey tell me; and, ef you notis, you never see no animal 'bout here laying 'sleep in de moon; even de lizards, dey creeps under de leaves and in de rocks. Don't you 'member dat time in Havana, when Captin-Gin'ral Mansano went to dat big dinner down to Marianao, and stayed eatin' and drinkin' till 'most mornin', den he rid home in a open

kerridge, and drapped dead de very next day? Well, dat was fur ridin' in de moon."

The marquis long since retired to his native Spain. Oppressive taxation, together with extravagant habits and luxurious tastes, overwhelmed him, and the carelessly managed "peck-a-neck" plantation was sold for debt. He used to say, "My engine walk well" It walked out of his possession years ago, and not even a Hamlet's ghost of all his Cuban wealth remains to mock him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FERTILITY OF THE SOIL—WORK DURING SUGAR-MAKING—FIRE IN THE CANE-FIELDS.

GENERATION after generation of thriftless Cubans cultivated the same fields, with but slight diminution in the harvests; and the belief in the inexhaustibility of the soil was so universal, that the land was neither enriched, nor allowed to rest, until the evidence of the long-continued drain became very apparent. Our own was one of the estates that had been "over-worked"—first in coffee, then in cane; and realizing the necessity of thorough fertilization, we, like others, used cane-stalk ashes and sugar-skimmings, the immense accumulation of which, during the grinding season, filled a large pool, in which the mixture remained till thoroughly rotted, when it was freely spread upon the land. The coral formation of the mountain-range was pierced with innumerable caves, affording safe retreats for myriads of owls, bats, and jutias. In all these caverns was a fertilizing deposit, possibly the accumulation of centuries. Convinced of its value, samples were sent to the United States,

where the analysis more than confirmed the most sanguine expectations. Lack of transportation facilities prevented utilizing it, as we hoped, for exportation; but the judicious application on many exhausted fields brought forth vigorous growth.

By the liberal use of fertilizers, thus within our reach, the soil soon regained pristine fruitfulness, yielding crops largely in excess of what had ever been produced before—averaging nearly four thousand pounds of sugar and two hundred gallons of molasses per acre. Cane is often grown in large tracts never touched by a plow, the surface of the ground being so entirely covered with soft, porous rocks that the cane can only be planted between the stones by the aid of a pick, one joint deposited in each hole, and only cultivated with a grubbing-hoe; yet it yielded abundantly. We had several acres of cane on the mountain-top, planted in such a rocky field that scarcely any soil was visible, yet the growth was luxuriant and the yield satisfactory. The cane from this elevation was slid down the steep mountain-side in an immense chute prepared for the purpose.

The fertility of the soil is almost beyond comprehension. Weeds and grass grow luxuriantly, and it requires the utmost diligence to keep the ground free from tangled vegetation till the cane attains a height sufficient to make a shade in which the weeds can not flourish. Cane once planted, and properly cul-

tivated and cared for while young and tender, will yield good crops year after year. We made excellent sugar from cane that we were solemnly assured had not been replanted in forty years. Sweet-potato vines live for many years, bearing abundantly; in time the product deteriorates in quality, becoming misshapen and tasteless, so at long intervals the plant has to be renewed. One banana planted—they are propagated from the stalk, and not from the seed—bears within twelve months a cluster of fruit, and perishes; but from the root spring a half-dozen stalks; each bears its one cluster, dies, and sends up its half-dozen sprouts. So there is a rapidly increasing renewal from the one original plant. Many plants that are annuals in the United States become perennials in Cuba. The blossoms sometimes diminish but more often increase in size. Tomatoes grow wild through the fields and by the fence-borders; they are to be had the year round. The fruit is very small and seedless, but the taste is the same, and, for seasoning, very freely used. There are myriads of wild flowers and blossoming vines of brilliant colors through the woods and on the rocky hill-sides. A species of bean, whose flowers are as large and variously colored as pansies, is to be found in the early autumn, covering every fence with its luxuriant drapery, and making it "a thing of beauty." Lily-bulbs, in quiet field-corners or shady spots, send up their long, thick stems

topped with brilliant red or purple blossoms. Morning-glories tie slender tendrils round the growing cane, and hang their delicate pink and blue cups on every blade, and in dewy mornings the glistening web of the field-spider is spread over all like a dazzling veil. Few of these beautiful flowers have any fragrance, but the air is always redolent with the odor of blooming and ripening fruits. Strange though it may appear, the brilliant-plumaged birds that frequent those woods are not singers. A rooster rarely crows unless he is of the fighting breed, and a hen never cackles when an egg is laid.

The amount of work accomplished during the six winter months was enormous and varied. Every operation, from the planting of cane to the shipping of sugar, was in progress at the same time. As the cane—to be ground—was cut and hauled away, the field was taken possession of by the *boyero* to herd and feed his oxen, and they followed day by day in the wake of the cane-cutters. The slender cane-tops, and leaves that grow along the stalk, form the only food the cattle receive in winter, though in time the saccharine matter contained therein destroys the teeth. In two weeks after the oxen gleaned a field, young cane sprouted up, straight and stiff like asparagus-shoots, till all was covered with a carpet of delicate green; then the plows and hoes were used to destroy the weeds that crept in among the tender cane-sprouts.

Meanwhile cane was being hauled in heavy wagons all day long to the sugar-house, passed through the powerful mill, that crushed it to a pulp; the extracted juice was carried through troughs to the kettles and boiled; the newly made sugar was shoveled into hogsheads, placed over the molasses-cistern to drain eight or ten days, then "headed up" and shipped to the city by cars.

The pressed cane-stalks, spread over the ground, were tossed in the sun to dry for fuel. Men were plowing, hoeing, cutting cane, loading wagons, driving teams, boiling, skimming, stirring fuel, filling hogsheads, and driving wagons to the depot loaded with sugar and molasses, day after day. For manifest reasons, no insurance could be effected on plantation property; therefore the planters deposited their produce in city warehouses as rapidly as possible. Our hogsheads were all made from staves and heads shipped direct from Maine, and put together by Chinese in our cooper-shop. Casks to contain molasses were furnished by a merchant in Matanzas (the great molasses market), whose warehouses were provided with enormous tanks into which the casks were emptied, then returned to be filled again. We had a well-equipped carpenter-shop and blacksmith's forge, and mechanics, mostly among our own laborers, who were equal to almost any emergency. Other plantations around us were similarly provided and managed.

There was daily more or less of *borrowing* going on; though only a matter of sixty miles from Havana, it was often impossible to obtain from the city the aid required in a sudden emergency. The planters were generous, kindly, and mutually helpful in cases when extra assistance was needed, often sending their own mechanics and sugar-makers if necessary.

Six months of tireless activity was conducted with clock-work regularity. The bell tolled the hours of meals, and changes of watch day and night. No one, from Lamo in the house to the cattle-tenders in the field (except the delicate women), had more than six hours for sleep during the twenty-four.

After the first week, all became accustomed to the change; and, by the end of the season, every living creature was rounder and fatter, except the hard-worked oxen. These had to be sent at once to a *potrero* (grazing-farm), and boarded at the rate of a dollar a month, until the next busy season.

Toward the end of winter all vegetation, albeit *green*, was parched and dusty; the cane-leaves hung from the stalks in dry and curled shreds. A carelessly dropped match, or a half-extinguished cigar, often caused a conflagration that swept over acres, and destroyed property worth thousands of dollars. From the veranda we had a commanding view of the broad plain which spread from the mountain to the sea, and scarcely a day passed that ascending smoke did not in-

dicate burning cane-fields, sometimes in two or three widely separated places.

While a fire on an adjoining plantation was an excitement, it did not compare with the intense alarm created by one in our own fields. The first shout of "*Fuego!*" and loud peal of the bell, started every one to his feet. Several horses were kept saddled, and others hitched under the sugar-house shed, for such emergency. So well did they know the signal of the bell at an unusual hour, that with the first taps they were frantic to start, and, if a rider did not immediately appear, sometimes broke loose and ran at the top of their speed in the direction of the fire. At the first alarm, Lamo, Henry, and Zell, were on the saddled horses, and off at a sweeping gallop. I snatched the key from its hook and hurried to unlock the store-room, where Ciriaco and Martha stood ready, each side the door, to distribute *machetes* (cane-knives)—always kept in reserve for such an emergency—to the men who were at work about the sugar-house. Those first ready mounted the tethered horses, sometimes two or three on one animal, and were off like the wind. It was an unwritten law that a fire-alarm *must* command an immediate response from laborers, white and black, on every plantation in sound of the bell. Before the echoes of our signal had died away, Brito's hands could be seen pouring pell-mell down the mountain-side, followed by the ardent Don José

himself, on horseback, urging them forward; from the right, Valera's workmen, *machete* in hand, tumbled over the low rock fence and aloe hedge that divided the two estates; while from another direction came Don Pancho, on his fiery stallion, brandishing his sword, and hurrying the entire force of the "Josefita" to the scene of action.

The excitement was intense and wide-spread. Steam is shut off, fires hastily raked from under the sugar-kettles, and all work at the sugar-house abandoned. Every hand that could wield a *machete* sped to the fiery fields, only a few white employés remaining in the vicinity of the buildings.

With straining eyes and bated breath the handful of us left at the house stood upon the veranda and watched the black volume of smoke rise in dense clouds and spread like a pall over the place where the brilliant flames were shooting heavenward in fiery, forked tongues. The shouted orders of the *mayorals* rose above the crackling sounds of destruction. By the aid of a field-glass we followed the rapid riding hither and thither, and rushing of hands with the glistening *machetes*, as the fitful wind changed from side to side. Sometimes an erect rider, with uplifted sword, was revealed against such a brilliant background of flame and rose-tinted smoke, that he seemed enveloped with the fiery element. Breathlessly we watched, passing the glass from one to another! How

nervous and anxious we were, lest the flakes of fire, swept by a whirlwind through the air, might fall among dry leaves and increase the conflagration, and truly thankful when the diminished smoke and flame indicated a victory; and later saw the negroes, all begrimed and drenched with the sweat of toil, who had been fighting the fire inch by inch until it was subdued, turn their faces toward the house, where a refreshing dram of *aguardiente* (native rum) was waiting for them! The planters and *mayorals* rode around the charred field, estimating the number of acres burned, that they might be fully advised whether we required assistance in cutting and hauling the scorched cane that stood in blackened, serried ranks, forming a melancholy blot in the midst of the universal verdure that hemmed it in on every side. Our generous neighbors were ready with men and teams to help, if more cane was injured than could be put under shelter in a week; longer delay, or a rain, rendered it sour and worthless.

The whole party adjourned to the veranda, all more or less disheveled and begrimed, some having lost their hats, and others singed their beards, in the fierce conflict, but all in good-humor; and, while partaking of coffee, extended their sympathy in our loss, and freely offered further assistance if needful.

In the United States, under similar circumstances, some more stimulating beverage than coffee would

have been in "good form"; but, after such fatigue and exposure, it would not have been accepted in Cuba. While it is the custom of a Cuban to offer you his house and all that therein is when you call, or his *volante*-horses if you chance to admire them, or his watch if you cast a glance at it when he tells you the hour, there lies beneath all this effusion, which to matter-of-fact people seems so unmeaning and absurd, a genuine kindness of heart. You are not expected to accept the horses or watch; it is only their Oriental way of signifying a desire to serve you. Our neighbors, who had so promptly responded to our signal of danger, however, were not like the disappointed and chagrined Frenchman, who "did offer his *voiture* for *la politesse*, and he took it for ride!"

The offer of laborers and teams was a frequent occurrence, in fact a business accommodation, and meant more than *la politesse*—it meant just what was expressed. While in such emergencies Lamo had on several occasions suspended work, in order to loan for a day all of Desengasno's available force to a neighbor, it had always happened that we were able to triumph over misfortune without placing ourselves under similar obligations.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DON RUANO'S COFFEE ESTATE—COFFEE-MILLS AND COFFEE-POTS—WASTE OF FRUITS—DON RUANO AND HIS MOTHER.

WE rode to Don Francisco Ruano's coffee estate, hoping to hire a few hands from him to tide over the unexpected rush of work. The Don, with his octogenarian mother, had lived many years on a small and neatly managed *cafetal*, whose boundaries touched Desengafio. The Don never ventured farther from home than the depot or nearest village; and the aged *señora su madre* had not been beyond the limits of her domain for so long that she—like many others of advanced life in that voluptuous land—had lost all desire to move. The avenue to the house was bordered with straggling, rough-barked cocoon-palms, loaded at all seasons with the valuable nuts that grow, ripened, and rotted in great bunches on the trees year after year. A coffee estate is necessarily a fruit-farm also. Coffee is a delicate plant, requiring heat tempered with shade, and, as it grows in long rows of detached shrubs on the cleanly kept ground, tall, broad-

spreading avenues of fruit-trees shelter it from the direct rays of the scorching sun.

A well-kept *cafetal*—and it has to be well kept, else it goes rapidly to ruin—is like a beautiful, symmetrical garden, planted with utmost precision.

The foliage is a light green; the leaves are small, and grow along the straight, slender branches in clusters; while the broad-spreading boughs of the towering trees, of a darker and richer green, cast their refreshing shade over all. Coffee is of slow and delicate growth. The plant is four to six years old before it begins to bear fruit. Once matured, it continues to increase in value and capacity for, perhaps, fifteen or twenty years before it deteriorates, and the necessity of renewal is apparent. In the late spring the shrubs are thickly sprinkled with a shower of white blossoms, somewhat resembling in form and fragrance those of the orange. When the petals of these flowers strew the ground, tiny green buds appear in great profusion the whole length of the slender branches, turning red like holly-berries as they increase rapidly in size, bending the boughs down with their weight. These transformations take place during the rainy season, and through that period a *cafetal* is wonderfully beautiful and fragrant.

The first clear days in October, the berries, then the size of small hazel-nuts, are carefully harvested in immense flat baskets and spread upon a broad paved

court to dry in the sun, protected from chance showers during the day and drenching dews at night by being heaped into piles under sheds or covered with heavy cloths. Any moisture during the drying process rots and ruins the berry. At Don Ruano's the drying *patio* was under his mother's supervision, and the old lady found occupation in watching the coffee, seeing that it was frequently stirred so that each grain received its due proportion of sun and heat, and that it was also protected from dampness.

All through the country coffee is sold in the hull, which contains two grains laid face to face, covered with a brown, dry husk, from which it is easily separated.

The door of every country-house, be it dwelling or *bodega*, is ornamented by the unattractive but useful coffee-mortar with its clumsy wooden pestle, and a sieve made of pita caruja hangs by its side, in which the contents of the mortar are tossed in the wind and the light husks blown away, leaving the firm, hard berry.

One of the sights that arrests the eye of a stranger in Cuba is the multitude of bags hanging at the door of every little shop and for sale at every step in the country as well as in the towns—bags of coarse red flannel, fitted with a hoop around the top and terminating in a point at the bottom; bags of every size, from those that would contain only a pint to others

with the capacity of many gallons. These are the coffee-pots of Cuba, from which come the most delicious draughts of that much-prized and much-disparaged beverage. Half filled with finely pulverized coffee and suspended from a hook on the wall, cold water is gently poured on from time to time till the whole mass is saturated. The first drops which fall into the receiver placed beneath the bag are thick and black. One spoonful in a cup of boiling milk yields a draught of coffee that is deliciousness itself, such as is not to be found in any other land. The red bag hangs day and night, and the process of dripping coffee is ceaseless. All classes and ages offer and drink it freely as we do water. The wealthiest banker in his gilded palace and the poorest peasant in his scanty hut use the same red flannel bag and drink the same coffee. It is quite as rich and delicious served in coarse pottery in the *bodegas* about the market-places, where the workmen assemble in the early dawn, as in the dainty Sèvres at "El Louvre" or "La Dominica," where the *élite* tarry the night away. So universal is its use that the *mayorals*, *boyeros*, cartmen, and, indeed, every class of white laborers on plantations, exact their cup of coffee before they begin the work of the day.

After the harvest, the coffee-plants which were not disturbed during the summer are carefully weeded, the decayed and decaying fruit removed, and the

ground kept cleanly *swept*. Mamey, marmocillo, zapote, and aguacate trees are by reason of their splendid shade the chosen growth of a *cafetal*. The fruit of all is rich, juicy, and greatly prized in the cities, while in the country the abundance is in many instances a nuisance and an expense. While Don Ruano had men employed in carrying off baskets of fruit to be cast away and we had barrow-loads of lemons wheeled from our garden, no way was provided by which this superabundance could be transported to a market. The cities received their supplies entirely through private enterprise, either by trains of pack-horses or by small vessels from one port to another, whose traffic, always hampered, was now almost suspended by military espionage and exactions. Therefore tropical fruits were often more expensive in Havana than in many interior cities of the United States.

With a railroad, connecting Havana with Matanzas and Union, passing so near that the smoke of the engine could always be seen and the rattle of the passing train often heard from his door-step, there were no facilities for Don Ruano to ship his fruit. We occasionally made the attempt to send Don Anastasio (our invalid merchant) a basket of zapotes; but, no matter how well secured and sealed or carefully dispatched, the basket invariably reached its destination with diminished contents. As freight on small pack-

ages must be prepaid, and no guarantee was given by the railroad company (then under military control), of course there could be no reclamation. I presume that Don Ruano never dreamed of patronizing the road at such risks.

The Don had a comfortable, simple country home. All the cots and bed-room furnishings were sunning by the side of the house as we entered. The old señora, in a low-neck, almost sleeveless muslin garment, too infirm and obese to rise from her chair without great effort, received us most cordially, and ordered *la mulata*, as she called her chocolate attendant, to pass me the cigars and a taper. Every morning it was her devoted son's first duty to make, with his own fingers, cigars for his mother's use during the day. They were long and thick, dark and strong, but limited in number to six. The señora mentioned, as though it were an indication of praiseworthy self-denial, that she never allowed herself to exceed that number. Don Ruano, with his white linen shirt starched stiff as pasteboard and glistening with polish, the skirt hanging in unyielding drapery over his pantaloons, was as courtly and gracious as a dancing-master. A sugar-planter's harvest begins after that of a *cafetero* ends, and from the latter the planter recruits the extra workmen required. From this neighbor we hired all the extra laborers we needed for our busy season, and in any emergency he

cheerfully increased the number for a limited time. With Henry's aid he was informed of our urgent need of any workmen he could spare for a month, and we were assured, with hand on his immaculate shirt-bosom and a thousand protestations of undying friendship, that we not only could command all the laborers he had, but his house and all its contents were also at our disposal!

CHAPTER XXX.

HOUSE-BUILDING ANTS—ELLIE'S YOUNG OWLS—HENRY SAYS
"ADIOS."

HENRY delighted in repairing to the bench under the zapote-trees in the garden with his lesson-books, pretending that the quiet of that retreat was conducive to mental application, but most of his time was employed in watching the movements of certain large ants that had great subterranean caves under his feet. The industrious little insects were not compelled, like the historic ant, to lay up winter stores, therefore their energies were spent in house-decorations. Their nests were huge excavations, lateral galleries leading to roomy chambers. In many places the ground for a considerable space was honey-combed with their abodes. The apertures on the surface were so small and usually concealed or protected by leaves that they were not visible, and passers-by could scarcely realize that they were treading over myriads of busy lives when they walked the carefully swept paths of the garden. Henry, book in hand, would sit hour after hour on the bench, curiously watching the march of long proces-

sions of these *hormigas* issuing from a minute, obscure hole in the ground, moving, with the regularity and precision of trained troops, in a direct line to the base of a small orange or pomegranate tree, that had already been ascended by an advance corps, and which, with their sharp mandibles, they were rapidly denuding of foliage. The small particles of leaves that fell in showers to the ground were *shouldered* in a position to utilize the propelling power of any air in circulation, and the long, brown retinue was rapidly converted into a fluttering green ribbon, threading another route to their home. So wonderfully methodical and orderly were they, that the little green sails were of uniform size, and the returning legions marched without a straggler. Henry, boy-like, amused himself by placing obstructions in their pathway. If only a stick, they boldly trudged over it; if a stone or some seemingly insurmountable barrier, the whole army halted in line, while a few scouts went forward to examine the enemy's works and report; frequently a *détour* was decided upon, to fall into line again as soon as practicable. These fresh, green leaves furnished their houses with not only floor but wall decorations. Repairs completed, the colony retired behind their gates, and there remained in peaceful seclusion until the nests required renovating. Then all the withered *débris* was laboriously brought to the surface, scattered broadcast, and everything within made ready for new furnishing.

There was frequently cause to complain of their depredations. They destroyed or bodily removed the seeds of certain vegetables as often as they were deposited in the ground, and the young sprouts of many others when they appeared above the surface. They made their excavations through the fields also, but their presence resulted in no injury to the cane. Our merchant, Don Anastasio, assured me that in some parts of the island these insects were so numerous and destructive that their nests frequently extended beneath the foundations and undermined large stone houses, rendering them so unsafe that the buildings had to be abandoned!

Great excavations were made with spades down into the recesses of the ants and the places filled with fire and brimstone, but even these violent measures seemed to make no appreciable diminution in their numbers, though millions must have been destroyed; in a week or two they were as numerous and destructive as ever. The dainty little *tomiguins*, that flew like canaries all about the garden, fearless as birds become that are never molested, often pierced an orange with their sharp little bills and extracted the juice; then a corps of *hormigas* followed and robbed it of the pulp; so an orange, "fair to see" as it hung in its golden beauty among the clustering green leaves, was often light and deceptive as a toy balloon.

Henry's love of the whole animal kingdom was

gratified in some measure by a choice collection of gay-plumaged birds that he kept in cages made of the delicate twigs of the *caña brava* (wild cane). Our friendly neighbors were constantly adding to the number, and one end of the veranda was devoted to his pets. Don José sent him a cage of ring-doves, whose mournful cooing always reminded my homesick husband of the days when he was a boy in a Western clearing. To these the generous Don added a number of pure white Guinea-fowls, and a pair of rabbits; the latter we colonized on the mountain, but they did not possess the agility of the *jutias*, and the hungry *majas* eventually destroyed them. It had been Henry's desire to find a nest of the beautiful veiled owl, and secure the young, which he hoped to be able to tame. The marquis had maintained an ominous silence regarding the pair promised Ellie, though doubtless he made every effort to compass their capture. One day, however, a *guajiro* whose services had been enlisted, presented himself, the fortunate possessor of two very young birds which he desired to offer to the señorita. Almost naked of plumage, with heads of abnormal size, and great, bulging eyes, they were, of course, very unattractive; but the full-grown owl is so handsome that Ellie eagerly accepted the gift, and used every effort to tame them. As they grow, they become so vicious and snappish that she found it hazardous to approach, even with caresses. No downy white feath-

ers appeared ; they were long-legged and skinny, and Henry began to ask Ellie if it was not time for her owls to put on their veils and conceal their nakedness ! Don Ruano called one morning, on business bent, and seeing the forlorn birds with blinking eyes and drooping heads, their legs tied with long strings to the banisters of the veranda, innocently inquired of Henry what we intended to do with those buzzards ! Ellie, who had already dawning suspicions of their genuineness, was horrified, and the dejected creatures were removed by Zell, who " 'low'd he know'd all de time dem was buzzards, or sum'thin' wuss."

Scarcely a day passed that news was not brought our boy of some attractive out-door sport. The discovery of a tree filled with wild honey made from the flowers of the banana, orange, or other fruit-trees, the most fragrant in odor, delicate in color, and delicious in taste in the world, was sure to take him to the woods and bring him back laden with spoils.

Permission having been tacitly given to use fire-arms, his gun was in constant requisition, and excursions in search of game or adventure were temptations hard to resist. With all these distractions, added to the frequent calls of importance made upon Henry as interpreter and to transact many minor details of business, it became evident that there were too frequent interruptions to render a continuous course of study possible while living on the plantation. Naturally

bright and studious as he was, the necessity of the discipline and application enforced by an academic course was too apparent to be ignored. When he was fourteen we felt compelled to make the sacrifice, an unusually great one, of parting from him. Lamo felt that it was hardly in the bounds of possibility to spare the boy, who had been at our side through all these vicissitudes, not only a dear son, but a valued assistant who had become well-nigh indispensable, but there was no other alternative than to send him to the United States to school.

In July he took a lingering farewell of all his boyish pets. His gun was carefully oiled and put away, with injunctions not to let it be disturbed. The little pet *tomiguins* that had been trained to hop on his finger and peck seed from his mouth, were set free in the garden. The pigeons that flocked daily at the sound of his voice were called and fed from a basket of rice for the last time. Old Mish, the cat, that nestled in his arms every night, had a last nap in that cozy embrace. The pony had his last gallop up the mountain, and Bob brought the last wounded dove, at his young master's bidding. To all the neighbors he made farewell calls. The kind old priest in the village, who was found sipping his *vino Colorado*, and playing cards with some of his parishioners, when "Enrique" called to bid him *adios*, rose and solemnly laid his hand upon the boy's head and blessed him.

When the hour for departure arrived, he mounted his pony and galloped down the avenue. Passing through the *Joscfita* plantation, he paused at the hospitable house, where the tender-hearted Caridad was found waiting with tearful eyes and open arms to embrace him. Don Pancho mounted the white stallion, already saddled at the door, and rode by his side to the depot; while bluff, brawny McClocky, the Scotch engineer, who had made so many helpful visits to Desengano, threw his old cap after him, shouting, "God bless ye, me boy!" A goodly number of *guajiros*, headed by Manuel and Pio, his companions in many a woodland expedition and field-hunt, were already assembled at the *paradero*. Henry had endeared himself to all classes. Full of enthusiasm for boyish sports and adventures, he was the *beau-idéal* of every *guajiro*. "Adios! Enrique!" "Adios, amigo mio!" echoed again and again through the air, as the cars rumbled off from the depot, and a last glimpse was had for a long time of his home surroundings—a home that was ever strange to us, but the home of the boy's childhood, was very dear to him. How desolate it became after his departure he never knew.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BEAUTIFUL OCTOBER—VIEW FROM THE MOUNTAIN—TERRIBLE
TEMPORAL—DEVASTATION.

OCTOBER was upon us. The summer rains had ceased, the air was full of the odor of fruit and fruit-blossoms by day, and overpowering, when the shades of evening fell, with the fragrance of the brilliant, white, night-blooming cereus, which flung its exuberant wealth of golden stamens in prodigal profusion over the coral-rock fences that bounded the grassy lawn. All nature that never donned a russet or yellow coat, or dropped a withered leaf, bloomed forth in freshly washed green. Vines, that had hung their heads under beating showers for six months, took heart again, and ran riot over the fences, and hung in long, tangled, graceful festoons from tree to tree, draping the rocky mountain's sides with curtains of verdure besprinkled with gorgeous blossoms of crimson and gold; while aloft on the mountain-top, in every tree nestled the beautiful dark-green parasites of the tropics, hanging in clusters, here and there and everywhere; with the overflowing abundance that Nature

so lavishly provided in Cuba, there was sustenance for all, so that the idle parasite, that had nothing to do but exhibit its beautiful self, did not diminish the vitality of the generous tree on which it feasted.

The rasping notes of the wild Guinea-fowl and the sharp whistle of the quail were heard all through the cane-fields, where the long, sweeping leaves had tenderly sheltered their nests, and now they were coming forth with abundant broods. The tiny yellow *tomiguin*, with his musical chirp, the brown *arriero* (mule-driver), with his two long, slender tail-feathers and his strident call; the gorgeously plumaged *tocalor* (every color), nestled in the mango-trees, swung upon the slender branches of the mimosa, and flew joyously over our heads; while the buzzards that we jestingly claimed were entitled to be emblazoned on our coat-of-arms, as at least one was forever to be seen perched on the arch at the end of the avenue, sailed in grand and graceful curves over and above all.

The mountain-range that runs like a backbone through the length of Cuba was only a quarter of a mile east of our dwelling, and a ride or walk up the steep sides well repaid a lover of nature. From the summit there spread before us an extended view of Oriental loveliness and exquisite beauty. At our feet limitless cane-fields hung their light-green leaves, topped here and there with erect torches of blossoming seed that shimmered and glistened in the sun like

molten silver. In the distance, amid the intense green of fruit-trees and whole avenues of kingly palms, towering chimneys of sugar-houses and groups of modest buildings marked the domain of neighboring planters. Far off to the right a broad expanse of still darker green revealed a coffee estate. To the left a tiny church-spire surmounted by a white cross denoted the village home of the captain and the *cura*, who exercised controlling influence in all matters temporal and spiritual, considerably relieving the docile population of that grandly beautiful country from all responsibility in the present and the future. The cerulean dome, scarcely flecked by a single fleecy cloud, stretching from zenith to horizon, the gently undulating landscape, the soft, hazy, languid atmosphere, the faint zephyrs redolent with perfume, suggested Arcadian peace and rest.

September, which so often took a boisterous farewell, retired with gracious smiles, and it seemed that every bird and bush felt safer when she was gone; but September had left a legacy to the incoming month.

Almost imperceptibly the air became still, oppressive in its stillness; not a leaf stirred in the topmost branches of the tall palms, whose feathery summits danced and tossed in every breeze. They became as painted trees on a painted landscape. Birds were to be seen restless and flying aimlessly about; horses whinnied and stamped and pulled from their halters

under the shed where they were tied. Old Mish, the cat, came mewling pitifully around and refused to be comforted. Dogs whined and howled, got up and turned around, only to lie down again, as though too nervous and restless to be still a moment. All nature was wretched and uncomfortable. The atmosphere became preternaturally transparent, and objects long distances off were revealed as though seen through a powerful field-glass. The total lack of vitality in the air made its very inhalation an effort. Cattle about the fields drifted in a restless manner to their pens and huddled together. Sheep found shelter in their mountain-cave, where they stood with noses to the ground; bugs and ants crept in through the doors and windows which had been flung wide open to catch the faintest breath of air.

The most inanimate of created things seemed to share in the depression. Leaves of trees curled and drooped, and flowers closed their limp petals as though a sirocco had swept over them.

Suddenly all was flurry and excitement to prepare for the cyclone that even the very lizards knew was coming. Sledge-hammers, axes, and immense timbers were hastily brought inside the house. We rapidly prepared to occupy and defend the three front rooms only. Ciriaco brought in some cold meat and bread, brandy, *aguadiente*, and a pail of water, which were deposited in a corner of the parlor.

The rear of the house was closely barred and secured in the strongest way possible. There was a sudden and hurried rush into the various buildings. Chinese and negroes fled to their respective barracoons and fastened themselves in. Lamo, with two white men in our employ, and several trusty, stalwart negroes, waited to see that all were protected, thoroughly safe as possible, barely allowing themselves time to rush into the house and close the last windows when the hurricane broke upon us. The wind rose in great, howling gusts, and swooped down and around with tumultuous roar like the booming of cannon. A rattle and a bang, as though we were being assaulted with battering-rams on one side the house, and all rushed to the threatened windows to secure them with great solid timbers driven by sledge-hammers into the polished floor, and forced against the massive panels of the shutters that closed from within. A rushing and a whizzing sound, broken into a prolonged roar, admonished us that the wind had veered, and now the opposite windows were threatened; before they could be properly secured, a great rattling and howling at the door drove every one with axes, sledge-hammers, and timbers to the front of the house. So the wind whirled round and round, stopping at every door and window to blow a louder and more startling blast. Like a great giant battling for admission, or a besieging army attacking first on one side, then on another, then all

around at once, in the determination to carry the defenses by storm, the merciless wind fought. We knew only too well that if it gained admission, the house would be wrecked; one of its mighty blasts could lift the very stone roof.

Meanwhile, except for a single candle in a corner, so shielded for fear of sudden gusts that it only served to make darkness visible, we were without any light. A panel a few inches square, hung on hinges in a front shutter, was our only means of obtaining a glimpse of the outside world, and we dared not open this while the storm was doing its utmost. For thirty hours we bravely and unceasingly defended the besieged castle—thirty hours of mortal terror and incessant vigilance—before the giant, with one last, deafening howl, diminished the force of the attack, and gave us one moment's peace. Cautiously taking hurried peeps through the little panel, while the tornado was whirling with fearful impetuosity through a roscate atmosphere, the very wind seemed a tangible pink element sweeping everything before it. *Débris* of every kind was being borne upon its mighty wings. Great sheets of metal roofing from the sugar-house went careering along like scraps of paper; huge palm-trees whirled aloft and away like straws; while tiles, bricks, and smaller objects sailed with lightning rapidity across the horizon like motes in a breeze, so utterly insignificant were they in the grasp of the mighty element.

A few holes, wrenched through the strong stone roof of the house, gave access to the rain, that now poured down in blinding floods, and we were soon like Noah's dove, flying in vain search of a dry spot.

When at last, after thirty hours of exhaustive battle and mortal alarm, our doors were once more thrown open, the scene of desolation was beyond all powers of description. The boundless fields of waving cane, that delighted our eyes only two days before, had entirely disappeared; beaten flat down by the wind, the rapidly descending waters rushed completely over them. The sugar-house was wholly unroofed; and for days broad strips of the metal, bent as though Vulcan's hammer had beaten them into a thousand fantastic shapes, were brought from the fields hundreds of yards away. Rock fences had been dashed to pieces and the fragments strewed over the fields. The proud army of majestic palms, that had for so many decades stood guard of our entrance, lost twenty of its bravest veterans. The grand old bell, whose ringing peals so often summoned help in the hour of danger, and whose gentle, solemn toll always brought to my tired heart memories of peaceful Sabbath days, lay shattered on the ground, its silvery tongue silenced forever!

Desolation was everywhere supreme. When the waters subsided (they ran off into low places and partly filled creeks with surprising rapidity), the negroes sallied forth from their long confinement. The

first move was to count all hands at the barracoons. Many had had wonderful escapes, and it was a great satisfaction to ascertain that only one, a Chinese, was missing. While the rushing waters were still several feet deep, messengers on horseback were dispatched to search for him. He was found extended upon a fragment of fence that surrounded the cattle-pen, insensible, and in that condition brought to the house, hanging in front of one of the riders. After rolling the poor, water-logged fellow again and again on a bench, and rubbing him with dry mustard, some evidence of life appeared. At the first signs of vitality copious draughts of brandy were administered, and he soon entirely recovered. The half-drowned cattle, that huddled together with the impulse of brute instinct, began to hold up their beaten and weary heads. The horses, that crowded into the sugar-house when it was under bare poles, with the intuition that taught them they were safer there than in the open field, escaped without serious injury. Basket after basket of drowned and half-drowned fowls were brought to the house; many of them had even their feathers wrenched out by the wind. The birds that had flown, in gay plumage and joyous note, from tree to tree only a short time before, were gone; hushed was the busy call of the Guinea fowl; silent was the whistle of the quail—the angry winds had whirled them away. A few buzzards, whose vitality is so proverbial—it is even averred

that a bullet can not kill one—were to be seen perched, day after day, in a most dejected and melancholy attitude, on the remnants of fences and posts, with scarcely a tail- or wing-feather left, naked and shivering, too helpless and disheartened to hop down; to attempt to fly would have been suicidal.

A walk through the house revealed broken and wrenched railings, battered windows, and a court-yard strewn with stone and cement plowed out of the roof by relentless winds. Everything was wet—each shoe floated in its particular puddle, all our garments dripped, and every chair-seat was soaked. Water ran in small streams over the floors; the very beds were saturated; the occupancy of each little dry spot had to be contested with ants, lizards, and scorpions that invaded the premises by myriads.

I wondered, on first seeing Desengafio, why people in a mild, soft climate should build a house solid as a castle, with walls three feet thick; and I wondered, after that *temporal*, that any one dared to live in a house less substantial and with less protection than massive walls and a stone roof afford.

Long before securing any degree of comfort, we had to help our neighbors, particularly the *guajiros*, who had a *sitio* between us and the village. Panchito and Manuel waded through the submerged roads to tell that their houses were entirely blown away. The places were washed and smoothed over all fresh and

clean to begin again : four holes and four uprights and some cross-poles, with a covering of green palm-branches, made each as complete as it was before. We furnished men and means to tide them over their losses. In the beginning of the *temporal*, or rather when it threatened, they sought refuge in the caves of the mountain-side, and a merciful Providence saved their lives from destruction.

Under the warm rays of the sun the cane soon lifted crooked and bont stalks, with their few remaining leaves whipped into shreds, and nature slowly recovered from the fearful shock.

It was hard work to get the sugar-house in order to take off the crop, greatly diminished though it was. Weeks passed before we were again even moderately comfortable in the house. By and by the water-logged trunks, the contents of drawers, and the soaked shoes, after long exposure to the sun, dried, but the musty odor of mold never seemed to depart from them. All the creeping things of the earth, and the flying things that live in dark places, came upon us like a plague. Ants and curious little split-tailed bugs swarmed by thousands, and the floor was often marked with the black streak of the one battalion, or the glittering yellow line of the other. Centipeds started from under every pillow, and big-bodied spiders, with long, hairy legs, ran from among the damp books, while the mosquitoes, that were always with us, became more vo-

racious and tormenting than ever. Cunning little lizards, the least objectionable of all our reptile visitors, darted about with their pretty emerald coats and shining black eyes, and the glorious *cucullos*, with blazing lanterns on their heads, flew in and out the open windows, when the shades of night revealed the brilliancy of their tiny lamps.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DULLNESS—ISOLATION—WEARINESS—CUBA, FAREWELL!

A CUBAN life is intolerably monotonous to one who has always known activity and enterprise. In the cities there are amusements and distractions, though of a very insipid and languid nature, but in the country the dullness is oppressive. We wearied of the eternal soft, mild air; the never-varying green of the landscape; the perpetual equable temperature that made the thinnest linen comfortable—the seasons only varied by dry and wet—the dry very dry and dusty, and the wet—very wet and muddy. The country roads are so narrow that the constant travel with loaded ox-teams all winter cuts them into deep ruts, and the summer rain soon makes them well-nigh impassable. A climate like this palls upon one who has been accustomed to the variations of the temperate zone. Unchanging verdure is like the everlasting, simpering smile on a pretty woman's face—so constant as to become meaningless and insipid.

We wearied of the senseless platitudes of our few visitors, and of the foreign tongue, that, with all its

smoothly flowing euphony, could never be to our ears as sweet as the voices of our fatherland. In our isolation, every new book, magazine article, or newspaper topic, started a discussion that enlivened the table at meals from one steamer-day to the next; and even a quaint advertisement was commented upon, giving food for thought and speech other than the details of the plantation, that were becoming so tiresome and threadbare.

As Ellie and I could not spend all our leisure in reading—neither of us being particularly literary or studious—the wonderfully brilliant heavens offered attractive astronomical research, and with the aid of an odd volume of Dick's "System"—the only book on the subject we had, and a good field-glass—we were quite successful in locating the position of stars and constellations, many of which are not visible in more northern latitudes.

We had very little fancy-work. No Berlin wools work was needed in that climate, so the materials were not procurable. The laborious drawing of thread-in fine linen and embroidering over the drawn places in delicate, cobwebby designs, so intricate that it makes one's eyes ache to look at them, had no charms for us, though it was the favorite occupation of Cuban señoras. We embroidered conventional morning-glories and wheat on pillow-shams; scalloped flounces and dress-waists, and made yards upon yards of sense-

less tatting, till we wearied with the work. Sewing-thread could be had in abundance, and our busy fingers produced wonderful tidies and spreads, for which we had no use. There remains in my possession a round-table cover, five yards in circumference, crocheted in Spanish sewing-thread—the center an elaborate arrangement of pansies and fuchias, the border enlivened by forty performing monkeys in the midst of acrobatic feats. This pure white spread is not only valuable as a memento of a dull summer's occupation, but an ingenious specimen of handiwork accomplished with scarcely an outline of instruction or pattern. Improvising a design to widen from a center to a periphery of sixteen feet, though by no means a slight undertaking, is diminutive compared with successful execution of the work.

Martha had time to "take in" sewing, and Ellie and I amused ourselves by designing—even frequently helping in the work itself—*tombo* dresses for the African belles on the plantation. Any new occupation that presented itself was eagerly welcomed. Zell brought us, from the swamps in the rear of the marquis's place, quantities of palmetto, which we bleached in the sun, split into suitable widths, and braided into hats, pressing the crowns into *shape* by ironing them over a perfectly *round* tin pail! Soon every one had a brand-new palmetto hat, which a few showers ruined.

Henry, who, with the keen perception of boyhood,

saw so much in his out-door life which brightened and cheered us, and whose incoming always brought a breath of fresh air—was gone. The daily duty of hearing him recite lessons amid countless interruptions that at the time were so trying, was sadly missed now. His father walked in and out of the rooms with a weary, listless air, missing the boy at every turn; while Ellie ceased to care for the early morning rides which they had so often enjoyed together.

Life was becoming a burden: we were wearying and losing heart; it was not occupation we needed, it was recreation, but the only change available in our dull lives was change of work. Ellie offered to teach Zell and Martha to read, but Zell "low'd. half dese here white folks can't read; I'se no time fur *dictionary* work. While I'se settin' down readin', who's waitin' on Lamo and 'terpretin' fur him?" The faithful soul, now that "little Mars Henry" was gone, followed Lamo around, hoping to cheer and assist him in the varied occupations of the day. Martha was more easily persuaded, but she was rather dull, and at the end of a winter's schooling, coming up every night with her book, had only advanced to words with two syllables. So the experiment was not very encouraging.

Finding Zell, now twenty years old, was casting amorous glances at a dusky Maud Muller, who raked cane in the field, I suggested that, if he contemplated

marriage, it would be well to open a bank account, for he was inclined to be extravagant with his money. Martha, whose opportunities to spend her earnings were limited to an occasional visit with me to Havana, also brought up her little savings. In return I gave to each a note bearing ten per cent. interest. From time to time they were encouraged in adding to the amount; and when, at the end of the first year, the notes with accrued interest were renewed, and they understood how the money "grow'd," they became enthusiastic capitalists.

Notwithstanding our heroic efforts to amuse and divert the mind with something to relieve us of the tiresome and busy routine of work, we found in time that a radical change was imperatively necessary, first to one, then to another, of the brave little household. Ellie, who had so lovingly and unselfishly shared my burden and lightened my cares, went home to her mother and remained several months. I had made various short and rapid trips to New York, which were exceedingly refreshing. Lamo, who felt his presence absolutely necessary at Desengafio, as indeed it was, valiantly staid year after year at his post, until his step began to falter, a paleness overspread his once ruddy countenance, a tired, dull look crept into his eye, and the faint smile that replaced his old cheery laugh, warned us there was a limit to the endurance of even the bravest spirit. When I spoke firmly and deter-

minedly of a trip to the United States, insisted upon the (somewhat imaginary) business that needed his personal attention, and urged that the storm had so reduced the crop that it could easily be harvested without his aid, I think he realized that a still stronger motive was hidden in the proposition, and that his overtaxed mind and body demanded an entire change of climate. Deeply regretting the urgency of the step, he could no longer hesitate; and one of the bravest acts of an unselfish life was, turning his back on Desengallo for a whole six months, and leaving me there. Henry's departure had already sundered one of the ties that bound us to the Cuban home that the boy loved so well. It was easy for us to break away after that. A few years later we left the island forever.

During the latter years of our residence, and those that immediately followed, military exactions and ruinous taxation crushed the life out of Cuba.

The gradual emancipation of slaves was enforced, the importation of coolies prohibited, and, as an inevitable sequence, an untold number of valuable estates were abandoned by their impoverished owners, thereby revolutionizing the entire financial and domestic status of the island.

Brito's beautiful plantation, notwithstanding the rare administrative ability of its owner, is to-day a forsaken wilderness; and the once genial, whole-souled

Don José, now broken-hearted, walks dejectedly the roads he erst traveled in such magnificent state.

The buildings of the "Josefita" were destroyed by fire; the family wealth taxed out of existence; Don Pancho, who was so attentive to Ellie, and such a kindly neighbor, dead of gout; the family all impoverished and scattered, and the hospitable old Cuban home wiped off the face of the earth. All the prancing steeds were seized by the Spaniards on the one side or the insurgents on the other; no cattle left for the *boyero* to care for, or labor for the *mayoral* to superintend; no engine for the sturdy Scotch engineer to run—all gone—and little else than a waste of weeds and choked cane left to indicate the spot where, little more than a decade ago, stood a magnificently equipped and managed sugar estate! If Spain had ravaged her "siempre fiel Isla de Cuba" with fire and pestilence, the destruction could scarcely have been more rapid and complete.

That superb province, whose natural resources are almost inexhaustible, has been bled to death by the leeches and parasites to whom her welfare and government were intrusted.

Zell, having already formed the strongest of ties, decided to remain at Desengaño, with his wife and children, even after it had passed into other hands. Through Mr. Hall, our consul-general in Cuba, he was furnished with all the necessary papers of United

States citizenship. After assisting him in making a favorable contract for work with the new owner of the plantation, in the same capacity as in the past, viz., *mandadero* (messenger), we paid him several hundred dollars, the accumulated amount of his savings. Year after year we received letters from him, written in Spanish by some plantation employé, giving all the neighborhood news of interest, and messages from the Chinese and negroes, among whom we had lived and labored almost ten years—invariably subscribing himself “Your devoted and faithful *slave*.” *Serviente* was the conventional phrase used from equal to equal, and may not have appeared expressive enough to suit Zell, so it was *esclavo* (*slave*). One day a mourning letter came to Henry. Zell was dead! congestion or fever, it mattered little—Zell was dead! Bitter tears we wept over that black-bordered letter, the last one we ever received from Desengañio. Faithful friend—not slave!

Martha returned to the United States with us, and, when she married, her savings were found sufficient to purchase a lot and pay for the building of a comfortable house in Virginia, near enough for us to see her almost every year, when she could take our daughter, already taller and larger than herself, in her loving arms, and call her “my Mexican baby.”

Now that tender, faithful soul, who ministered to our comfort, not as slave but helpful companion

during those trying years, has gone "where change shall come not till all change end"—thus severing one of the few remaining links that bound us to the old, old life.

THE END.

