

Our Little Mexican Twins, Cuban and Puerto Rican Cousins

VOLUME TWENTY

LUCY FITCH PERKINS
MARY HAZELTON WADE

Our Little Mexican Twins, Cuban and Puerto Rican Cousins

Volume 20

Lucy Fitch Perkins
Mary Hazelton Wade

Libraries of Hope

Our Little Mexican Twins,
Cuban and Puerto Rican Cousin

Volume 20

Copyright © 2021 by Libraries of Hope, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher. International rights and foreign translations available only through permission of the publisher.

The Mexican Twins, by Lucy Fitch Perkins. (Original copyright 1915).

Our Little Cuban Cousin, by Mary Hazelton Wade. (Original copyright 1902).

Our Little Porto Rican Cousin, by Mary Hazelton Wade. (Original copyright 1906).

Cover Image: Landscape of San Cristobal Romita, by Luis Coto (1857). In public domain, source Wikimedia Commons.

Libraries of Hope, Inc.
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

Website www.librariesofhope.com
Email: librariesofhope@gmail.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

The Mexican Twins 1

The Mexican Twins 7

San Ramon's Day in the Morning 11

The Blessing 23

The Party 46

Tonio's Bad Day 57

Judas Iscariot Day 82

The Adventure 103

While They Were Gone 116

The Secret Meeting 124

Christmas at the Hacienda 149

Our Little Cuban Cousin 173

Preface 175

Danger 177

The Picnic 183

Legends 194

Next-Door Neighbors 200
Sugar 208
The Quarters 215
Home Again 221
Startling News 224
First Years in the New World 231
The Merrimac 239
Victory 246
Havana 252
Our Little Porto Rican Cousin 261
Preface 263
Manuel 266
Dolores 272
Lessons 278
Through the Woods 283
The Coffee-Tree 289
Songs and Stories 293
A Cruel Sport 302

Early Times..... 307

The Caribs..... 312

A Seaside Picnic..... 316

The Wonderful Cave 325

The Hurricane..... 332

The New Baby..... 337

The City 341

The Mexican Twins

Lucy Fitch Perkins
Illustrated by Lucy Fitch Perkins





To American Children and
their friends of all nations.









The Mexican Twins

This is a picture of Antonio Francisco Gomez[1] *and his twin sister, Margarita Teresa Gomez.*

They live on the great hacienda[2]*, or plantation, of Señor Fernandez*[3]*, in the wonderful country of Mexico, and they are eight years old.*

The boy is named Antonio for Saint Antonio and Francisco for his father, and the girl is named Margarita for Saint Margarita and Teresa for her mother.

But nobody ever thinks of calling the Twins by all these names. They are called just Tonio and Tita, to save time.

Even their father isn't called by his long name! Everybody calls him Pancho[4]*—that is, everybody but the Twins, of course.*

Their mother isn't called anything at all for short. She is

---

[1] Pronounced Gō´mess.
[2] Ah-sĭ-en´dah.
[3] Fer-nahn´dess.
[4] Pahn´cho.

always called Doña Teresa[5]*. I do not know why this is, unless perhaps it is because she can make better tortillas, and chicken mole, and candied sweet potatoes than anyone else on the whole hacienda.*

Pancho is a vaquero, or cowboy.

There are hundreds of cows and oxen and sheep and goats on Señor Fernandez's hacienda, and all day long, every day, Pancho rides about on his horse Pinto, rounding up cattle, driving the cows to pasture after milking, or getting the oxen together for the plowing.

The Twins think it is a fine thing to be a vaquero and ride horseback all the time.

Tonio means to be one when he grows up. He practices riding on Tonto, the donkey, now, and he has had his own lasso since he was six.

If you will turn the page you will find a picture of the little adobe hut where Tonio and Tita and Pancho and Doña Teresa live. Pancho isn't in the picture, because he and Pinto are away in the fields, but Doña Teresa is there grinding her corn, and Tita is feeding the chickens, while Tonio plays with his dog,

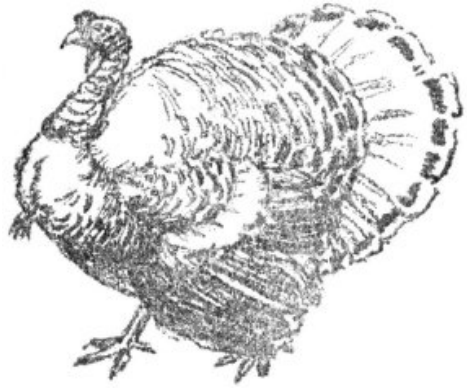
[5] Dōn′ya Tay-ray-sa.

Jasmin[6].

Tonio is looking out from the shed at the end of the hut. Tita's cat is on the roof. She is almost always on the roof when Jasmin is about.

Beside the hut is a fig tree, which bears the most delicious figs. Every night the red rooster, the five hens, and the turkey go to roost in its branches, and every day its green boughs make a pleasant shade across the dooryard.

Back of the hut there is a tiny garden with beehives, and beyond that there is a path through the woods that leads down to a little river. It was in this very path, just where the stepping-stones cross the river, that Tonio met—But there! it tells all about that in the story and you can read it for yourselves.



[6] Hahss-meen′.



CHAPTER I

San Ramon's Day in the Morning

I

One summer morning the red rooster on his perch in the fig tree woke up and took a look at the sky.

He was a very responsible rooster. He was always the first one up in the morning, and I really think he believed that if it were not for him the sun himself would forget to rise.

It was so very early that a few stars still shone, and a pale moon was sailing away toward the west. Over the eastern hills the rooster saw a pink cloud, and knew at once that it was time to wake the world. He stood up and stretched his wings. Then he crowed so long and loud that he nearly fell off his perch backward, on to the cat, who was sleeping on the roof just below.

"Cock a doodle do-o-o!" he screamed. "I'm awake, are

you-oo-oo?"

At least that is the way it must have sounded to all the other roosters in the little village, for they began at once to answer him.

"Cock a doodle doo-oo, we're up as soon as you-oo," they cried; and soon there was such a chorus of them calling back and forth that the five hens woke up, one after another, and flew down from the perch, to hunt bugs for their breakfast.

Last of all the turkey opened his eyes and flapped heavily to the ground, gobbling all the way.

The cat stretched herself and sprang from the roof to the fig tree and sharpened her claws on its bark.

The birds began to sing, and still there was no sound from the tiny gray adobe house under the fig tree.

The little white hen tiptoed round to the front of the hut and peeped in at the open door. There in one corner of their one room lay Tonio and Tita and their father and mother, all sound asleep.

The little white hen must have told the red rooster what she saw, for he followed her and looked into the hut too.

Then he ruffled his neck feathers, flapped his wings, and crowed so loudly that Pancho and Doña Teresa and the twins all woke at once and sat up with a bounce, to see what was the matter.

It startled the little white hen to see them all sit up suddenly in a row, so she squawked and scrambled out through the open door as fast as she could go.

The red rooster ran too, and the two of them never stopped until they disappeared behind the beehives in the garden.

II

The moment she was really awake, Doña Teresa began to talk.

"Upon my soul!" she cried, crossing herself, "the red rooster gave me a dreadful turn. I was just in the midst of a most beautiful dream! But now he has driven it all out of my head with his silly noise, and I cannot even remember what it was about!"

Doña Teresa rose, and while she talked she deftly rolled up the mat on which she had slept and stood it on end in the corner of the room. You see it didn't take any time at

all to dress, because they always slept with their clothes on. But Doña Teresa was very particular about one thing. She made them all wash their faces and hands the very first thing every single morning!

For a wash-basin there was a part of a log, hollowed out



like a trough. Beside the hollow log there was a large red olla, with a gourd in it. Pancho had dipped water from the olla into the trough and was already splashing about, while Doña Teresa rolled the twins off on to the floor and placed their mats in the corner with the others.

"Come, my pigeons," she said to them, "it is time to be stirring. We are very lazy to lie in bed after cockcrow on San Ramon's[7] Day!"

"Oh, Little Mother," cried Tita, picking herself up, "is it really the fiesta of San Ramon? And may I take the little white hen to be blessed, all myself?"

"You may take the little white hen if you can catch her," Doña Teresa answered. "Indeed, we must take all the animals, or at the very least one of each kind to stand for all the others. The turkey must be caught, and the goat must be brought from the field so I can milk her. Tonto [that was what they called the donkey] is waiting in the shed to be made ready, not to speak of the cat and dog! Bless my soul, how many things there are to be done!"

While his mother talked, Tonio had taken his lasso

[7] Pronounced Sahn Rah-mon′.

down from the nail where it hung, and was just quietly slipping out of the door with it, when Doña Teresa saw him. "Here you—Tonio," she cried, "come back and wash yourself!"

"Can't I wait until I've caught Pinto?" Tonio begged. "What's the use of washing? You only get dirty again. Lots of the boys don't wash at all except on Sunday."

"Come right back and wash yourself this minute," commanded Doña Teresa. "You might as well say it's no use to eat your breakfast because you'll be hungry again right away! As long as I'm your mother you shall begin the day right at least."

Tonio groaned a little, and came back to the trough. There he did something that he called washing, though I feel quite sure that there were corners behind his ears that were not even wet!

On the wall above the place where the sleeping mats had been spread, there was a picture of the Virgin and Child, and Doña Teresa kept a little taper always burning before the picture.

When they had all washed, Doña Teresa called Pancho



and the twins to her side, and all four knelt in a row before the picture, crossed themselves, and murmured a little prayer.

"If you want the day to go right," said Doña Teresa as she rose from her knees, "always begin with saying your prayers and washing your face. And now, Tonio, run and catch Pinto for your father while I get his breakfast, for the

cows must be rounded up for milking even if it is San Ramon's Day; and Tita, you take the little red olla and go for water!"

III

While the twins were gone on these errands, Pancho fed the donkey, and Doña Teresa made the fire in her queer little stove; only she didn't call it a stove—she called it a *brasero*.[8] It was a sort of box built up of clay and stones. The brasero stood in analcove, and beside it was a large red olla, which Doña Teresa kept filled with water for her cooking.



[8] Brah-say'ro.

Beyond the brasero was a cupboard for the dishes.

Doña Teresa knelt before the brasero and pulled out the ashes of yesterday's fire. Then she put in some little sticks, lighted them, and set a flat red dish on top of the brasero over the tiny flames.

In the corner of the room there was a pretty basket covered with a white drawn-work napkin. Doña Teresa turned back the napkin and counted out ten flat cakes, made of corn meal. They were yesterday's tortillas. These she put in the dish to heat.

When they were warm, she brought some of them to Pancho, with a dish of beans and red chile sauce. Pancho sat down on a flat stone under the fig tree to eat his breakfast. He had no knife or fork or spoon, but he really did not need them, for he tore the tortillas into wedge-shaped pieces and scooped up the beans and chile sauce with them, and ate scoop, beans, chile sauce, and all in onemouthful. The chile sauce was so hot with red pepper that you would have thought that Pancho must have had a tin throat in order to swallow it at all; but he was used to it, and never even winked his eyes when it went down. Just as he was

taking the last bite of the last tortilla, Tonio came back, leading Pinto by the rope of his lasso.

Tonio was very proud of catching Pinto and bringing him back to his father all by himself. He even put the saddle on. But the moment he felt the saddle-girth around him Pinto swelled up like everything, so that Tonio couldn't buckle it! Tonio pulled and tugged until he was red in the face, but Pinto just stood still with his ears turned back, and stayed swelled.

Then Pancho came up. He took hold of the strap, braced his knee against Pinto's side, and pulled.

Pinto knew it was no use holding his breath any longer, so he let go, and in a minute Pancho had the strap securely fastened and had vaulted into the saddle.

He was just starting away, when Doña Teresa came running out of the hut with something in her hand. "Here's a bite of lunch for you," she said, "in case you get hungry in the field. There's beans and chile sauce and four tortillas."

She had put it all nicely in a little dish with the tortillas fitted in like a cover over the chile sauce and beans, and it was all tied up in a clean white cloth.



Pancho took off his sombrero, put the dish carefully on his head, and clapped his hat down over it. The hat was large, and the dish just fitted the crown, so it seemed quite safe. Then he galloped off, looking very grand and gay, with his red serape flying out behind him.

When he was out of sight, Doña Teresa and the twins had their breakfasts too, sitting on the stones under the fig tree.



CHAPTER II

The Blessing

I

When breakfast was over you could tell by the long, long shadow of the fig tree that it was still very early in the morning. On sunny days Doña Teresa could tell the time almost exactly by its shadow, but on rainy days she just had to guess, because there was no clock in her little cabin.

It was lucky that it was so early, because there were so many things to be done. The twins and their mother were not the only busy people about, however, for there were two hundred other peons beside Pancho who worked on the hacienda, and each one had a little cabin where he lived with his family.

There were other vaqueros besides Pancho. There were ploughmen, and farmers, and water-carriers, and servants for the great white house where Señor Fernandez lived with



his wife and pretty daughter Carmen. And there was the gatekeeper, José,[9] whom the twins loved because he knew the most wonderful stories and was always willing to tell them.

There were field-workers, and wood-cutters, and even fishermen. The huts where they all lived were huddled together like a little village, and the village, and the country for miles and miles around, and the big house, and the little chapel beside it, and the schoolhouse, and everything else on that great hacienda, belonged to Señor Fernandez.

It almost seemed as if the workers all belonged to Señor Fernandez, too, for they had to do just what he told them to, and there was no other place for them to go and nothing else for them to do if they had wanted ever so much to change.

All the people, big and little, loved the fiesta of San Ramon. They thought the priest's blessing would cause the hens to lay more eggs, and the cows to give more milk, and that it would keep all the creatures well and strong.

Though it was a feast day, most of the men had gone

[9] Hō-sā′.

away from their homes early, when Pancho did; but the women and children in all the little cabins were busy as bees, getting themselves and their animals ready to go in procession to the place where the priest was to bless them.

As soon as breakfast was eaten, Doña Teresa said to Tonio: "Go now, my Tonio, and make Tonto beautiful! His coat is rough and full of burs, and he will make a very poor figure to show the priest unless you give him a good brushing. Only be careful of his hind legs. You know Tonto is sometimes very wild with his hind legs. It is strange to me that his front ones should be so much more tame, but it seems to be the nature of the poor creature."

Tonio went to Tonto's shed and brought him out and tied him to a tree. Then he brushed his coat and took out the burs, and braided the end of his tail, and even made a wreath of green leaves and hung it over his left ear. And Tonto seemed to know that it was San Ramon's Day, for he never kicked at all, and brayed only once, when Tonio pulled a very large bur out of his ear.



II

While Tonio was making Tonto beautiful, Tita swept the ground under the fig tree and sprinkled it with water, and washed and put away the few dishes they had used.

Her mother was very busy meanwhile, grinding the corn for tortillas. You see, every single meal they had tortillas. It was their bread, and their meat too, most of the time, so it

would never do to miss getting the corn ground, not even if it were the greatest feast day of the whole year.

When Tita had finished putting things in order, her mother said to her, "Now, my pigeon, see if you can't catch the little white hen, and the red rooster, and the turkey. The red rooster crows so sweetly I shall miss him when he is put in the pot, but he is not long for this world! He is so greedy there's no satisfying him with food. He has no usefulness at all, except to wake us in the morning.

"But the little white hen now! There is the useful one! She has already begun to lay. She must surely go to the priest. And as for the turkey, he needs to go for the sake of his temper! I hope the *padrecito* will lay a spell on him to stop his gobbling from morning till night. It will be no grief to me when he is put on to boil."

The red rooster, the hen, and the turkey were all wandering round in the little patch of garden behind the house, when Tita came out, rattling some corn in a dish.

The red rooster began to run the moment he heard corn rattle, and he called to the hens to come too. He seemed to think they wouldn't know enough even to eat corn unless

he advised them to.

They swarmed around Tita's feet, pecking at each other and snatching greedily at each kernel as it fell.

"You all need to go to the priest for your manners," Tita said to them severely. "You behave like the pigs."

She set the dish down on the ground, and when they all tried to get their heads into it at once, she picked out the legs of the red rooster and seized them with one hand, and those of the little white hen with the other, and before they could guess what in the world was happening to them she had them safely in the house, where she tied them to the legs of the table.

III

When Tita went back after the turkey, she found him eating the very last kernels of corn out of the dish. He had driven all the hens away and was having a very nice time by himself. Tita made a grab for his legs, but he was too quick for her. He flew up into the fig tree and from there to the roof. Tita looked up at him anxiously.

"Don't you think you ought to get blessed?" she said. "Come down now, that's a good old gobbler! Mother says

your temper is so bad you must surely go to the priest, and how can I take you if you won't come down?"

"Gobble," said the turkey, and stayed where he was.

Tita was in despair. She threw a stick at him, but he only walked up the thatched roof with his toes turned in, and



sat down on the ridge-pole.

Just then Tita looked down the river path, and there was Tonio coming with the goat! At least he was trying to, but the goat didn't seem to care any more about being blessed than the turkey did. She was standing with her four feet braced, pulling back with all her might, while Tonio pulled forward on the lasso which was looped over her horns.

Tonio looked very angry. He called to Tita, "Come here and help me with this fool of a goat! I believe the devil himself has got into her! She has acted just like this all the way from the pasture!"

Tita ran down the path and got behind the goat. She pushed and Tonio pulled, and by and by they got her as far as the fig tree. Then they tied her to a branch, and while Doña Teresa milked her, the twins went after the turkey again.

Tonio had practiced lassoing bushes and stumps and pigs and chickens and even Tita herself, ever since he could remember, and you may be sure no turkey could get the best of him. He stood down in the yard and whirled his lasso in great circles round his head, and then all of a sudden the

loop flew into the air and dropped right over the turkey on the ridge-pole, and tightened around his legs!

If he hadn't had wings the turkey certainly would have tumbled off the roof. As it was, he spread his wings and flopped down, and Tita took him into the cabin and tied him to the third leg of the table. There he made himself very disagreeable to the little white hen, and gobbled angrily at the red rooster, and even pecked at Tita herself when she came near.

"There!" sighed Doña Teresa, when the turkey was safely tied; "at last we have them all together. Now we will make them all gay."

She went to the chest which held all their precious things, took out three rolls of tissue paper, and held them up for the twins to see. One was green, one was white, and one was red.

"Look," said she. "These are all Mexican animals, so I thought it would be nice for them to wear the Mexican colors. Come, my angels, and I will show you how to make wreaths and streamers and fringes and flowers for them to wear. Our creatures must not shame us by looking shabby



and dull in the procession. They shall be as gay as the best of them."

For a long time they all three worked, and when they had made enough decorations for all the animals, Doña Teresa brought out another surprise. It was some gilt paint and a brush! She let Tonio gild the goat's horns and hoofs, and Tita gilded the legs and feet of the little white hen.

While she was doing it, the red rooster stuck his bill into the dish and swallowed two great big bites of gold paint on his own account! Doña Teresa saw him do it.

"If he isn't trying to gild himself on the inside!" she cried. "Did you ever see such sinful pride!" And then she made him swallow a large piece of red pepper because she

was afraid the paint would disagree with him.

The red rooster seemed depressed for a long time after that; but whether it was because of the paint, or the pepper, or being so awfully dressed up, I cannot say. His bill was gilded because he had dipped it in the gold paint, so they gilded his legs to match. Then they tied a white tissue-paper wreath with long streamers around his neck. They tied a red one on the little white hen. They tried to decorate the turkey, too, but he was in no mood for it, and gobbled and pecked at them so savagely that Doña Teresa had to tie up his head in a rag!

They stuck some red tissue-paper flowers in Tonto's wreath, and tied red tissue-paper streamers to the goat's horns. They put a green ruff around the cat's neck, and a red one on the dog; but the dog ran at once to the river and waded in and got it all wet, and the color ran out and dyed his coat, and the ruff fell off, before they were even ready to start.

IV

At last a gong sounded from the big house.

The gong was the signal for the procession to start, and

the moment they heard it, the people began pouring out of their cabins, and getting their animals together to drive toward the place where the blessing was to be.

Doña Teresa and Tita threw their *rebozos* over their heads, and Tonio put on his sombrero. Then Doña Teresa untied the turkey's legs and took him in her arms; and though his head was still tied in the cloth, he gobbled like everything.

Tita took the little white hen on one arm, and her kitten on the other, and Tonio led the donkey, with Jasmin following behind.

They were all ready to start, when Doña Teresa cried out, "Upon my soul! We nearly forgot the goat! Surely she's needing a blessing as much as the worst of them."

She hurried back to the fig tree and untied the goat with one hand, because she was still carrying the turkey with the other. When the goat felt herself free, she gave a great jump and nearly jerked the rope out of Doña Teresa's hand; then she went galloping toward the gate so fast that poor Doña Teresa was all out of breath keeping up with her.

"Bless my soul, but that goat goes gayly!" she panted, as

she joined the twins at the gate. "If I led her about much I should have no chance to get fat."

Already there were crowds of people and animals going by. It was a wonderful procession. There were horses and cows all gayly decorated with garlands and colored streamers. There were donkeys and pigs and guinea-fowls and cats and dogs and birds in cages, and so many other creatures that it looked very much like the procession of animals going into Noah's ark.

Doña Josefa, who lived in a hut near the river, was driving two ducks and two white geese—only she had dyed the geese a bright purple—and José's wife had painted stripes of red clear around her pig. She was having a dreadful time keeping the pig in the road, for all the little boys, and all the little dogs—and there were a great many of both—frisked and gamboled around the procession and got in the way, and made such a noise that it is no wonder the creatures were distracted and tried to run away.

V

It was not a very great distance to the large corrals back of the big house where the people were to meet, and as they



drew near the grounds Tonio and Tita could see Pancho dashing about on Pinto after stray cows, and other cowboys rounding up the calves and putting them in a corral by themselves.

The bulls were already safely shut away in another enclosure, and all the open space around the corrals was filled with horses, and donkeys, and sheep, and goats, and

dogs, and cats, and fowls of all kinds, all dressed in such gay colors and making such a medley of sounds that the Fourth of July, fire-crackers and all, would have seemed like Sunday afternoon beside the celebration of San Ramon's Day in Mexico.



Señor Fernandez, looking very grand in his black velvet suit and big sombrero, sat on his fine horse and watched the scene. Beside him, on their own horses, were Doña Paula, his wife, and pretty Carmen, their daughter.

The servants of the big house were grouped around them, and all the rest of the people passed back and forth

among the animals, trying to make them keep still and behave themselves until the priest should appear.

It was not long before the priest came out of his house, with a small boy beside him carrying a basin of holy water.

Doña Teresa and all the people knelt on the ground when they saw him coming. The priest walked among them chanting a prayer and sprinkling drops of holy water over the animals and over the people too. Of course the people behaved very well, but I am sorry to have to tell you that when he felt the drops of water fall on the rag that his head was tied up in, the turkey gobbled just exactly as if it were Tita—or Doña Teresa—instead of the priest!

And the cat stuck up her tail and arched her back, in a most impolite way. Perhaps that was not to be wondered at, because we all know that cats can never bear water, not even holy water.

But when Tonto, who should have known better, and who was used to being out in the rain even, stuck his nose up in the air and let out a "hee-haw, hee-haw" that set every other donkey in the crowd hee-hawing too, Doña Teresa felt as if she should die of mortification.

Only the red rooster, the little white hen, the goat, and the twins behaved as if they had had any bringing up at all! However, the priest didn't seem to mind it. He went in and out among the people, sprinkling the water and chanting his prayer until the basin was empty. Then he pronounced the blessing.

VI

When he had finished, the people drove their creatures back to their homes, or to the fields.

Pancho came riding along and took Tita and the white hen up on Pinto's back with him. Tonio rode Tonto and carried the rooster. Tita had to put the cat down to get up on the horse, and when Tonio's dog saw her he barked at her, and she ran just as fast as she could and got to the cabin and up on the roof out of reach.

Doña Teresa walked along with Doña Josefa, and talked with her about her rheumatism and about how badly the animals behaved, and how handsome Doña Josefa's purple geese were, until she turned in at their own gate.

When she was in their own yard once more, she set the turkey down and untied his head. Tonio let the rooster go,

and Tita set the little white hen free, and they all three ran under Tonto's shed as if they were afraid they might get blessed again if they stayed where they could easily be caught. And they never came out until they had torn the tissue paper all to pieces and left it lying on the ground.

Tonio got the goat back to pasture by walking in front of her, holding a carrot just out of reach, and Pancho took Pinto and the donkey down to the river for a drink, while Tita and her mother went into the cabin to get the second breakfast ready. When people get up so very early they need two breakfasts.

Doña Teresa was just patting the meal into cakes with her hands and cooking them over the brasero, when Pancho came in the cabin door with dreadful red streams running down his head and face and over his white cotton clothes!

When Doña Teresa saw him, she screamed and flew to his side. "What is it, my Pancho?" she cried. "You are hurt —you are killed, my angel! Oh, what has happened?"

She asked so many questions and poured out so many words that Pancho couldn't get one in edgewise; so he just



took off his hat, and there was the dish of chile sauce and tortillas broken all to bits, and the chile sauce spilled all over his face and clothes!

"It was that foolish Tonto that did it," he said, when he could say anything at all. "I was just putting him back in his shed when he cried, 'Hee-haw,' and let fly with both hind feet at once and one of them just grazed my head, and broke

the dish."

Doña Teresa sat down heavily with her hand on her heart. "If anything had happened to you, my rose, my angel," she said, "I should have died of sorrow! Tonto is indeed a very careless beast. It would seem as if the padrecito's blessing might have put more sense into him. It must be the will of God that there should be a great deal of foolishness in the world, but without doubt donkeys and goats have more than their share."

Just then she smelled the tortillas burning and ran back to attend to them, while Pancho washed himself at the trough, and mopped the chile sauce off his clothes.

In a little while the twins and their father and mother were all sitting about on the stones under the fig tree, eating their second breakfast. And when they had all had every bit they could hold, it was almost noon.





CHAPTER III

The Party

I

Early that evening, when Pancho had rounded up the cows and taken them back again to pasture, and the goat had been milked, the animals fed, and supper eaten and cleared away, the twins and their father and mother sat down together outside their cabin door.

The moon had risen and was shining so brightly that it made beautiful patterned shadows under the fig tree. There were pleasant evening sounds all about. Sometimes it was the hoot of an owl or the chirp of a cricket, but oftener it was the sound of laughter and of children's voices from the huts nearby.

The red rooster, the turkey, and the hens were all asleep in the fig tree. Tita could see their bunchy shadows among the shadows of the leaves. The cat was away hunting for

field-mice. Jasmin sat beside Tonio, with his tongue hanging out, and everything was very quiet and peaceful.

Then suddenly, quite far away, they heard a faint tinkling sound. "Ting-a-ling-ling; ting-a-ling-ling," it went, and then there was a voice singing:

"Crown of the high hill
That with your cool shadow
Gives me life,
Where is my beloved?
Oh, beautiful hill,
Where dwells my love?
If I am sleeping,
I'm dreaming of thee;
If I am waking, thee only I see."

The voice came nearer and nearer, and children's voices began to join in the singing, and soon Tonio and Tita could see dark forms moving in the moonlight. There was one tall figure, and swarming around it there were ever so many short ones.

"It's José with his guitar!" cried the twins, and they flew out to meet him. Doña Teresa and Pancho came too.

"God give you good evening," they all cried out to each other when they met; and then José said, "Have you plenty of sweet potatoes, Doña Teresa? We have come with our dishes and our pennies."

"Yes," laughed Doña Teresa. "I thought you might come tonight and I knew your sweet tooth, José! And all these little ones, have they each got a sweet tooth too?"

"Oh yes, Doña Teresa, *please* cook us some sweet potatoes, won't you?" the children begged. They held up their empty dishes.

"Well, then, come in, all of you," said Doña Teresa, "and I will see what I can do."

She hurried back to the cabin. Pancho went with her, and José and the twins and all the other children came trooping after them and swarmed around the cabin door.

Pancho made a little brasero right in the middle of the open space beside the fig tree. He made it of stones, and built a fire in it. While he was doing that, Doña Teresa got her sweet potatoes ready to cook, and when she came out



with the cooking-dish and a jug of syrup in her hands, the children set up a shout of joy.

"Now sit down, all of you," commanded Doña Teresa, as she knelt beside the brasero and poured the syrup into the cooking-pan, "It will take some time to cook enough for everyone, and if you are in too much of a hurry you may burn your fingers and your tongue. José, you tell us a story while we are waiting."

So they all sat down in a circle around Doña Teresa with José opposite her, and the fire flickered in the brasero, and lighted up all the eager brown faces and all the bright black eyes, as they watched Doña Teresa's cooking-pan.

II

Then José told the story of Br'er Rabbit and the Tar Baby; and after that he told how Br'er Rabbit made a riding-horse out of Br'er Fox; and when he had finished, the sweet potatoes were ready.

"Who shall have the first piece?" asked Doña Teresa, holding up a nice brown slice.

"José, José," cried all the children.

José took out his penny and gave it to Doña Teresa, and held out his dish. She took up a big piece of sweet potato on the end of a pointed stick. It was almost safely landed in José's dish, when suddenly there was a great flapping of wings and a loud "Cock-a-doodle-doo," right behind José!

The red rooster had opened his eyes, and when he saw the glow of the fire, he thought it must be morning. So he crowed at once, and then flew right down off his perch, and before anyone knew what he was after or could stop him,

he had snatched José's candied sweet potato off the end of Doña Teresa's stick, and was running away with it as fast as he could go!

"Thanks be to God," said José, "that piece was still very hot!"

The red rooster soon found that out for himself. He was so afraid that somebody would get his morsel away from him that he swallowed it whole, boiling hot syrup and all! He thought it was worse than the red pepper and the gold paint he had taken that morning.

He opened his bill wide and squawked with pain, and his eyes looked wild. The children rolled on the ground with laughter. The last they saw of the red rooster he was running to the back of the house, where a dish of water was kept for the chickens; and it is perfectly true that for three days after that he could hardly crow at all!

Doña Teresa was dreadfully ashamed of the red rooster. She apologized and gave José another piece of sweet potato at once, and then she passed out more pieces to the children, and said:—

"Now mind you don't behave like the rooster! You see

what he got for being greedy."

The children sucked their pieces slowly, so as to make them last a long time, and while they got themselves all sticky with syrup, José told them the story of Cinderella and her glass slippers and her pumpkin coach, and two ghost stories.



III

"Where did you learn so many beautiful stories, José?" asked Tonio when he had finished the last one. "Did you read them out of a book?" (You see Tonio and Tita and some of the older children went to school and were beginning to read a little.)

José shook his head. "No," he said, "I didn't read them

out of books. I never had a chance to go to school when I was a boy. I tell you these stories just as they were told to me by my mother when I was as small as you are. And she couldn't read either, so somebody must have told them to her. Not everything comes from books, you see."

"Yes," said Doña Teresa. "I heard them from my mother when I was a child, and she couldn't read any more than Pancho and I can. But with these children here it will be different. They can get stories from you, and out of the books too. It is a great thing to have learning, though a peon can get along with very little of it, praise God."

Up to this time Pancho had not said a single word. He had brought sticks for the fire and had listened silently to the stories; but now he spoke.

"When the peons get enough learning, they will learn not to be peons at all," he said.

"But whatever will they be then?" gasped Doña Teresa. "Surely they must be whatever the good God made them, and if they are born peons—"

She stopped and looked a little alarmed, as if she thought perhaps after all it might be as well for Tonio and

Tita to be like most of the people she knew—quite unable to read or write.

She crossed herself, and snatched Tita to her breast.

"You shall not learn enough to make you fly away from the nest, my bird!" she said.

Then Pancho spoke again. "With girls it does not matter," he said. "Girls do not need to know anything but how to grind corn and make tortillas, and mind the babies—that is what girls are for. But boys—boys will be men and—" But here it seemed to occur to him that perhaps he was saying too much, and he became silent again.

José had listened thoughtfully, and when Pancho finished he sighed a little and made a soft little "ting-ting-a-ting-ting" on his guitar-strings. Then he jumped up and began to sing and dance, playing the guitar all the while. It was a song about the little dwarfs, and the children loved it.

"Oh, how pretty are the dwarfs,
The little ones, the Mexicans!
Out comes the pretty one,

Out comes the ugly one,

Out comes the dwarf with his jacket of skin."

José sang—and every time he came to the words—

"*Out* comes the little one,

Out comes the pretty one,"



he stooped down as he danced and made himself look as much like a dwarf as he possibly could.

When he had finished the Dwarf Song, José tucked his guitar under his arm, and bowed politely to Doña Teresa and Pancho.

"Adios!" he said. "May you rest well."

"Adios, adios!" shouted all the children.

And Pancho and Doña Teresa and the twins replied: "Adios! God give you sweet sleep."

Then José and the children went away, and the tinkle of the guitar grew fainter and fainter in the distance. When they could no longer hear it, Doña Teresa went into the cabin, unrolled the mats, and laid out the pillows, and soon the twins and their father and mother were all sound asleep on their hard beds.

When at last everything was quiet, the red rooster came stepping round from behind the house, and looked at the dying coals of the fire as if he wondered whether they were good to eat. He seemed to think it best not to risk it, however, for he flew up into the fig tree once more and settled himself for the night.

CHAPTER IV
Tonio's Bad Day

I

It is hard for us to understand how they tell what season it is in a country like Mexico, where there is no winter, and no snow except on the tops of high mountains, and where flowers bloom all the year round.

Tonio and Tita can tell pretty well by the way they go to school. During the very hot dry weather of April and May there is vacation. In June, when the rainy season begins, school opens again. Then, though the rain pours down during some part of every day or night, in between times the sky is so blue, and the sunshine so bright, and the air so sweet, that the twins like the rainy season really better than the dry.

If you should pass the open door of their school some day when it is in session, you would hear a perfect Babel of



voices all talking at once and saying such things as this—only they would say them in Spanish instead of English—

"The cat sees the rat. Run, rat, run. Two times six is thirteen, two times seven is fifteen" (I hope you'd know at once that that was wrong). "Mexico is bounded on the north by the United States of America, on the east by the Gulf of Mexico, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, on the

… Cortez conquered Mexico in 1519 and brought the holy Catholic religion to Mexico. The Church is …"

Then perhaps you would clap your hands on your ears and think the whole school had gone crazy, but it would only mean that in Mexico the children all study aloud. The sixth grade is as high as anyone ever goes, and most of them stop at the fourth.

Señor Fernandez thinks that is learning enough for any peon, and as it is his school, and his teacher, and his land, of course things have to be as he says.

Pancho asked the priest about it one day. He said: "I should like to have Tonio get as much learning as he can. Learning must be a great thing. All the rich and powerful people seem to have it. Perhaps that is what makes them rich and powerful."

But the priest shook his head and said, "Tonio needs only to know how to be good, and obey the Church, and to read and write and count a little. More knowledge than that would make him unhappy and discontented with his lot. You do not wish to make him unhappy. Contentment with godliness is great gain. Is it not so, my son?"

The priest called everybody, even Señor Fernandez himself, "my son," unless he was speaking to a girl or a woman, and then he said, "my daughter."

Pancho scratched his head as if he were very much puzzled by a good many things in this world, but he only said, "Yes, little father," very humbly, and went away to mend the gate of the calves' corral.

II

I am not going to tell you very much about the twins' school, because the twins didn't care so very much about it themselves.

But I am going to tell you about one particular day, because that day a great deal happened to Tonio. Some of it wasn't at all pleasant, but you will not be surprised at that when I explain the reason why.

A good many months had passed by since San Ramon's Day, and it was a bright beautiful spring morning, when the twins left their little adobe hut to go to school.

They had to be there at half past eight, and as the schoolhouse was some distance down the road and there were a great many interesting things on the way, they

started rather early.

Doña Teresa gave them two tortillas apiece, rolled up with beans inside, to eat at recess, and Tonio wrapped them in a cloth and carried them in his hat just the way Pancho carried his lunch, only there was no chile sauce, this time. Doña Teresa waved good-bye to them from the trough where she was grinding her corn.

The air was full of the sweet odor of honeysuckle blossoms, and the roadsides were gay with flowers, as the twins walked along. The birds were flying about getting material for their nests, and singing as if they would split their little throats.

Sheep were grazing peacefully in a pasture beside the road, with their lambs gamboling about them. In a field beyond, the goats were leaping up in the air and butting playfully at each other, as if the lovely day made them feel lively too. Calves were bleating in the corrals, and away off on the distant hillside the children could see cows moving about, and an occasional flash of red when a vaquero rode along, his bright serape flying in the sun.

Farther away there were blue, blue mountain-peaks

crowned with glistening snow, and from one of them a faint streak of white smoke rose against the blue of the sky. It was a beautiful morning in a beautiful world where it seemed as if everyone was meant to be happy and good.

The school was not far from the gate where José, the gate-keeper, sat all day, waiting to open and close the gate for cowboys as they drove the cattle through.

The twins stopped to speak to José, and just then on a stone right beside the gate Tonio saw a little green lizard taking a sun bath. He was about six inches long and he looked like a tiny alligator.

Tonio crept up behind him very quietly and as quick as a flash caught him by the tail. Just then the teacher rang the bell, and the twins ran along to join the other children at the schoolhouse door, but not one of them, not even Tita herself, knew that Tonio had that green lizard in his pocket!

Tonio didn't wear any clothes except a thin white cotton suit, and he could feel the lizard squirming round in his pocket. Tonio didn't like tickling, and the lizard tickled like everything.



As they came into the schoolroom, the boys took off their hats and said, "God give you good day," to the Señor Maestro[10]—that is what they called the teacher.

Then they hung their hats on nails in the wall, while the girls curtsied to the teacher and went to their seats.

When they were all in their places and quiet, the Señor

[10] Mah-ĕs′trō.

Maestro stood up in front of the school, and raised his hand. At once all the children knelt down beside their seats. The Maestro knelt too, put his hands together, bowed his head, and said a prayer. He was right in the middle of the prayer when the lizard tickled so awfully in Tonio's pocket that Tonio—I really hate to have to tell it, but facts are facts—Tonio laughed—aloud!

Then he was so scared, and so afraid he would laugh again if the lizard kept on tickling, that he put his hand in his pocket and took it out. Kneeling in front of Tonio was a boy named Pablo, and the bare soles of his feet were turned up in such a way that Tonio just couldn't help dropping the lizard on to them.

The lizard ran right up Pablo's leg, inside his cotton trousers, and Pablo let out a yell like a wild Indian on the warpath, and began to act as if he had gone crazy.

He jumped up and danced about clutching his clothes, and screaming! The Señor Maestro and the children were perfectly amazed. They couldn't think what ailed Pablo until, all of a sudden, the green lizard dropped on the floor out of his sleeve and scuttled as fast as it could toward the



girls' side of the room. Then the girls screamed and stood on their seats until the lizard got out of sight.

Nobody knew where it had gone, until the Señor Maestro suddenly fished it out of a chink in the adobe wall and held it up by the tail.

"Who brought this lizard into the schoolroom?" he asked.

Tonio didn't have to say a word. I don't know how they could be so sure of it, but all the children pointed their fingers at Tonio and said, "He did."

The Maestro said very sternly to Tonio, "Go out to the

willow tree and bring me a strong switch," Tonio went.

He went very slowly and came back with the willow switch more slowly still.

I think you can guess what happened next—I hope you can, for I really cannot bear to tell you about it. When it was over Tonio was sent home, while all the other children sat straight up in their seats, looking so hard at their books that they were almost cross-eyed, and studying their lessons at the top of their lungs.

If you had asked them then, they would every one have



told you that they considered it very wrong to bring lizards to school, and that under no circumstances would they ever think of doing such a thing.

III

Tonio walked slowly down the road toward his home. He didn't cry, but he looked as if he wished he could just come across somebody else who was doing something wrong! He'd like to teach him better.

When José saw him, he called out to him, "Is school out?"

"No," said Tonio. "I am," and he never said another word to José.

He had the willow switch in his hand. The Maestro had given it to him, "to remember him by," he said. Tonio felt pretty sure he could remember him without it, but he switched the weeds beside the road with it as he walked along, and there was some comfort in that.

At last he remembered that he had a luncheon in the crown of his hat. He sat down beside the road and ate all four tortillas and every single bean. Then he went home. His mother was not in the house when he got there.

Jasmin came frisking up to Tonio and jumped about him and licked his hand. It seemed strange to Tonio that even a dog could be cheerful in such a miserable world. He took his lasso down from the wall and went out again with Jasmin.

The cat was lying back of the house in the sunshine asleep. Tonio pointed her out to Jasmin and he sent her up the fig tree in a hurry. Then Jasmin chased the hens. He drove the red rooster right in among the beehives, and when the bees came out to see what was the matter they chased Jasmin instead of the rooster, and stung him on the nose. Jasmin ran away yelping to dig his nose in the dirt, and Tonio went on by himself through the woods.

Soon he came to the stepping-stones that led across the river to the goat pasture, and there he met José's son and another boy.

"Hello, there! Where are you going?" Tonio called to them.

"We aren't going; we've been," said José's son, whose

name was Juan.[11] The other boy's name was Ignacio.[12]

"Well, where have you been then?" said Tonio.

"Down to the lake hunting crabs. We didn't find any," they said.

You see there is no law in Mexico that every child must go to school, and the parents of Juan and Ignacio didn't make them go either, so they often stayed away.

"What's the reason you're not in school?" Juan said to Tonio. "I thought your father always made you go."

"Well," said Tonio, "I—I—hum—well—I thought I would rather play bull-fight up in the pasture! I've got an old goat up there trained so he'll butt every time he sees me. Come along."

The three boys crossed on the stepping-stones, and ran up the hill on the other side of the river to the goat pasture.

There was a growing hedge of cactus plants around the goat pasture. This kind of cactus grows straight up in tall, round spikes about as large around as a boy's leg, and higher than a man's head. The spikes are covered with long, stiff

[11] Hwahn.
[12] Ig-nah′sĭ-ō.

spines that stick straight out and prick like everything if you run into them. The only way to get through such a fence is to go to the gate, so the boys ran along until they came to some bars. They opened the bars (and forgot to put them up again) and went into the pasture.

IV

When they got inside the pasture the boys looked about for the goat. This goat was quite a savage one, and was kept



all by himself in a small field. It did not take them long to find him. He was grazing quietly in the shadow of a mesquite[13] tree. As Tonio had the only lasso there was, he knew he could have the game all his own way, so he said, "I'll take the first turn with the lasso, Ignacio; you wave your red serape at the goat while Juan stirs him up from behind."

The goat had his head down, eating grass, and did not notice the boys until suddenly Juan split the air behind him with a fearful roar and prodded his legs with a stick.

"Ah, Toro!" roared Juan at the top of his lungs just as he had heard the matadors do at a real bull-fight, and at the same moment Ignacio shook out his red serape.

The goat looked up, saw Tonio and the red serape, and immediately stood up on his hind legs. Then he came down with a thump on his fore feet, put his head down, and ran at Ignacio like a bullet from a gun. Ignacio waved the serape and shouted, and when the goat got very near, he jumped to one side as he had seen the matadors do, and the goat butted with all his might right into the serape.

[13] Mes-keet'.



When he struck the serape his horn went through one end of it. Ignacio had hold of the other end and before he knew what had happened he was rolling backward down a little slope into a pool of water which was the goat's drinking-place.

Meanwhile the goat went bounding about the pasture

with the serape hanging from one horn. Every few minutes he would stamp on it and paw it with his fore feet. Ignacio picked himself out of the water, and then all three boys began a wild chase to get back the serape. It would be a sad day for Ignacio if he went home without it.

Serapes are the most valuable things there are in a peon's hut, and were never intended to be used by goats in this way.

Tonio couldn't lasso the goat because the serape covered his horns, so the boys all tried to snatch off the serape as the goat went galloping past, but every time they tried it the goat butted at them, and they had to run for their lives.

At last the goat stood up on his hind legs and came down on the serape so hard that there was a dreadful tearing sound, and there was the serape torn clear in two and lying on the ground!

When his horns were free, the goat looked around for the boys. He was a very mad goat, and when he saw them he went for them like an express train. Juan ran one way, and Ignacio ran the other. Tonio was a naughty boy, but he wasn't a coward. He kept his lasso whirling over his head,

and as the goat came by, out flew the loop and dropped over his horns!

The goat was much stronger than he, but Tonio braced back with all his might and held on to the rope. Then began a wild dance! The goat went bounding around the pasture with Tonio at the other end of the rope bouncing after him.

It was a sight to see, and Juan and Ignacio were not the only ones who saw it either.

V

Señor Fernandez was going by on his fine black horse, and when he heard the yells of the boys he rode up to the pasture to see what was going on. He was right beside the bars when the goat and Tonio came tearing through.

The goat jumped over the bars that the boys had left down, but Tonio caught his foot and fell down, and the goat jerked the rope out of his hands and went careering off over the fields and was soon out of sight.

Tonio sat up all out of breath and looked at Señor Fernandez. Señor Fernandez looked at Tonio. Juan and Ignacio were nowhere to be seen. They were behind bushes in the goat pasture, and they were both very badly scared.

"Well," said Señor Fernandez at last, "what have you been doing?"

"Just playing bull-fight a little," Tonio answered in a very small voice.

"Didn't you know that was *my* goat?" said Señor Fernandez severely. "What business have you driving it mad like that? Get up."

Tonio got up. He was stiff and sore all over. Moreover, his hands were all skinned inside, where the rope had pulled through.

"Were you alone?" asked Señor Fernandez.

"Not—very—" stammered Tonio.

"Where are the other boys?" demanded the Señor Fernandez.

"I d-don't know," gasped poor Tonio. "I—I don't see them anywhere." (Tonio was looking right up into the top of the cactus hedge when he said this, so I am quite sure he spoke the truth.)

"Humph," grunted Señor Fernandez. "Go look for them."

Tonio began to hunt around stones and bushes in the

pasture with Señor Fernandez following right behind on his horse. It wasn't long before he caught a glimpse of red. It was the pieces of the serape, which Ignacio had picked up. Tonio pointed it out, and Señor Fernandez galloped to it and brought out the two culprits. Then he marched the three boys back to the village in front of his horse, Tonio with his blistered hands and torn clothes, Juan with bumps that were already much swollen, and Ignacio wet as a drowned rat and carrying the rags of the serape.

When they got back to the river they found Doña Teresa there washing out some clothes. When she saw them coming she stopped rubbing and looked at them. She was perfectly astonished. She supposed, of course, that Tonio was in school.

"Here, Doña Teresa, is a very bad boy," Señor Fernandez said to her. "He has been chasing my goat all around the pasture and lassoing it, and he left the bars down and they are broken besides, and no one knows where the goat is by this time. I'll leave him to you, but I want you to make a thorough job of it."

He didn't say just what she should make a thorough job



of, but Tonio hadn't the smallest doubt about what he meant. Doña Teresa seemed to understand too.

Señor Fernandez rode on and left Tonio with his mother while he took the other two boys to their homes. What happened there I do not know, but when she and Tonio were alone I do know that Doña Teresa said sternly, "Go bring me a strong switch from the willow tree," and that Tonio thought, as he went for it, that there were more



willow trees in the world than were really needed.

And I know that when Doña Teresa had done "IT"—whatever it was that Señor Fernandez had asked her to do thoroughly—Tonio felt that it would be a very long time before he took any interest in either lizards or goats again.

That evening Pancho went out with Pinto and hunted up the goat and put him back in the pasture and brought home Tonio's lasso, and when he hung it up on the nail he said to Tonio, "I think you're too young to be trusted with a lasso. Let that alone for two weeks."

That was the very worst of all. To be told that he was too young! Tonio went out and sat down under the fig tree and thought perhaps he'd better run away.

But pretty soon Tita came out and sat down beside him and told him she was sure he never meant any harm about the lizard, and his mother washed his skinned hands and put oil on then, and brought him some molasses to eat on his tortillas just as if she still loved him in spite of everything.

So Tonio went to bed quite comforted, and that was the end of the day.





CHAPTER V

Judas Iscariot Day

I

One day, later in spring, in the week just before Easter, Doña Teresa got ahead of the red rooster. It happened in this way. Early in the morning, when everything was still as dark as a pocket, and not a single rooster in the neighborhood had yet thought of crowing, Doña Teresa woke up and lighted a candle. Then see went over to the twins' mat and held up her candle so she could look at them. They were both sound asleep.

"Wake up, my lambs," said Doña Teresa. But her lambs didn't wake up. Doña Teresa shook them gently. "Wake up, dormice! Don't you know this is Judas Iscariot Day, and you are all going to town? Come, we are going in Pedro's boat, and he has to start early."

Tita began to rub her eyes, and Tonio was sitting up

with both of his wide open the moment Doña Teresa said the word "boat." They bounced out in a minute, and they even washed without being told, and they used soap, too!

Pancho was roused by the noise they made. He got up at once and went to attend to the donkey and to Pinto. When he opened the door the gleam of Doña Teresa's candle woke the red rooster. He began to crow, and then all the other roosters crowed, and almost right away candles were glimmering in every hut in the village and everyone was up and getting ready to start to town.

Everybody was going. Some were going on horseback and some on donkeys; more were walking, and as it was many miles from the hacienda to the town it was necessary to start very early.

The quickest way to go was by boat, but, of course, not everyone could go that way because there were not enough boats. Pedro's boat went back and forth every day between the hacienda and the town, carrying wood and all kinds of supplies. He was a friend of Pancho's and that was how they were so fortunate as to be invited to go with him.

Doña Teresa got breakfast very quickly, and while they

were eating it they heard a voice calling, "Here, buy your Judases—at six and twelve cents—your Judases."

"There comes the Judas-seller. Run, children, run," cried Doña Teresa. "You may each have twelve cents and you may buy two little ones or one big one, as you like."

The Judas-seller had a long branch cut from a tree, with little twigs growing out of it. On each twig hung a "Judas." They were small dolls, with sticky pink-painted faces and sticky black-painted hair, and they were dressed in tissue paper. The hands of the Judases were stuck straight out on each side and from one hand to the other there was a string stretched. Fire-crackers were hung along on this string. When these fire-crackers go off, one after another, they set fire to the Judas and burn him up.

You remember that long years ago, when Jesus was on earth, He was betrayed by a man named Judas Iscariot, who sold Him to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver. In Mexico, Judas Iscariot Day is kept in remembrance of this, and all the Judases which the people buy and burn up are to show how very wicked they believe the real Judas to have been.

But the Judas dolls didn't look the least bit as the real Judas must have looked. Some of them were made to look like Mexican donkey-boys and some like water-carriers, while others represented priests, or policemen, or cowboys.

Tita couldn't make up her mind whether to buy a donkey-boy or a policeman. But Tonio found what he wanted right away. It was a "Judas" made like a thin young school-teacher! Tonio thought it looked like the Señor Maestro, and he thought it would be very pleasant to see him burn up, and so, though he cost twelve cents, he bought him at once.

II

When Pancho and Doña Teresa and the twins were ready they went in a little procession to the lake-shore. They found Pedro with his wife and baby and Pablo already there.

This was the very same Pablo on whose feet Tonio had put the lizard. He was Pedro's son.

Pedro was loading the boat with bundles of reeds. They were the reeds used for weaving the petates[14] or sleeping-

[14] Pay-tah'tays

mats. The reeds grew all about the lake, but the people in the town could not easily get them, so Pedro had gathered a supply to sell to them.

The boat was quite large. It had one sail and there was a thatched roof of reeds over the back part of it. It was too large to bring into the shallow water near the shore, so Pedro had rolled up his white trousers and was wading back and forth from the boat to the beach, carrying a bundle of reeds each time and stowing it away under the thatch.

Pancho at once took off his sandals, rolled up his trousers, and began to help carry the bundles, while Doña Teresa and the twins sat on the sand with Pablo and the



baby and their mother.

There was a large sack of sweet potatoes lying on the sand beside Pedro's wife. You could tell they were sweet potatoes because the bundle was so knobby. Besides Tonio felt of them.

"What are you going to do with your sweet potatoes?" asked Doña Teresa.

"I'm going to cook them in molasses and sell them," said Pedro's wife. "I shall sit under an awning and watch the fun and turn a penny at the same time. The baby is too heavy to carry round all day, anyway."

"I'll help you," said Doña Teresa. "Very likely I shall be glad enough to sit down somewhere myself before the day is over."

"Pedro made me a little brasero out of a tin box," said his wife, "and I have a bundle of wood right here, and the syrup and the dishes, all ready."

When the reeds had all been put on board, Pancho took Tonio in his arms and Pedro took Pablo, and they tossed them into the boat as if they had been sacks of meal. The boys scrambled under the covered part and out to the bow

at once, and Pablo got astride the very nose of the boat and let his feet hang over.

Then Pedro lifted Tita in.

It was more of a job to get the mothers aboard, for Pedro's wife was fat, and he was a small man. Pedro shook his head when he looked at his wife, then he took off his sombrero, and scratched his head. At last he said, "I think I'll begin with the baby."

He took the baby and waded out to the boat and handed her to Tita, then he went back to shore and took another look at his wife. "It'll take two of us," he said to Pancho.

"I'm your man," said Pancho bravely. "I can lift half of her."

So Pedro and Pancho made a chair with their arms, and Pedro's wife sat on it, and put her arms around their necks, and they waded out with her into the water.

They got along beautifully until they reached the side of the boat and undertook to lift her over the edge. Then there came near being an awful accident, for Pedro's foot slipped on a slimy stone and he let her down on one side so that one of her feet went into the water.

"Holy mother!" screamed Pedro's wife. "They are going to drown me!"

She waved her arms about and jounced so that Pancho almost dropped the other foot in too, but just in time Pedro shouted, "One, two, three, and over she goes," and as he said *over*, he and Pancho gave a great heave both together, and in she went all in a heap beside Tita and the baby.

While she crawled under the awning and settled herself with the baby and stuck her foot out in the sunshine to dry,



Pancho and Pedro went back for Doña Teresa. She wasn't very stout so they got her in without any trouble.

They put in the brasero and all the other things, and last of all Pancho and Pedro climbed on board themselves, hoisted the sail, and pushed off. Luckily the breeze was just right, and they floated away over the blue water at about the time of day that you first begin to think of waking up.

III

Even with a good breeze it took nearly an hour to sail across the lake. If they hadn't been in such a hurry to see the fun in town, the twins and Pablo would have wished to have it take longer still.

Far away across the lake they could see the town with its little bright-colored adobe houses and the spire of the church standing up above the treetops.

As they drew nearer and nearer, they could see a bridge, and people passing over it, and flags flying, and then they turned into a river which ran through the town, where there were many other boats.

It took some time to find a good place to tie the boat, but at last it was done, and the whole party went ashore

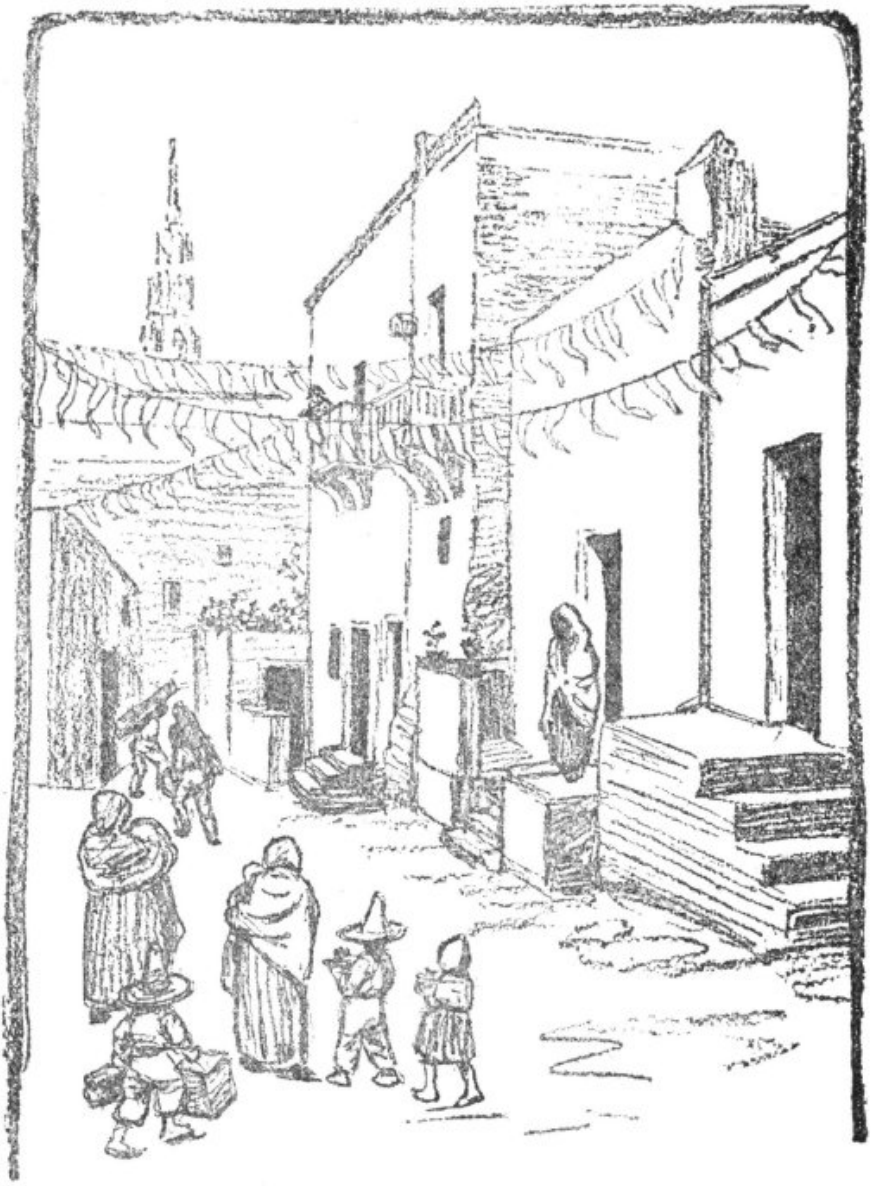
and started up the street toward the open square in the middle of the town.

Pedro and Pancho went ahead, each carrying three bundles of reeds on his back. Then came Pedro's wife with the bag of sweet potatoes, while Doña Teresa carried the baby. Pablo had the brasero and the wood, and Tonio and Tita brought up the rear with the molasses jug, the cooking-dishes, and their Judases all carefully packed together.

"Now, mind you, Tonio," said Doña Teresa as the processsion started, "don't you get to watching everything in the street and forget that jug of molasses."

It was pretty hard to keep your mind on a jug when there were so many wonderful things to see. In the first place there was the street itself. No one had ever seen it so gay! Strings had been stretched back and forth across the street from the flat tops of the houses on either side, and from these strings hung thousands of tissue-paper streamers and pennants in all sorts of gorgeous colors.

The houses in Mexican towns are close to the street-line and stand very near together. They are built around a tiny open space in the center called a patio. The living rooms



open on the patio, so all that can be seen of a house from the street is a blank wall with a doorway, and perhaps a window or two with little balconies. Sometimes, if the door is open, there are glimpses of plants, flowers, and bird-cages in the little patio.

Pablo and Tonio and Tita had their hands full, but they kept their eyes open, and their mouths too. They seemed to feel they could see more that way.

IV

It was not very long before they came to the public square or plaza of the town, and there on one side was the church whose spire they had seen from the boat.

On the other side was the market-place, and in the center of the square there was a fountain. In another place there was a gayly painted band-stand with the red, white, and green flag of Mexico flying over it.

There were beds of gay geraniums at each corner of the square, and large trees made a pleasant shade where people could sit and watch the crowds, or listen to music, if the band were playing.

Pedro and Pancho went straight across the street to the

market side. There were rows of small booths there, and already many of them were occupied by people who had things to sell. There were peanut-venders, and pottery-sellers; there were women with lace and drawn work; there were foods of all kinds, and flowers, and birds in cages, and chickens in coops or tied up by the legs, and geese and ducks—in fact, I can't begin to tell you all the things there were for sale in that market.

Pedro found a stall with an awning over it and took possession at once. He and Pancho put down the bundles of reeds in a pile, and his wife sat on them. Pedro placed the brasero on the ground in front of her, and the sweet potatoes by her side. Pablo put down the wood, and Doña Teresa put the baby into her arms. Tita gave her the cooking-dishes, and Tonio was just going to hand her the jug, when bang-bang-bang!—three fire-crackers went off one right after the other almost in his ear! Tonio jumped at least a foot high, and oh—the jug! It accidentally tipped over sideways, and poured a puddle of molasses right on top of the baby's head!

It ran down his cheek, but the baby had the presence of



mind to stick his tongue out sideways and lick up some of it, so it wasn't all wasted.

Doña Teresa said several things to Tonio while the baby was being mopped up. Tonio couldn't see why they should mind it if the baby didn't.

At last Doña Teresa finished by saying to the twins and Pablo, "Now you run round the square and have a good time by yourselves, only see that you don't get into any more mischief; and come back when you're hungry."

Pedro and Pancho had already gone off by themselves, and as they didn't say where they were going I can't tell you anything about it. I only know they were seen not long after in front of a pulque shop (pulque[15] is a kind of wine) talking in low tones with a Tall Man on horseback, and that after that nobody saw them for a long time. It may be they went to a cock-fight, for there was a cock-fight behind the pulque shop and most of the other men went if they did not.

V

The twins and Pablo with their precious Judases went to a bench near the fountain, and sat down to watch the fun. There were water-carriers filling their long earthen jars at the fountain; there were young girls in bright dresses who laughed a great deal; and there were young men in big hats and gay serapes who stood about and watched them.

There were more small boys than you could count. Twelve o'clock was the time that everyone was supposed to set off his fire-crackers, and the children waited patiently until the shadows were very short indeed under the trees in the square and there had been one or two explosions to

[15] Pool'kay.



start the noise, then they tied their Judases up in a row to the back of the bench. They hung Tonio's Maestro in the middle, with Tita's donkey-boy on one side and the policeman on the other. Pablo's Judas was a policeman too, and they put him on the other side of the donkey-boy.

Then Pablo borrowed a match from a boy and set fire to the first cracker on his policeman. Fizz-fizz-bang! off went the first fire-cracker. Fizz-fizz-bang! off went the second one. When the third one exploded, the policeman whirled around on his string, one of his hands caught fire, and up he went in a puff of smoke.

They lighted the fuses on the donkey-boy and the other policeman, both at once, and last of all Tonio set fire to the Maestro Judas. He was the biggest one of all. While the fire-crackers went off in a series of bangs, Tonio jumped up and down and sang, "Pop goes the Maestro! Pop goes the Maestro!" and Tita and Pablo thought that was so very funny that they hopped about and sang it too.

Just as the last fire-cracker went off and Tonio's Judas caught fire, and all three of them were dancing and singing at the top of their lungs, Tonio saw the Señor Maestro himself standing in front of the bench with his hands in his



pockets, looking right at them!

Tonio shut his mouth so quickly that he bit his tongue, and then Pablo and Tita saw the Maestro and stopped singing too, and they all three ran as fast as they could go to the other side of the square and lost themselves in the crowd.

They stayed away for quite a long time. They were in the crowd by a baker's shop when a great big Judas which hung high overhead exploded and showered cakes over them. They each picked up a cake and then ran back to show their goodies to their mothers. They could hardly get near the booth at first, because there was quite a little crowd around it, but they squirmed under the elbows of the grown people, and right beside the brasero eating a piece of candied sweet potato, and talking to Doña Teresa, whom should they see but the Señor Maestro?

Tonio wished he hadn't come. He turned round and tried to dive back into the crowd again, but the Señor Maestro reached out and caught him by the collar and pulled him back. Tonio was very much frightened. He thought surely the Maestro had told his mother about "Pop goes the Maestro," and that very unpleasant things were

likely to happen.

"Any way, there aren't any willow trees in the plaza," he said to himself. "That's one good thing."

But what really happened was this. The Maestro took three pennies out of his pocket, and said to Pedro's wife, "Please give me three pieces of your nice sweet potatoes for my three friends here!"

Pedro's wife was so busy with her cooking that she did not look up to see who his three friends were until she had taken the pennies and handed out the sweet potatoes. Then she saw Pablo and Tonio and Tita all three standing in a row looking very foolish.

She was quite overcome at the honor the Maestro had done her in buying sweet potatoes to give to her son, and Doña Teresa thought to herself, "They really must be very good and clean children to have the Maestro think so much of them as that." She thanked him, and Tonio and Tita and Pablo all thanked him.

After that there was a wonderful concert by a band all dressed in green and white uniforms with red braid, and at the end of the concert, it was four o'clock. Pedro's wife had

sold all her sweet potatoes by that time and Pedro had sold all his reeds. Pancho had come back, the baby was sleepy, and everyone was tired and ready to go home. So the whole party returned to the boat, this time without any heavy bundles except the baby to carry, and sailed away across the lake toward the hacienda.

Pancho and Doña Teresa and the twins reached their little adobe hut just as the red rooster and the five hens and the turkey were flying up to their roost in the fig tree.



CHAPTER VI

The Adventure

I

One hot morning in early June, Doña Teresa took her washing down to the river, and Tonio and Tita went with her. They found Doña Josefa and Pedro's wife already there with their soiled clothes, and the three women had a good time gossiping together while they soaped the garments and scrubbed them well on stones at the water's edge.

Pablo and the twins played in the water meanwhile, hunting mud turtles and building dams and trying to catch minnows with their hands.

At last Pablo's mother said to him, "Pablo, take this piece of soap and go behind those bushes and take a bath."

Then she went on telling Doña Teresa about a new pattern of drawn work she was beginning and forgot all about



Pablo. Pablo disappeared behind the bush, and no one saw him again that day. He wasn't drowned, but it's my belief that he wasn't bathed either.

However, this story is not about Pablo. It's about Tonio and Tita, and what happened to them.

Doña Teresa said to them, "I wish you would get Tonto and go up the mountain beyond the pasture and bring down a load of wood. Take some lunch with you. You won't get

lost, because Tonto knows the way home if you don't. Get all the ocote[16] branches you can to burn in the brasero."

The twins were delighted with this errand. It meant a picnic for them, so they ran back to the house and got Tonto and the luncheon and started away down the road as gay as two larks in the springtime.

They both rode on the donkey's back and they had Tonio's lasso with them. The luncheon was in Tonio's hat as usual. Tonio whistled for Jasmin, but he was nowhere to be found, so they started without him.

They crossed the goat-pasture, and this time Tonio did not forget to put up the bars. They passed the goat too, but Tonio rode right by and hoped the goat wouldn't notice him.

From the goat pasture they turned into a sort of trail that led up the mountainside, and rode on for two miles until they came to a thick wood. Here they dismounted and, leaving Tonto to graze comfortably by himself, began to search for ocote wood. Tonio had a machete stuck in his belt.

[16] Ō-kō′teh.

A machete is a long strong knife, and he used it to cut up the wood into small pieces. Then he tied it up in a bundle with his lasso to carry home on Tonto's back.

The children had such fun wandering about, gathering sticks, and looking for birds' nests that they didn't think a thing about time until they suddenly realized that they were very hungry. They had gone some distance into the wood, and quite out of sight of Tonto by this time.

II

They sat down on a fallen log and ate their lunch, and then they were thirsty.

"Let's find a brook and get a drink," said Tonio. "I know there must be one right near here."

They left their bundle of wood and walked for some distance searching for water, but no stream did they find. They grew thirstier and thirstier.

"It seems to me I shall dry up and blow away if we don't find it pretty soon," said Tita.

"I've *almost* found it, I think," answered Tonio. "It must be right over by those willow trees."

They went to the willow trees but there was no stream

there.

"I think we'd better go back and get the wood and start home," said Tita. "We can get a drink in the goat pasture."

"All right," said Tonio, and he led the way back into the woods.

They looked and looked for the bundle of sticks, but somehow everything seemed different.

"I'm sure it must have been right near here," said Tonio. "I remember that black stump. I'm sure I do, because it looks like a bear sitting up on his hind legs. Don't you remember it, Tita?"

But Tita didn't remember it, and I'm afraid Tonio didn't either, really, for the bundle of sticks certainly was not there. They hunted about for a long time, and at last Tonio said, "I think we'd better go back to Tonto; he may be lonesome."

But Tonto had disappeared too! Tonio was sure he knew just where he had left him, but when they got to the place he wasn't there, and it *wasn't* the place either! It was very discouraging.

At last Tonio said, "Well, anyway, Tonto knows the way

home by himself. We'll just let him find his own way, and we'll go home by ourselves."

"All right," said Tita, and they started down the mountainside.

They had walked quite a long way when Tita said, "I think we're high enough up so we ought to see the lake." But no lake was in sight in any direction.

Tita began to cry. "We-we-we're just as lost as we can be," she sobbed. "And you did it! You said you knew the way, and you didn't, and now we'll die of hunger and nobody will find us—*I want to go home*."

"Hush up," said Tonio. "Crying won't help. We'll keep on walking and walking and we'll just *have* to come to something, some time. And there'll be people there and they'll tell us how to go."

Tonio seemed so sure of this that Tita was a little comforted. They walked for a very long time—hours it seemed to her—before Tita spoke again.

Then she said, "There's a big black cloud, and the sun is lost in it, and it's going to rain, and we aren't anywhere at all yet!"

They had got down to level ground by this time and were walking through a great field of maguey[17] plants. The maguey is a strange great century-plant that grows higher than a man's head. When it gets ready to blossom the center is cut out and the hollow place fills with a sweet juice which Mexicans like to drink. Tonio knew this and thought perhaps he could get a drink in that way.

So he cut down a hollow-stemmed weed with his machete and made a pipe out of it. Then he climbed up on the plant that had been cut and stuck one end of his pipe into the juice, and the other into his mouth. When he had had enough, he boosted Tita up and she got a drink too. This made them feel better, and they walked on until they had passed the maguey plantation and were out in the open fields once more.

III

The sky grew darker and darker, and there were queer shapes all around them. Giant cacti with their arms reaching out like the arms of a cross loomed up before them. There were other great cacti in groups of tall straight spines,

[17] Mah-gay′ē



and every now and then a palm tree would spread its spiky leaves like giant fingers against the sky.

Suddenly there was a great clap of thunder, "It's the beginning of the rains," said Tonio.

"Shall we—shall we—be drowned—do you think?"

wept Tita. "It's almost night."

Tonio was really a brave boy, but it is no joke to be lost in such country as that, and he knew it.

Tonio was almost crying, too, but he said, "I'll climb the first tree I can get up into and look around." He tried to make his voice sound big and brave, but it shook a little in spite of him.

Soon they came to a mesquite tree. There were long bean-like pods hanging from it. Tonio climbed the tree and threw down some pods. They were good to eat. Tita gathered them up in her rebozo,[18] while Tonio gazed in every direction to see if he could see a house or shelter of any kind.

"I don't see anything but that hill over there," he called to Tita. "It is shaped like a great mound and seems to be all stone and rock. Perhaps if we could get up on top of it and look about we could tell where we are."

"Let's run, then," said Tita.

The children took hold of hands and ran toward the hill. There were cacti of all kinds around them, and as they ran,

[18] Ray-bō′sō



the spines caught their clothes. The hill seemed to get bigger and bigger as they came nearer to it, and it didn't look like any hill they had ever seen. It was shaped like a great pyramid and was covered with blocks of stone. There were bushes growing around the base and out of cracks between the stones. Tonio tried to climb up but it was so steep he only slipped back into the bushes, every time he tried.

"Oh, Tonio, maybe it isn't a hill at all," whispered Tita.

"Maybe it's the castle of some awful creature who will eat us up!"

"Well, whatever it is he won't eat me up!" said Tonio boldly. "I'll stick a cactus down his throat and he'll have to cough me right up if he tries."

"I'll kick and scream so he'll have to cough me up too," sobbed Tita.

Just then there came a flash of lightning. It was so bright that the children saw what they hadn't noticed before. It was a hollow place in the side of the pyramid where a great stone had fallen out, and the dirt underneath had been washed away, leaving a hole big enough for them to crawl into, but it was far above their heads.

At last Tonio climbed into a small tree that grew beside it, bent a branch over, and dropped down into the hollow, holding to the branch by his hands.

Poor Tita never had felt so lonely in her whole life as she did when she saw Tonio disappear into that hole! In a minute he was out again and looking over the edge at her.

"It's all right. You climb up just as I did," he said.

Tita tied the mesquite pods in the end of her rebozo and

threw it up to Tonio. Then she too climbed the little tree and dropped from the branch into the mouth of the tiny cave.

A hole in the side of a queer pyramid isn't exactly a cheerful place to be in during a storm, but it was so much better than being lost in a cactus grove that the children felt a little comforted.

The rain began to fall in great splashing drops, but they were protected in their rocky house. They ate the mesquite pods for their supper, and then Tonio said: "Of course, no one will find us tonight, so we'd better go to sleep. We'll play we are foxes. The animals and birds sleep in such places all the time and they're not afraid."

So they curled down in the corner of the cave, and, being very tired, soon fell asleep.





CHAPTER VII
While They Were Gone

I

Meanwhile what do you suppose had been happening at home? When she had finished her washing and had dried the clothes on the bushes, Doña Teresa folded them and carried them back to the house, and began her ironing.

She didn't think much about the time because she was so busy with her work, but at last she felt hungry and glanced out at the shadow of the fig tree to see what time it was.

She was surprised to see the shadow already quite long and pointing toward the east.

"Well," thought she to herself, "I'll get myself something to eat, and by that time the children will be home and as hungry as two bears. I think I'll get something especially good for their supper."



She hummed a little tune as she worked, and every little while she glanced out the open door to see if they were not coming. By and by she noticed that the sky was overcast and then she heard a clap of thunder. It was the very same clap of thunder that had frightened the twins in the cactus grove.

"The holy saints above us!" cried Doña Teresa aloud. "The children should have been home long ago. Where can they be!" She ran to the door just in time to see Tonto come ambling slowly into the yard alone and go to his own place in the shed.

Doña Teresa's eyes almost popped out of her head with surprise and fright. She threw on her rebozo and ran over to Pedro's hut. Pedro's wife was just examining Pablo's ears to see if he had really washed himself in the river, when Doña Teresa arrived, quite breathless, at the door.

"Whatever can be the reason that my children are not home?" she gasped. "You remember it was morning when I sent them after wood. They have not been seen since, and Tonto walked into the yard just now all alone, and of course there's nothing to be got out of him! What can have happened to them?"

"Now, never you mind, like a sensible woman," said Pablo's mother soothingly. "They're playing along the way as likely as not and will be at your door before you are. Who should know better than myself the way children will forget the thing they're set to do."

She looked severely at Pablo as she said this, so I judge the examination of his ears had not been satisfactory.

Doña Teresa didn't wait to hear any more, but ran back home, and when the children still did not appear she walked down the road hoping to meet them.

The clouds grew blacker and blacker, and the rain began to fall. Doña Teresa called Jasmin, who had reappeared by this time, and gave him Tonio's shoes to smell of.

"Go find him, go find him," she cried.

Jasmin whined and looked anxious, but just then came a flash of lightning. Jasmin was afraid of lightning, so he crept into Tonto's stall with his tail between his legs and hid there until the storm was over.

II

At last it was time for Pancho to come home. Poor Doña Teresa kept her supper hot and waited anxiously to hear the sound of Pinto's hoofs, but no such sound came. Pancho would go with her, and together they would find their children, she was sure, but six o'clock and seven came, without either Pancho or the children.

It was quite dark when at last she put on her rebozo and ran as fast as she could to the priest's house. The door was opened by the priest's fat sister, who kept house for him.

"Oh, where is the padrecito?" Doña Teresa said to her. "I must see him."

"He is eating his supper," said the fat sister.

"Tell him I am in great trouble," sobbed Doña Teresa.

In a moment the priest appeared at the door, and Doña Teresa kissed the hand he stretched out to her, and told him her anxieties all in one breath.

The padrecito had just had his supper and was feeling very comfortable himself, so he told her he was sure that everything would come out all right. He patted Doña Teresa on the shoulder and said not to worry; that probably Pancho had had to stay to mend a fence somewhere, and the children—why, they had probably stopped to play!

"In pitch darkness and rain, holy father? It cannot be," Doña Teresa moaned.

"Well," said the priest, "if they are not here in an hour we will search for them, but they will surely come soon."

Doña Teresa had such faith in the priest that she went back home, intending to do just what he said, but when she got there she found Pedro's wife waiting for her.

The moment she saw Doña Teresa she cried out, "Has Pancho come?"

"No," sobbed Doña Teresa.

"Neither has Pedro," answered his wife. "I can't think

what can be the matter. He never stays out so late as this—especially in a storm. Something dreadful has surely happened."

Doña Teresa told her what the priest had said, but neither one was willing to wait another minute, so they ran together in the rain to the other huts and told the news, and the men formed a searching party at once.

They put on their grass coats to protect them from the rain, and started off in the darkness and wet, carrying lighted pine torches, and calling loudly, "Pancho—Pedro—Tonio—Tita," every few minutes.

While they were gone Pedro's wife left the baby and Pablo with a neighbor and asked her to send Pablo to the chapel if there should be any news. Then she and Doña Teresa went there to pray.

The chapel door was open and candles were burning on the little altar, as the two women crept in and knelt before the image of the Virgin and Child.

"O Holy Mother," sobbed Doña Teresa, "help us who are mothers, too!"

All night long they knelt on the chapel floor before the

images, sobbing and praying, listening for footsteps that did not come, and promising many candles to be placed upon the altar, if only their dear ones could be restored to them.

It was long after the rain was over and the moon shining again that the weary search party returned to the village without any news of the wanderers.



CHAPTER VIII
The Secret Meeting

I

THE children, meanwhile, were sleeping soundly in their hard bed. They were so tired that they did not wake up even when a tiny stream of water broke through a crevice in the rocks and splashed down on Tonio's head. It ran off his hair just as the rain ran off the thatched roof of their little adobe hut.

About nine o'clock the rain stopped and the moon shone out from behind the clouds. An owl hooted; a fox ran right over the roof of their cave, making a soft pat-pat with his paws that would have frightened them if they had heard it, but they slept on.

At last, however, something did wake Tita. She sat up in terror. A flickering light that wasn't moonlight was dancing about the cave! It was so bright that she could see

everything about them as plain as day.

She clutched Tonio, shook him gently, and whispered in his ear, "Tonio, Tonio, wake up."

Tonio stirred and opened his mouth, but Tita clapped her hand over it. She was so afraid he would make a noise. When he saw the flickering light Tonio almost shouted for joy, for he was sure that his father had found them at last.

The flickering light grew brighter. They heard the crackling of flames and men's voices, and saw sparks. Very quietly they squirmed around on their stomachs until they could peep out of the opening of their cave.

This is what they saw!



There on the ground a few feet in front of their hiding place was a fire, and two men were beside it. Their horses were tied to bushes not far away. One of the men was broiling meat on the end of a stick. The smell of it made the children very hungry. The other man was drinking something hot from a cup. They both had guns, and the guns were leaning against the rocks just below the cave where the children were hidden.

The man who was standing up was tall and had a fierce black mustache. He had on a big sombrero, and under a fold of his serape Tonio could see a cartridge-belt and the handle of a revolver.

"It's the Tall Man that Father and Pedro were talking to in front of the pulque shop," whispered Tonio.

Tita was so frightened that she shook like a leaf and her teeth chattered.

Pretty soon the Tall Man spoke. "The others ought to be here soon," he said. "They'll see the fire. Put on a few more sticks and make it flame up more."

The other man gave a last turn to the meat, handed it stick and all to the Tall Man, and disappeared behind the



bushes to search for wood.

He had not yet come back, when there was the sound of horses' feet, and a man rode into sight, dismounted, hitched his horse, and joined the Tall Man by the fire.

One by one others came, until there were ten men standing about and talking together in low tones. Last of all there was the thud-thud of two more horses and who should come riding into the firelight but Pancho on Pinto, and Pedro on another horse!

When they joined the circle, Tonio almost sprang up and shouted. He did make a little jump, but Tita clutched him and held him back. He loosened a pebble at the mouth of the cave by his motion and it clattered down over the rock. The man who had gone for the wood was just putting his load down by the fire when the pebble came rattling down beside him.

"What's that?" he said, and sprang for his rifle.

Tonio hastily drew in his head. The men all listened intently for a few minutes, and looked cautiously about them.

"It's nothing but a pebble," said the Tall Man at last. "No one will disturb us here. And if they should,"—he tapped the handle of his revolver and smiled,—"we'd give them such a warm welcome they would be glad to stay with us—quietly—oh, very quietly!"

The other men grinned a little, as if they saw a joke in this, and then they all sat down in a circle around the fire.

II

Pancho and Pedro sat where the children could look right at them. The Tall Man was the only one who did not

sit down. He stood up and began to talk.

"Well, men," he said. "I knew I could count on you! Brave fellows like you know well when a blow must be struck, and where is the true Mexican who was ever afraid to strike a blow when he knew that it was needed?

"We came of a race of fighters! And once Mexico belonged to them! Our Indian forefathers did not serve a race of foreign tyrants as we, their sons, do! Look about you on Mexico! Where in the whole world can be found such a land? The soil so rich that it yields crops that burden the earth, and mountains full of gold and silver and precious stones! And it is for this reason we are enslaved!

"If our land were less rich and less beautiful, if it bore no such crops, if its sunshine were not so bright, and its mountains yielded no such treasure, we should be free men today.

"But the world envied our possessions. You know how Cortez, long ago, came from Spain and when our forefathers met him with friendliness he slew men, women, and children, tore down their ancient temples, and set the churches of Spain in their places!

"The Spaniards turned our fathers from free and brave

men into a conquered and enslaved people, and worst of all they mixed their hated blood with ours. From the days of Cortez until now in one way or another we have submitted to oppression, until the spirit of our brave Indian ancestors is almost dead within us!

"And for what do we serve these aristocrats? For the privilege of remaining ignorant! For the privilege of tilling *their* fields, which were once ours! For the privilege of digging *our* gold and silver and precious stones out of *their* mines to make them rich! For the privilege of living in huts while they live in palaces! For the *privilege* of being robbed and beaten in the name of laws we never heard of and which we had no part in making, though this country is called a Republic! A Republic!—Bah!—A Republic where more than half the people cannot read! A Republic of cattle! A Republic where men like you work for a few pence a day, barely enough to keep your body and soul together—and even that pittance you must spend in stores owned by the men for whom you work!

"The little that you earn goes straight back into the pockets of your masters! Do you not see it? Do you not see

if they own the land and the supplies they own you too? They *call* you free men—but are you free? What are you free to do? Free to starve if you will not work on their terms, or if you will not strike a blow for freedom. Are not my words true? Speak up and answer me! Are you satisfied? Are you free?"

III

The Tall Man stopped and waited for an answer. The fire flickered over the dark faces of angry men, and Pedro stirred uneasily as if he would like to say something.

"Speak out, Pedro. Tell us your story," said the Tall Man.

Pedro stood up and shook his fist at the fire. "Every word you speak is true," he said. "Who should know better than I? I had a small farm some miles from here, left me by my father. It was my own, and I tilled my land and was content. My father could not read, neither could I. No one told me of the laws.

"At last one day a rural[19] rode to my house, and said, 'Pedro, why have you not obeyed the law? The law says that

[19] Roo-rahl′.

if you did not have your property recorded before a magistrate by the first of last month it should be taken from you and given to the State.'

"'But I have never heard of such a law,' I said to him. He answered, 'Ignorance excuses no man. Your farm belongs to the state.' And I and my family were turned out of the house in which I and my father before me had been



born. All our neighbors were treated in the same way. In despair we went away to the hacienda of Señor Fernandez, and there we work for a pittance as you say. And our homes! That whole region was turned over by the President, not long after, to a rich friend of his, who now owns it as a great estate!

"Many of my old neighbors are now his peons—working for him on land that was once their own and that was taken from them by a trick—by a trick, I say,"—his voice grew thick, and he sat down heavily in his place.

Another man, a stranger to Tonio, sprang to his feet. "Ah, if that were all!" he said; "but even in peonage we are not left undisturbed! It was only a year ago that I was riding into town on my donkey with some chickens to sell, when an officer stopped me and brought me before the Jefe Politico.[20]

"'Why have you not obeyed the law?' said the magistrate. 'I know of no law that I have not obeyed,' I said. 'You may tell me that,' said the scoundrel, 'but to make me believe it is another matter. You must know very well that

[20] Hay-fay Pō-lee′tĭ-cō.

a law was passed not long ago that every peon must wear dark trousers if he wishes to enter a town.'

"'I have no dark trousers,' said I, 'and I have no money to buy them. I have worn such white trousers as these since I was a boy, as have all the men in this region.' 'That makes no difference to me,' he said; 'law is law.' I was put in prison and made to work every day on a bridge that the Government was building! I never saw my donkey or the chickens again. My wife did not know where I was for two weeks.

"While I was working on the bridge five other men whom I knew were seized and treated in the same way. It is my belief that there is no such law. They wanted workmen for that bridge and that was the cheapest way to get them!"

"Where are those other five men who were imprisoned, too? Have they no spirit?" It was the Tall Man who spoke.

"They have spirit," the man answered, "but they also have large families. They fear to leave them lest they starve. They are helpless."

"Say rather they are fools," said the Tall Man when the stranger sat down. "Why had they not the spirit like you to take things in their own hands—to revenge their wrongs?

As for myself," he went on, "everyone knows my story.

"The blood of my Indian ancestors was too hot in my veins for such slavery—by whatever name you call it. I broke away, and my name is now a terror in the region that I call mine.

"It is no worse to take by violence than by fraud. My land was taken from me by fraud. Very well, I take back what I can by violence. The rich call us bandits, but there is already an army of one thousand men waiting for you to join them, and we call ourselves Soldiers of the Revolution. We have risen up to get for ourselves some portion of what we have lost.

"Will you not join us? Our general is a peon like yourselves. He feels our wrongs because he has suffered them, and he fights like a demon to avenge them. Ride away tonight with me! You shall see something besides driving other people's cattle—and being driven like cattle yourselves!"

The Tall Man stopped talking and waited for an answer. No one spoke. The men gazed silently into the fire as if they were trying to think out something that was very puzzling.

The Tall Man spoke again. "Sons of brave ancestors, do you know where you are?" he said. "Do you know what this great pyramid is?" He pointed directly up toward the cave, and Tonio and Tita, who had listened to every word, instantly popped their heads out of sight like frightened rabbits.

"This stone mountain was built by your Indian ancestors hundreds of years ago. It is the burial place of their dead. It is called the Pyramid of the Moon. Look at it! Have the Spaniards built anything greater? Mexico has many mighty monuments which show the glory which was ours before the Spaniards came.

"I have seen the ruins of great cities—cities full of stone buildings covered with wonderful carvings, all speaking of the magnificence of the days of Cuauhtemoc.[21] Here in this place the souls of those brave ancestors listen for your answer. There are many people who do not know—who do not feel—who are content to be like the sheep on the hillside; but you, you know your wrongs—come with us and avenge them!"

[21] Kwow′tĕ-mōk.

IV

The man who had gone for the wood now spoke. He took up one of the rifles. "See!" he said, "we have guns enough for you, and you have horses. It is time to start. The morning will soon be here."

The men rose slowly from their places around the fire. Tonio saw some of them glance fearfully around at the great Pyramid of the Moon in which they were hidden and furtively cross themselves. Then he heard his father's voice. It was the first time Pancho had spoken.

"I will go with you," said Pancho. "I am no sheep. I, too, have suffered many things. My wife is a strong woman. She will look after the children while I am gone. I have no fear for them."

When Tita heard her father say these dreadful words she almost screamed, but now Tonio clapped his hand over her mouth.

"Keep still," he whispered in her ear. "Those other men might kill us if they knew we were here and had heard everything."

Tita hid her face on her arms, and her whole body shook

with sobs, but she did not make a sound—not even when she saw Pancho and Pedro ride away with the two men whom they had first seen by the fire.

Four of the other men went with them too. The ones who had made the sign of the cross did not go.

The children could catch only a few words of what they said when Pancho and Pedro and the others rode away, but it sounded like this: "—Our wives—our children—we shall not forget—by and by—perhaps in the spring—" And then they heard the voice of the Tall Man speaking very sharply.

"If you will not go with us, see that you keep silence," he said. "If any news of this gets about in this region we shall know whom to blame and to punish! We shall come back and we shall know," and then "Ádios[22]—ádios—ádios—" and the hoof-beats of horses as they rode away, then silence again, and the moon sailing away toward the west, with only the glow of the dying coals to show that anyone had been there at all.

When they were gone, the children wept together as if their hearts would break, but soon the birds began to sing,

[22] Ah Dee-ōs′.



and the sky grew brighter and brighter in the east, and the coming of the sunshine comforted them.

When it was quite light they let themselves down out of their nest and warmed themselves over the coals. They had nothing to eat, of course, and they did not know which way to go. But Tonio had an idea.

"Father and Pedro came from this direction," he said, pointing toward the south, "and so the hacienda must be somewhere over that way."

V

They started bravely toward the south and had not gone far when they struck a rough road. Tonio stooped down and found the fresh prints of Pinto's hoofs in the mud.

"This is the way," he cried joyfully. "I'm sure of it."

They walked on and on, but they were too hungry to go very fast. By and by they sat down on a stone to rest. They had been there only a short time when they heard the beat of horses' hoofs, and galloping down a hill they saw two people on horseback. One was a lady. The other was a man.

The children watched them eagerly, and in a moment Tita sprang up and began to run towards them, shouting joyfully, "It's the Señorita Carmen!"

Then Tonio ran too. When Carmen saw the two wild little figures she shouted and waved her hand to them, and she and the mozo,[23] or servant, who was on the other horse, galloped as fast as they could up the hill to meet them.

[23] Mō′sō.

When they reached the children, Carmen sprang down from her horse and threw her bridle-rein to the mozo. Then she quickly opened a little bundle which he handed her, and gave the children each a drink of milk, and some food, and all the while she murmured comforting things to them.

"Poor little ones—poor little souls!" she said, patting them. "We have been looking for you, the mozo and I, since daybreak! Where have you been, my poor pigeons? Your mother is nearly wild with grief! Tell me, have you seen anything of your father or Pedro? They have not been home either. We thought perhaps they might be searching for you too."

Tonio and Tita both had their hungry mouths so full they could not answer just then, but when the mozo had lifted Tita up on the horse behind Carmen, and had taken Tonio up on his own horse, and they were on their way home, they told Carmen and the mozo just how they got lost, only neither one said a single word about their father or Pedro, or the Tall Man, or the group they had seen around the fire.

They remembered what the Tall Man had said about



coming back to punish anyone who should tell of the secret meeting, and they remembered how fierce his voice sounded as he said it.

When at last they rode into the gate of the hacienda everyone was so glad to see them that the twins felt like

heroes.

José waved his hat and shouted when he saw them coming, and Jasmin came tearing out to meet them with his tongue hanging out and his tail stuck straight out behind him like the smoke behind a fast locomotive.

The news spread quickly through the village, and all the boys and girls and the mothers came swarming out of their huts to greet them and to ask a thousand questions about where they had been.

The first one to reach them was Doña Teresa. She came running out of the chapel, with her rebozo flying out behind her almost like Jasmin's tail, and she clasped them in her arms and kissed them again and again and called them her lambs, her angels, her precious doves.

She kissed the hands of Carmen and thanked her, and then she ran back with the twins to the chapel and made them say a prayer of thankfulness with her before the image of the Virgin.

VI

It was not until she had them all to herself in their little adobe hut that she made them tell her every word about



their adventure. Of course they told their mother everything—about the fire and the Tall Man, and the guns, and what he said about coming back to punish anyone who told.

Doña Teresa rocked back and forth on her knees and wiped her eyes on her apron as she listened to them, while at the same time she made them hot chocolate on the brasero.

As they were drinking it she said to them: "Listen, my children. I will tell you a secret. Promise me first that you

will never, never tell what I am going to tell you now!"

The children promised.

Then Doña Teresa went on: "I am not wholly surprised at your father's disappearance. I knew he had seen the Tall Man. I knew it after Judas Iscariot's Day. The Tall Man talked then with him and Pedro and some others, and asked them to join the Revolution. I begged him on my knees not to go, but he said: 'If I go it is only to make things better for us all. I'm tired of this life. Peons might just as well be slaves.'"

"What is the Revolution?" asked Tonio.

"Oh, I don't know," sobbed Doña Teresa. "Your father says it is rising up to fight against wrongs and oppression. He says the Government is in league with the rich and powerful and even with the Church"—here Doña Teresa crossed herself—"to keep the poor people down, and to take away their land. He says the Revolution is going to give back the land to the people and give them a better chance.

"That's what the Tall Man told him. But to me it looks like just adding to our poverty. Here at least we have a roof

over our heads, and food, such as it is, and I could be content. What good it will do any one to go out and get shot I cannot see—but then, of course, I am only a woman." She finished with a sob.

"Father told the Tall Man that you were a strong woman and that he had no fear for us because you would look after us while he is gone," said Tita.

"And so I will, my lamb," said Doña Teresa. "It is not for nothing that I am the best ironer and the best cook on



the hacienda. You shall not suffer, my pigeons. But you must help me. You must never, *never*, NEVER tell anyone where your father has gone. Señor Fernandez would be angry. It might injure your father very much. We must be silent, and work hard to make up for his absence. I shall tell Pedro's wife. She knows about the Tall Man, and it was the first thing we both thought of when your father and Pedro did not come home last night. But Pablo doesn't know a thing about it, and he must not know. I'm afraid Pablo couldn't keep a secret!"

This made the twins feel very grown up and important. Perhaps after all their father would come back and things would be better for them all, they thought. He probably knew best, for was he not a man? And so they lay down on their hard beds, warmed and fed and comforted, and slept, while Doña Teresa went over and told Pedro's wife all that the twins had told her.



CHAPTER IX

Christmas at the Hacienda

I

Days and weeks and months went by and still there was no news of the wanderers. Doña Teresa worked hard at her washing and cooking, and with the goat's milk and the eggs managed to get enough to feed the twins and herself. But the time seemed long and lonely, and she spent many hours before the image of the Virgin in the chapel, praying for Pancho's safe return. She even paid the priest for special prayers, and out of her scanty earnings bought candles to burn upon the altar. At last the Christmas season drew near.

The celebration of Christmas lasts for more than a whole week in Mexico. Every evening for eight evenings before Christmas all the people in the village met together and marched in a procession all round the hacienda. This



procession is called the Pasada.[24]

Everybody marched in it, and when on the first evening they came to the priest's house, he came out and stood beside his door and gave to each person a lighted candle, which his fat housekeeper handed out to him.

Then while all the people stood there with the candles shining like little stars, he told them this story, to remind them of the meaning of the procession:—

"Listen, my children," he said. "Long years ago, just before our Saviour was born, Mary, his mother, went with Joseph, her husband, from the little town of Nazareth, where they lived, into Judæa. They had to make this journey because a decree had been passed that everyone must be taxed.

"Joseph and the Blessed Mother of our Lord were always obedient to the law, so they went at once to Bethlehem in Judæa, which was the place where their names had to be enrolled. My children, you also should obey in all things, as they did. Discontent and rebellion should have no place in your lives—as it had no place in theirs.

[24] Pah-sah′dah.

"When Joseph and Mary reached Bethlehem they found the town so full of people, who had come from far and near for this purpose, that there was no room for them in the inn. For eight days they wandered about seeking a place to rest and finding none.

"At last, on the ninth day, they were so weary that they took shelter in a stable with the cattle, and there on that night our Blessed Saviour was born. They were poorer than you, my children, for they had no place to lay their heads, and the Queen of Heaven had only a manger in which to cradle her newborn son. It is to commemorate their wanderings that you make your Pasada."

When the priest had finished the story the people all marched away carrying their candles and singing. Each night they marched and sang in this way until at last it was Christmas Eve.

Doña Teresa and the twins went to bed early that night because there was to be high mass in the little chapel at midnight. Doña Teresa slept with one eye open, fearing she might be late, and a few minutes before twelve she was up again.

She washed the twins' faces to wake them, and then they all three walked in the starlight to the little chapel near the Big House. The altar was blazing with lights, and the floor was covered with the dark figures of kneeling men and women, as the mother and children went in out of the darkness and found a place for themselves in a corner near the door.

When the service was over, Doña Teresa hurried home to set the house in order and to prepare the Christmas dinner for the twins. She had made up her mind that the red rooster must surely be caught and cooked, because she wanted to keep the turkey until Pancho should be at home to share in the feast.

She had planned it all carefully. "It will be quite easy to creep up under the fig tree while the red rooster is asleep and seize him by the legs," she said to the twins as they walked home from the chapel. "Only you must be very quiet indeed or he will wake up and crow. You know he is a light sleeper!"

They slipped through the gate and into the yard as quietly as they could. They reached the fig tree without

making a single sound and Doña Teresa peered cautiously into the dark branches.

She saw a large shadow at the end of the limb where the red rooster always slept and, stretching her hand very stealthily up through the branches, she suddenly grabbed him by the legs—or she thought she did.

But the owner of the legs gobbled loud enough to wake everyone in the village, if they hadn't been awake already!

"It's the turkey, after all," gasped Doña Teresa. Just then there was a loud crow from the roof, and they saw the silhouette of the red rooster making all haste to reach the ridge-pole and fly down on the other side.

Doña Teresa was in despair, but she held on to the turkey. "That rooster is bewitched," she said.

Just then the turkey stopped gobbling long enough to peck vigorously at Tonio, who came to help his mother, and Doña Teresa said, "Well, then, we'll eat the turkey, anyway, though I had hoped to wait until your father gets home. But we must have something for our Christmas dinner, and there's no telling when we shall see the red rooster again."

"I shouldn't want to eat the red rooster, anyway," said Tita. "He seems just like a member of the family."

And so the Christmas dinner was settled that way.

The turkey wasn't the only thing they had. There was rice soup first, then turkey, and they had frijoles, and tortillas, of course, and bananas beside, and all the sweet potatoes cooked in syrup that they could possibly hold. It took Doña Teresa so long to cook it all on her little brasero that she didn't go back to bed at all, though the twins had another nap before morning.

They had their dinner early, and when they had finished eating, Tita said, "We must give a Christmas dinner to the animals too."

So Tonio brought alfalfa in from the field on purpose for Tonto, and the red rooster appeared in time to share with the hens twice as much corn as was usually given them. The cat had a saucer of goat's milk, and Tonio even found some bones for Jasmin, so every single one of them had a happy Christmas Day.

At dusk when candles began to glimmer about the village and all the people were getting ready for the Christmas

Pasada, Doña Teresa said to the twins, "You take your candles and run along with Pablo. I am going to the chapel." And while all the other people marched round among the cabins, singing, she stayed on her knees before the image of the Virgin, praying once more for Pancho's safe return.

When they reached the priest's house, the priest himself joined the procession and marched at the head of it, bearing in his hands large wax images of the Holy Family. Behind him came Lupito, the young vaquero who had taken Pancho's place on the hacienda, with his new wife, and following them, if you had been there, you might have seen Pedro's wife and baby, and Rafael and José and Doña Josefa, and Pablo and the twins with Juan and Ignacio and a crowd of other children and grown people whose names I cannot tell you because I do not know them all.

As they passed the chapel, Doña Teresa came out and slipped into line behind the twins. If she had been looking in the right direction just at that minute she might have seen two dark figures come out from behind some bushes near the priest's house, and though they had no candles,

fall in at the end of the procession and march with them to the entrance of the Big House. But she kept her eyes on her candle, which she was afraid might be blown out by the wind.

When they reached the doorway everyone stopped while Lupito and his new wife sang a song saying that the night was cold and dark and the wind was blowing, and



asking for shelter, just as if they were Joseph and Mary, and the Big House were the inn in Bethlehem.

Then a voice came from the inside of the Big House as if it were the innkeeper himself answering Joseph and Mary. It was really the mozo's voice, and it said, No, they could not come in, that there was no more room in the inn.

Then Lupito and his wife sang again and told the innkeeper that she who begged admittance and had not where to lay her head, was indeed the Queen of Heaven.

At this name the door was flung wide open, and the priest, bearing the images of the Virgin and Child and Joseph, entered with Lupito and all the others singing behind him.

The priest led the procession through the entrance arch to the patio, and there he placed the images in a shrine, all banked with palms and flowering plants, which had been placed in the patio on purpose to receive them.

Then he lifted his hand and prayed, and blessed the people, and the whole procession passed in front of the images, each one kneeling before them long enough to leave his lighted candle stuck in a little framework before

the shrine. Señor Fernandez and his wife Carmen watched the scene from one end of the patio.

Doña Teresa and the twins were among the first ones to leave their candles, and afterward they stood under the gallery which ran around the patio, to watch the rest of the procession.

Everything was quiet until this was done, because this part of Christmas was just like a church service.



One by one the people knelt before the images, crossed themselves, and joined the group under the gallery. Last of all came the two dark figures without any candles.

Up to that moment they had lingered behind the others in the background, and had kept as much as possible in the shadow, but now they stood right in front of the Holy Family with all the candles shining directly into their brown faces—and who should they be but Pancho and Pedro come back from the war?

II

The moment she saw Pancho, Doña Teresa gave a loud scream of joy, and then she rushed right by every one—almost stepping on the toes of the priest himself—and threw her arms around his neck, while the twins, who got there almost as soon as she did, clasped an arm or a leg, or whatever part of their father they could get hold of.

At the same time Pedro's wife, with her baby on her arm and Pablo beside her, made a dash for Pedro, but Pablo got there first because, you remember, his mother was fat. And Pedro was so glad to see them he tried to hug her and the baby both at once, while Pablo hung round his neck, only

as he was a small man he couldn't begin to reach round, and had to take them one at a time after all.

Everybody was so glad to see Pancho and Pedro, and so glad for the happiness that had come to their wives and children on Christmas Day that everybody shook hands with everybody else, and talked and asked questions without waiting for anybody to answer them, until it sounded almost like the animals on San Ramon's Day.

After Pancho and Pedro had greeted their families, and had said how Pablo and the twins had grown, and Pedro's wife had told him that the baby had six teeth, and the baby had bitten Pedro's finger to prove it, he and Pancho broke away from them and went to pay their respects to Señor Fernandez and the priest, who were standing together, talking in low tones and watching the crowd round the wanderers.

Pancho and Pedro had reason to dread what Señor Fernandez and the priest might say to them. They thought the priest might say, "Is this obedience, my sons?" and they thought very possibly Señor Fernandez might say something like this: "Well, my men, do you think you can play



fast and loose with your job like that? You'll have to learn a hacienda can't be run that way. There's plenty of other help, so you may see if you can find work elsewhere."

But as they came before Señor Fernandez and bowed humbly with their sombreros in their hands, the priest glanced at their ragged clothes and their thin faces and said

something in a low tone to Señor Fernandez, and although Pancho and Pedro listened they couldn't hear a word of it except "Christmas Day."

Señor Fernandez gazed at them rather sternly for a moment without speaking and then he said: "Well, Pancho and Pedro, I suppose you've been out seeing the world, and would like to have your old jobs back again, eh? You don't deserve it, you rascals, but I think I can use the men who have taken your places elsewhere on the hacienda, so if you like you can take your boat again the first of the year, Pedro; and Pancho, you can begin your rounds next week. Now, go and enjoy yourselves with your families!"

And if you'll believe me, he never even asked them where they had been! Pancho and Pedro went back to their wives, who were watching the interview anxiously from the other side of the patio, and the wives knew the moment they saw the men's faces that everything was all right and they could be happy once more.

The rest of the people had already gone into the dining room of the Big House and were eagerly watching a great earthenware boat that hung from the middle of the ceiling.

They knew that the boat was full of good things to eat. Beside the boat stood pretty Carmen with a long stick in one hand and a white cloth in the other.

As Pancho and Pedro with their wives and Pedro's baby came into the room, she was saying: "Now, I'll blindfold each of you, one at a time, and you must whack the piñata[25] real hard or nothing at all will happen! I'll begin!"

She tied the cloth about her own eyes, turned round three times, and then struck out with the stick. But she didn't come anywhere near the piñata. Instead she nearly cracked José's head!

Everybody laughed, and then it was Lupito's turn. Lupito was a great man at roping bulls, or breaking wild horses, but he couldn't hit the boat with his eyes covered any better than Carmen had.

Then José tried. He struck the piñata—but it was only a love-pat. The boat swung back and forth a little, but not a thing dropped overboard.

At last Carmen cried out, "Come, Tonio, see if you have not a better aim than the rest of us."

---

[25] Pin-yah′tah.



Tonio stepped boldly into the middle of the room and Carmen bandaged his eyes, turned him round and gave him the stick. Tonio knew what was in that boat, and he was bound to get it out if he could, so he struck out with a kind of sideways sweep and struck the ship whack on the prow!

It was made of earthenware on purpose so it would break easily, and the moment Tonio struck it there was a crashing

sound, and then a perfect rain of cakes and candies, and bananas, and oranges, and peanuts, and other goodies which fell all over the floor, and it wasn't two minutes before everyone in the room had his mouth full and both hands sticky.

Doña Teresa and Pancho watched the fun for a while, and then Doña Teresa whispered to Pancho: "My angel, when did you eat last? You look hungry."

Pancho at that very moment had his mouth full of banana, but he managed to say: "Last night I had some tortillas. I have had nothing since until now."

"Bless my soul!" cried Doña Teresa. "Come home with me at once. Thanks be to the Holy Virgin, you'll share the turkey with us after all! I had to cook him because we couldn't catch the rooster! Tell the twins and come right along."

III

So while the guitars were tinkling and the rest of the people were still singing and dancing and having the merriest kind of a merry Christmas, Pancho and his family said good-night politely to Señor Fernandez and his wife and



slipped quietly away to the little adobe hut under the fig tree.

When they were inside their little home once more, Doña Teresa made a fire in the brasero and heated some of the turkey for Pancho, and while he ate, Tonio and Tita stood on each side of their one chair, in which he sat, and listened with their eyes and mouths both while their father told about his adventures as a Soldier of the Revolution. And then they told him all about the night they were lost, and the secret meeting, and he was so astonished that he

could hardly believe they had not dreamed it until Tita told him just what the Tall Man had said, and what Pedro had said, and about the pebble that rolled down.

Then he said, "Have you told anyone about this?"

And Doña Teresa answered proudly, "Not a soul. Not even the priest."

"You've done well, then," Pancho said. "The Tall Man punishes those who spoil his plans by talking of them. He has raised an army of two thousand men in such ways. We enlisted for only four months, and in that time we turned the region to the south of us altogether into the hands of the Revolutionists. I intended to return home at the end of the four months, but finally stayed a month more to finish the campaign."

"I knew you would come some time, my angel," cried Doña Teresa. "I have prayed every day before the Virgin for your safe return."

"As God wills it," Pancho answered soberly. "I meant at any rate to strike my blow for freedom, and to try to make things better for us all."

"Well, have you?" asked Doña Teresa.

Pancho scratched his head with the old puzzled expression on his face. "I don't know," he said at last. "Things are not right as they are—I know that—and they never will be right if no one ever complains or protests or makes any fuss about it. And I know, too, that these uprisings never will stop until Mexico is better governed, and poor people have the chance they long for and do not know how to get for themselves. It is something just to keep things stirred up. Perhaps some time Tonio here can think out what ought to be done. He may even be a great general someday."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Doña Teresa. She almost upset Pancho's dish, she was so emphatic. "There has been enough of going to war in this family!"

"Well," said Pancho, "war isn't very pleasant. I've seen enough of it to know that: but peace isn't very pleasant either, when your life is without hope and you must live like the animals—if you live at all."

"Now that I have you at home again, I, for one, am quite content," said Doña Teresa; and then she went to unroll the mats and put the children to bed.

They were so tired that they went to sleep in their

corner in no time at all, and when she had snuffed the candles before the Virgin, Doña Teresa came back to Pancho and sat with him beside the embers still glowing in the brasero.

She told him everything that had happened on the hacienda while he was away, and Pancho told her all the strange sights he had seen, and the new things he had learned, and at last he said: "Anyway, I've made up my mind that Tonio shall have more learning than he can get on this hacienda, though I don't know yet how it can be brought about. Somehow children must know more than their parents if things are ever to be better for the poor people of Mexico."

And Doña Teresa answered, "Well, anyway, we have each other and the twins, so let's take comfort in that, right now, even if there are many things in the world that can't be set right yet awhile."

Just then the first streak of dawn showed red over the eastern hills. Out in the fig tree the red rooster shook himself and crowed, and to Pancho, as he stretched himself on his own hard bed in his own poor little home once more,

it sounded exactly as if he said,

"Cock-a-doodle-do-oo.

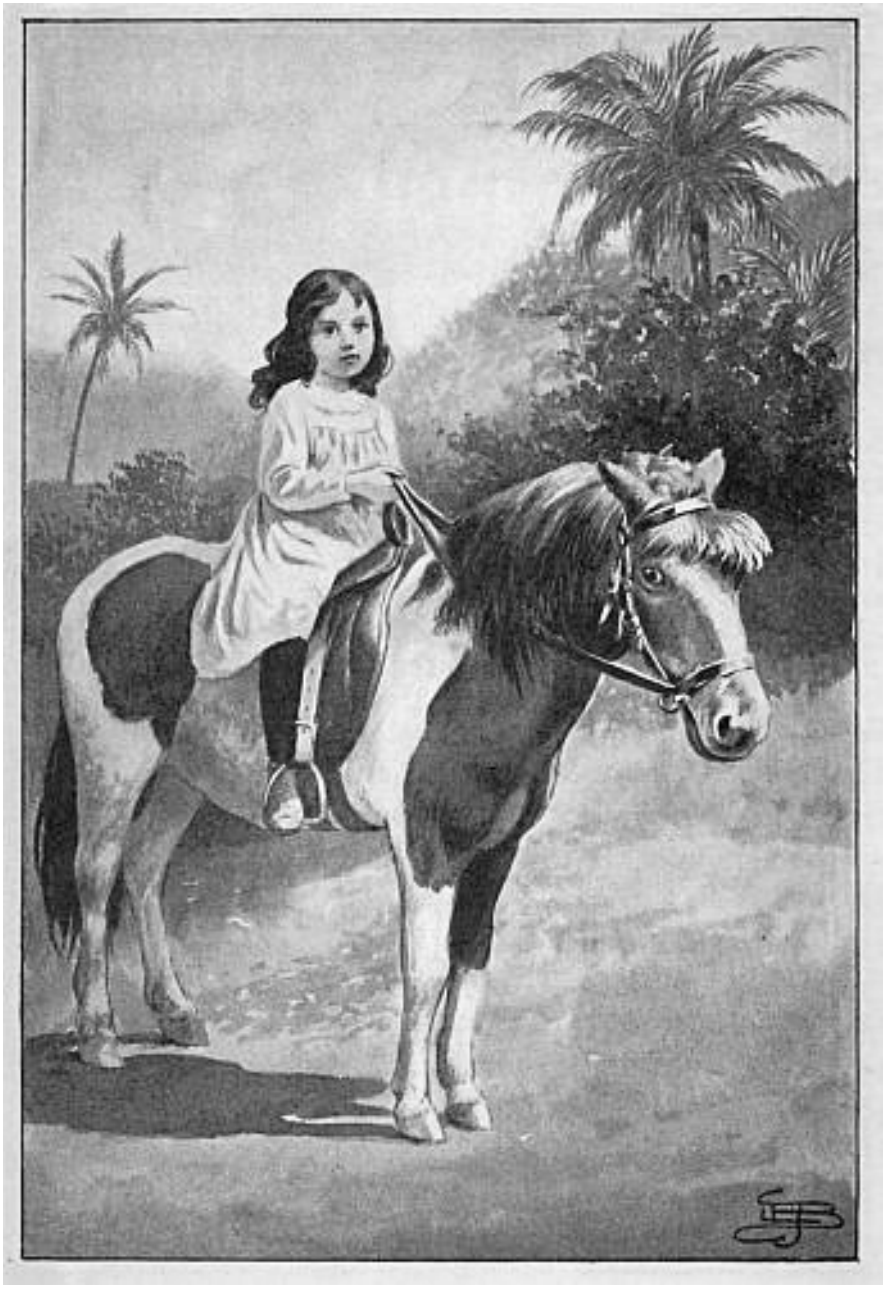
We're glad to see you-oo-oo."

THE END



Our Little Cuban Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade
Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



Preface

Largest of all the fair West Indian Islands which lie in our open doorway is Cuba. The great south doorway to the United States and all North America, you know, is the Gulf of Mexico.

But recently, as we all remember, we have had war and bloodshed at this doorway. The Spanish government, in trying to subdue its rebellious province of Cuba, brought great hardship and suffering upon the Cuban people, our neighbors, and our government at last decided that such things must not be at our very doorway. So today Cuba is free, and the great trouble of war is over and past for her.

Yet, though war no longer troubles the Cuban people, they have many new hardships and difficulties to contend with, and need the friendly help of their more fortunate neighbors scarcely less than before. Now, in order that we

may be able to help our friends and neighbors, the Cubans, we must know them better, and surely we shall all feel a stronger interest than ever before in their welfare. So we shall be glad to meet and know our little Cuban neighbor, Maria.

We shall ask to have what Maria says translated for us, for most of us do not understand the Spanish language, which Maria speaks. We must remember, too, to pronounce her name as if it were spelled Mahreeah, for that is the way she and her family pronounce it. Our Cuban cousins, you know, like our cousins in Porto Rico, are descended from the dark-eyed, dark-haired Spanish people. Their forefathers came over seas from Spain to Cuba, as the English colonists came across the ocean to our country, which is now the United States.

Yet we must remember that the Spanish people and the English people are near akin in the great human family. They both belong to the white race; and so we shall call our black-eyed little neighbor our near cousin. Welcome, then, to our little Cuban cousin!

CHAPTER I

Danger

"Maria! Maria! Maria!" was the low call from some unknown direction. It sounded like a whisper, yet it must have travelled from a distance. Low as it was, the little girl dozing in the hammock in the lemon grove was awake in an instant. She sprang out and stood with hands shading her eyes, looking for the owner of the voice.

She well knew what it meant. Ramon was the only one who had agreed to call in this way. It was a sign of danger! It meant, "The enemy are coming. Look out and get ready." Shouldn't you think our little Cuban cousin would have trembled and cried, or at least run for protection to her mother?

Maria was only nine years old. She was a perfect fairy of a child, with tiny hands and feet and soft black eyes. But

she was used to war by this time. She never knew when she went to sleep at night but that her home would be burnt down by the cruel Spaniards before the end of another day.

Ramon got up before sunrise this morning. He had been away from home for several hours. He had gone out in the country "to look around," as he said. From his own front door the burning roofs of the houses of old friends not a mile distant could be seen the night before. The Spanish troops must be near. Who could say but that the boy's own home would suffer next?

He was tall and active, and he longed very much to help his people. They had suffered much from their Spanish rulers and now they were working hard for freedom. But Ramon's father had been ill for a long time. He was growing weaker every day. The boy's mother looked very sad at times. Her eyes filled with tears when she said: "My dear boy, you must not leave us now. Your duty lies at home. You must be your father's right hand and protect your little sisters and myself."

The Diaz children lived in a cozy little home in the country. It was only a few miles from Havana. Their father

had a small sugar plantation. He had been able to raise enough sugar to buy everything the family needed until lately. But now times were very hard. It was not easy to sell the sugar; besides this, the good man and his family were in constant danger.

What had they done? you ask. Nothing. They did not love their Spanish rulers, to be sure, and they believed their countrymen were fighting justly to free their beautiful island home. They would help these countrymen, or insurgents, as they were called, if they had a chance.

But Maria's father had never, himself, fought against the Spaniards. He was a quiet, kindly gentleman, and he had no love for war. What did the Spaniards care for that? They might say to themselves:

"This man has a pleasant home. He raises sugar. He may give food and shelter to those daring Cuban soldiers. Then they can keep up their strength and be able to keep up the fight against us all the longer."

So far Maria's home had been spared. Although many other houses near her had been burned, hers stood safe and unharmed yet. But "Tomorrow is another day," the child

often repeated to herself, after the manner of her people. That meant, "Although I am safe now, no one knows what will come next." Then Maria would sigh for a moment and look sad. But she was naturally merry and gay, and the next moment would be dancing about and humming a lively tune.

What news was her brave brother bringing this morning? As soon as he came in sight, Maria ran to meet him. The sun was very hot and the little girl's head was bare, but she did not think of these things. The Spaniards! The Spaniards! made the only picture she could see.

As soon as she was within easy call, Ramon told her that a company of the enemy was only two miles away. He had been very close to them. He had even heard them talking together while he hid in the bushes.

"Just think, Maria," he exclaimed, "they were laughing at the easy time they would have in breaking our spirit. They said that before long they would starve us into giving up. I rather think they won't. Do you know, Maria, I believe God will send us help if we are only patient. The Americans live so near us, I don't see how they can help taking our

part, when they know the way we are treated. But come, we must hurry and tell father the news. He will know what we ought to do to get ready for a visit today."

The children hurried to the house, and soon everyone was in a state of the greatest excitement. When Señor Diaz was told of the approach of the Spaniards, he said, in his gentle voice, "We would best have a picnic."

The children looked greatly astonished at the idea of a picnic at such a time, but their father went on to explain. He had often thought of the coming of the Spanish troops. He had made a plan in case he should hear of their approach. The house should be locked up; all the family should go down to the shore of a small lake a quarter of a mile back in the woods. The path that led to this lake was so hidden that a stranger would not know it was there. Ramon could lead the oxen; the father thought that he was strong enough to guide the horse to the picnic ground.

If the Spaniards found no one about the house, and no animals worth capturing, they might possibly pass by without doing any harm.

Señora Diaz and old black Paulina got a hasty luncheon

ready. Maria said she must certainly take her sewing materials, for she was going to embroider some insurgent emblems. Her little sister, Isabella, carried her pet kitten in her arms, and cried because the parrot must be left behind.

"He'll be so lonesome," she said; "and I just know he'll call 'Isabella' all day long."

The dear little girl cried hard, but everybody's hands were so full that Mr. Poll was left in the house. A big linen cloth was stretched over the cage. If kept in the dark, he would probably be still, and not attract the attention of the soldiers, if they stopped and looked in. The black man servant, Miguel, stayed behind to shut up the chickens in barrels, but would follow the rest of the party in a few moments.

The path led in and out through the beautiful southern woods. There were cocoanut-palms and ebony and mahogany trees, while underneath were creeping vines and bushes, making a close thicket of underbrush. There was no talking. The family crept along as quietly as possible, lest they should be heard and followed. For by this time the enemy must be very near.

CHAPTER II

The Picnic

In a few minutes the lake was in sight. It was a very pretty sheet of water. A tiny boat rocked to and fro close to the shore, for Ramon and Maria often came here to row about the quiet lake.

Ramon soon had two hammocks swinging between the trees for his father and mother. The lunch was spread out on the ground, as it was already past the time for the noonday meal.

"What did they have to eat?" you ask. There were some delicate white rolls, that Paulina knew how to make so nicely. There was guava jelly to eat on the rolls; fresh lemons and newly made sugar from which to make a refreshing drink. Besides these, there was plenty of cold fried chicken. Could any children have a nicer picnic lunch than this, even if a long time had been spent in getting ready for

it?

The guava jelly looked just as clear and beautiful as that which is brought to America, and sold here at such a high price. Did you ever see it in the stores of Boston or New York, and think how nice it must taste? Perhaps your mother has bought it for you when you were getting well after a long illness, and wished to tempt your appetite by some new dainty. Maria has several guava trees near her home. Paulina makes so much jelly from the ripe fruit that perhaps the little girl does not realize how nice it is.

After the lunch, Señor Diaz stretched himself in one of the hammocks for a quiet rest. He was very tired after his walk through the woods. He was also troubled over the sad state of things in his country, and was worried that he was not strong enough to take a more active part against the enemy. His wife lay down in the other hammock for a noon-day nap, after which she promised to help Maria in her sewing.

Paulina gathered the remains of the lunch and put things in order, while the three children rowed around the lake.

"Won't you hear me read out of my primer, Maria?" said Isabella. "Ramon, dear, give your oars a rest, and float for a little while. You can listen, too, and I know you'll like my lesson today."

The little girl was just learning to read, and she had a book printed by the insurgents. No one had to urge her to study, for even her own little primer was made up of stories about the war. She had tucked her loved book in the loose waist of her dress when she left the house. No one had noticed it before.

"Why, yes, my darling sister, certainly I will listen, and help you with the big words, too," answered Maria, while Ramon drew in his oars, and lay back in the boat with a pleasant smile. Of course the words were all Spanish, because that was the only language the children had ever learned. Isabella read: "My papa is in the army of the Cubans. He fights to make us free. Do you hear the cannon roar? Our men will bring victory. Long live Cuba!"

When Isabella came to the word "victory," Maria had to help her. It was such a big word for the six-year-old child to pronounce. She looked at it again and again, repeating it

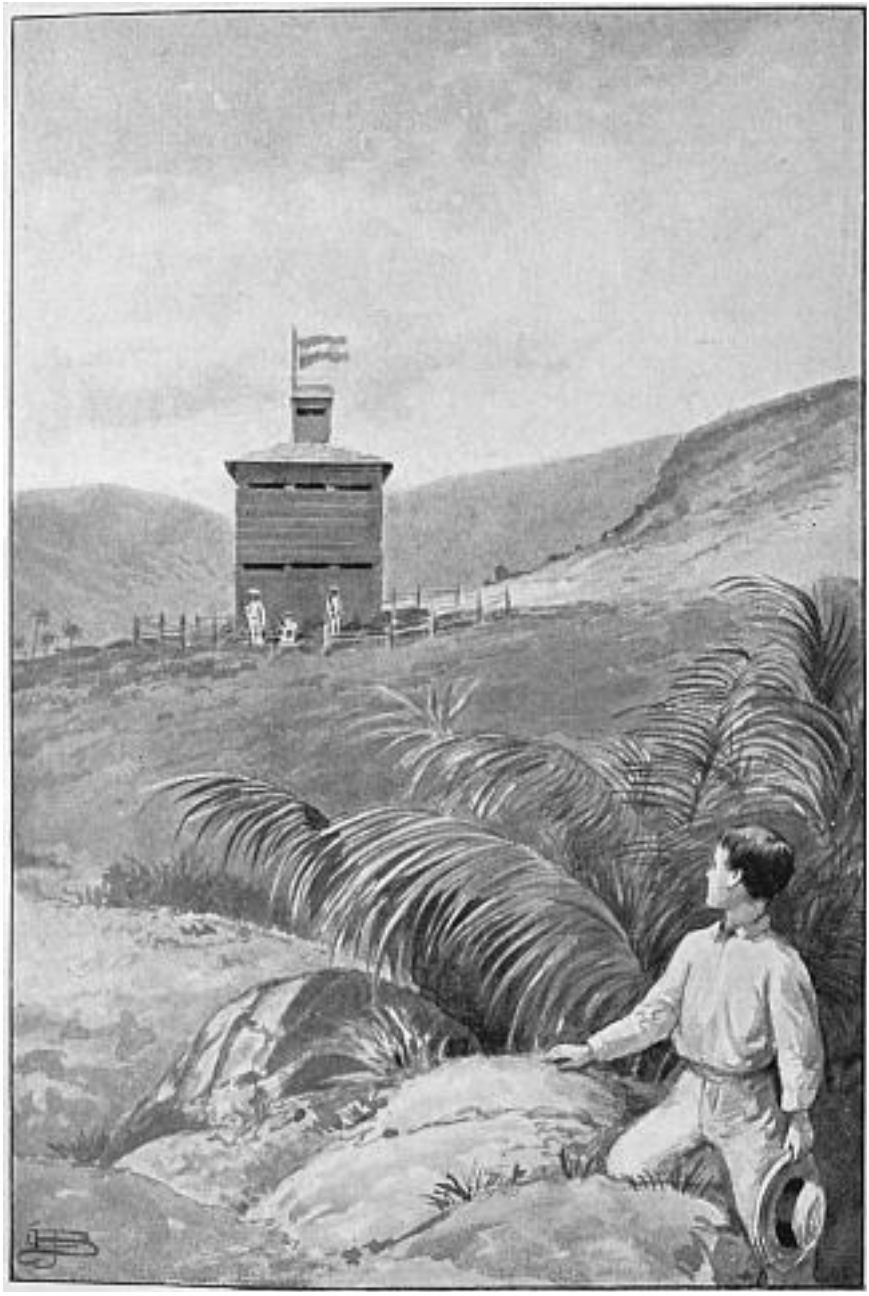
slowly to herself. Then she said: "I'll never fail on that word again, Maria, no matter where it is. How I would like to see it in great big letters on a silk banner! I'd wave it all day long."

This was a good deal for such a little girl to say, but then, you know, she was living in the midst of war.

"Good for you," said her brother; "we'll all live yet to see the words of your primer come true. Long live free Cuba! I say. But come, let's go on shore, and play war. You and Maria can be the Spaniards, and I'll be the insurgent army. You just see how I will make short work of taking you prisoners."

The children landed under a big cotton-tree. They made a fort out of dead branches which they gathered. This fort was to belong to the Spanish troops. The two girls placed themselves behind it, and stood ready to defend themselves. It was not many minutes before Ramon took them by surprise, and dragged them to the boat, which stood for the Cuban headquarters.

"Do you know," said the boy, when they stopped to rest a few minutes from their sport, "I counted three different



"I counted three different forts of the enemy."

forts of the enemy during my tramp this morning. The cowardly Spaniards don't dare to march very far away from those forts. They really don't give our men a chance to have a good fair battle. They think by having plenty of forts they can keep our soldiers from getting into the cities. Then they will scare the rest of us who live in the country from feeding them. In that way we will be starved into giving in. We'll see, that's all."

By this time Maria could see that her mother had waked up and left the hammock.

"She will be ready to help me with my work now," said Maria. "Don't you want to come and watch me embroider, Isabella?"

The two girls were soon sitting beside their mother, while Ramon went with Miguel on a hunt for birds. The insurgent emblems which Maria was so eager to make were to be given to the Cuban soldiers. They were to wear beneath their coats. Suppose that an insurgent should stop at any place, and ask for food and rest; how would the people know that he was true to his country, and not a friend of the Spaniards? He could show his little piece of

flannel with the watchword of the Cubans embroidered upon it. That was the only thing needed. The people would be safe now in giving him help.

Maria did her work very nicely. She made a scalloped edge with red silk all around the white cloth. A crimson heart on a green cross must then be made, with underneath these words: "Be of good cheer. The heart of Jesus is with me."

Two hours went by before Ramon came back. Miguel and he were bringing a large net full of birds. Of course, they had done no shooting. That would not have been wise when Spanish soldiers might be near to hear the noise. No, they had searched through the woods till they found some sour orange trees. The fruit was ripe now and there were sure to be numbers of parrots around. They could be caught in the net that Miguel had brought from the house that morning. They had to creep along very quietly so as to take the birds by surprise.

They had great success, it seemed; but what would the family do with a dozen dead parrots? Eat them, to be sure. Paulina would make a fine stew for dinner that very night.

That is, of course, if they were fortunate enough to find the house still standing when they reached home. The flesh of this bird is tough, and one wonders that Ramon and Maria are so fond of parrot stew. In Cuba there are many nicer birds for eating. But each one has his own tastes. No two people are alike, we have found out long ago.

"I discovered something in the woods that I want to show you girls," said Ramon. "It's only a little ways off. Won't you come, too, mamma? It's the dearest little nest I ever saw in my life. It must belong to a hummingbird."

Ramon's mother and the children followed him till the boy stopped in front of a low bush. Hidden away under the leaves was the tiny nest. It was no bigger than a large thimble. It was made of cotton, bound together with two or three horse-hairs.

"I'm sure I couldn't have sewed it as well as that," said Maria. "See how the threads are woven in and out. It's wonderful what birds can do. But look at the eggs, mamma dear. See! there are two of them. They aren't any bigger than peas."

Just then the children heard a fluttering of tiny wings. It

was Mrs. Humming-Bird who had come home. She was troubled at the sight of the strangers.

"Did you ever before see such a small bird?" whispered Isabella. "She looks like a butterfly, and a small one, too. Aren't her colors beautiful?"

"We would best let her go back to her nest, now, my dears," said Señora Diaz. "You can watch, Ramon, and find out when the baby birds hatch. We shall all like to see them, I'm sure."

They left the bush and turned back toward the lake. Ramon stopped again, however, when they came to a small lace-wood tree.

"You know you asked me to get you some of the wood to trim your doll's dress, Isabella. Here is a good chance to get it. I'll follow you in a few minutes."

Ramon took out his knife, and soon the young tree was cut away from the roots. It would take some time to strip off the bark. It must be done carefully and peeled off in one piece, so as to leave the pith of the tree quite smooth and whole. Several strips of delicate lace could be obtained from this pith. Now Isabella would be able to dress her doll in

great elegance. She could ruffle the lace on the waist and flounces of the doll's skirt and make it look as beautiful as though it cost a good deal of money. Isabella herself has a dress trimmed with the lace, but Paulina needs to be very careful when she irons it. It was growing dark when Ramon arrived at the shore with his tree.

"We will go back now," said Señor Diaz, "and see if the soldiers have left us our home."

All were soon making their way back to the house, which they found unharmed. Nothing had been touched by the enemy. Perhaps they had not thought it worthwhile to stop. At any rate, there was great joy in the Diaz family that evening as they sat on the balcony, sipping cups of hot sweetened water. The times were so hard they could not buy coffee, and *guaraba,* as they called it, was the next best thing. Maria is very fond of it.

The children were so tired from the day's excitement that by eight o'clock they were quite ready to go to dream-land. Isabella started first. She went up to her father and, placing her tiny hands across her breast, looked up into his eyes with a sweet, solemn look. He knew at once what it

meant. She was asking an evening blessing before leaving him for the night. Everyone in the room stopped talking; all bowed their heads while the kind father said: "May God bless my darling child, and all others of this household."

Maria and Ramon followed Isabella's example, and soon the children were sound asleep. Isabella dreamed that she taught her loved parrot to say "Liberty," and was delighted at her success.

CHAPTER III

Legends

The next morning it rained quite hard, so the children had to stay in the house.

"What shall we do with ourselves?" said Maria. "Oh, I know. We'll ask father to tell us stories."

"What shall it be today?" he asked. "Do you want a tale of old Spain, or shall it be the life of Columbus; or maybe you would like a fairy story?"

"A fairy story! A fairy story!" all cried together.

"Very well, then, this shall be a tale that our people heard in Europe a thousand years ago.

"It was long before Columbus dreamed of his wonderful voyages across the Atlantic. It was before people had even thought of the idea of the roundness of the earth. They had such queer fancies in those days. Few men dared to sail far into the West. They believed that if they did so they would

come into a place of perfect darkness.

"Still they had one legend of a land across the Atlantic that was very beautiful. Many of our greatest men believed in it. It was called the Island of Youth, and people who reached it could live forever, and never grow old."

"What made them think there was such a place?" asked Maria, with wide-open eyes.

"They had heard that long ago there was a very brave young man. He had a wonderful horse as white as the foam of the ocean. Strange to say, this horse could carry him through the water more safely than the stoutest boat. As he was looking for adventure, he started off on the back of his fairy steed to cross the ocean.

"After he had travelled for some distance, he stopped to kill a giant who had enchanted a princess. When the giant was dead, and the beautiful maiden was free once more, he travelled on till he came to a land where the trees were loaded with birds. The air was filled with their sweet music.

"He stayed in this land for a hundred years. He was merry and gay all the time. He was never ill, and never tired."

"But wasn't he lonesome?" asked Ramon. "I should

think he would wish for other company besides the birds."

"Oh, there were many other people there, of course, and as our traveler was fond of shooting, he had great sport hunting the deer.

"But at last something happened to make him think of his old home and friends. It was a rusty spear that came floating to the shore one day. It must have traveled across the ocean. The young man grew sad with longing for the scenes of his early days. He mounted his white steed once more, plunged into the ocean, and at last reached his own home.

"But think, children. It was a hundred years since he had seen it. His old friends were all dead. The people seemed like dwarfs. I suppose he must have grown in size and strength while away on the Island of Youth. At any rate, his own home was not what he expected to find it. He had no wish to live longer. He lay down and died. The Island of Youth had not been such a great blessing to him, after all.

"Another story used to be told in Spain of the Island of Seven Cities. It was a legend of our own Cuba, for all we

know. People said that a thousand years before Columbus crossed the Atlantic, an archbishop was driven away from Spain. Why was it? He was untrue to his king. He sailed far from his country with a goodly company of men and women.

"After a long voyage they reached a land which they called Antilla. There were people already living here. They were kind and gentle.

"The archbishop divided the land into seven parts. He built churches and other fine buildings. He got the natives to help him. All lived together in peace and happiness.

"But look, children, the rain has stopped falling, and the sun is shining. You can go outdoors now, and amuse yourselves. Before you leave, however, let me ask you a question in geography.

"Cuba is shaped like what animal? Think how long and narrow it is, and of the ridge of mountains running through the center of the island. I will give you until tomorrow to guess the answer.

"And, by the way, did you ever think that our home is really the top of a row of mountains reaching up from the

floor of the ocean? Ah, what wonders would be seen in the valleys below us, if we could journey under the water, and explore it for ourselves!"

Just as the good man stopped speaking, Miguel knocked at the door. Two ragged little girls were standing at his side. They were strangers. Where had they come from during the hard rain of the morning?

It seemed that Miguel had been tramping through the woods after game. He did not care for the rain. He was a good-natured servant, and was always ready to make pleasant surprises for the family. When he was about four miles from home, he came upon an unexpected camp. There were about thirty people in it. There, on the mountainside, they had made rough huts to live in. There were not only men and women, but little children, also. They had been here for two or three weeks.

What a sad story they had to tell! It was the old story. They wished to be peaceful; they did not join the army of the Cubans. Still, they might possibly help them in some little way. But they did not go to the great city. They fled to the woods on the mountainside. They kept themselves

from starving by gathering berries and wild fruit. Their children were sent out every morning to the country homes which were not too far off to beg for food and help.

"Poor little children!" exclaimed Maria, when Miguel had finished his story. "We will help you all we can, won't we, papa?" And the child's eyes were full of tears, as she said: "We may be homeless like them, yet."

Isabella ran to call her mother and ask her help. Clothing was collected, and all the food the family could spare was put into baskets. It was far too large a load for the little girls to carry, so Ramon and Miguel went with them.

"What a good servant Miguel is!" said Señor Diaz to his wife, after they were gone. "So many of the blacks are lazy, and only think of their own comfort. But Miguel is always good-natured and ready to help."

CHAPTER IV

Next-Door Neighbors

It was a beautiful Sunday morning. The birds were singing gaily outside. Maria opened her eyes. Perhaps she would have slept longer if she had not been wakened by a sound in the next room. It was Ramon who was calling.

"Say, Maria, what shall we do today while father and mother are gone to church? Let's go over to the plantation. You know we've been invited ever so many times, and it is such fun watching the men at work."

"All right," said Maria, "but there's no hurry. We will wait till after the folks have gone before we start."

Just beyond the home of the Diaz children was an immense sugar plantation. It covered at least a square mile of land. The rich planter who owned it employed more than a hundred black men. It was cutting season now, and the work was carried on day and night, both Sundays and

weekdays. Sunday afternoon, however, was a half-holiday, even in the busiest time, and the black people then gave themselves up to merrymaking, no matter how tired they were.

By nine o'clock Señor Diaz and his wife had left home in the oddest-looking carriage you ever heard of. It was a *volante*. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. It looked somewhat like an old-fashioned chaise. It had immense wheels, and the shafts were at least sixteen feet long.

We think at once, how clumsily one must move along in such a carriage. But it is not so. It is the best thing possible for travelling over the rough roads of Cuba. It swings along from side to side so easily that a person is not bumped or jostled as he would be in any other kind of carriage. But one does not see many new volantes in Cuba now. They are going out of fashion.

Señor Diaz was very proud of this carriage when it was new. It was trimmed with bands of silver. It had beautiful silk cushions. Even now, the good man and his wife looked quite elegant as they sat back in the low, broad seat. Isabella sat between them.



"They sat back in the low, broad seat."

Miguel rode on the horse's back as driver. He wore a scarlet jacket trimmed with gold braid. He had on high boots with spurs at his heels. He felt very proud. It made very little difference to him that his coat was badly torn and the braid was tarnished. These were war-times and one could not expect new clothes.

"If the people at the great house invite you to stay till evening, you may do so," said Señor Diaz to his two older children just as he was driving away. "I know you will be gentlemanly, Ramon; and Maria dear, my little daughter will certainly be quiet and ladylike."

Away swung the volante down the road, while Ramon and Maria put on their wide straw hats and started across the fields for the rich sugar planter's home. They looked very pretty as they moved along under the shade-trees. Both were barefooted; Maria wore a simple white dress, and Ramon a linen shirt and trousers.

They reached their neighbor's grounds in a few minutes. They soon found themselves in front of a large, low house with beautiful gardens and shade-trees around it. But of what was the house made? It was of the same material as

Maria's home, yet we see nothing like it in our own country. It was neither brick, nor wood, nor stone. Maria would say to us: "Why, this is 'adobe,' and it keeps out the sun's hot rays nicely. Don't you know what adobe is? It is a mixture of clay and sand dried by the sun. Some people call it unburnt brick. It was nearly white when the house was new, but now you see it is quite yellow."

There was no glass in the window-cases. In such a warm land as Cuba glass would keep out the air too much, and the people inside would suffer from the heat. But there were iron bars across the casements; there were also shutters to protect the house from the sun and rain.

The children went in at the door, opened by a black servant. She looked kind and pleasant, and showed two rows of white teeth as she smiled at the young visitors. A gorgeous yellow bandanna was wound around her head.

"Come right in, little dears. Massa and missus will be glad to see you; little Miss Lucia has been wishing for company today."

She led Ramon and Maria into a large sitting room with two rows of rocking chairs opposite each other. They

stretched nearly from one end of the room to the other. There was scarcely any other furniture.

A minute afterward, Lucia opened the door. She was about Maria's age and very pretty. But she was dressed like a grown-up young lady. She carried in her hand a dainty little fan, which she moved gracefully as she talked.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you," she cried. "But let us go out into the garden; it is much pleasanter there; don't you think so? I want to show you my sensitive plant. Did you ever have one?"

Maria and Ramon had heard their father speak of this plant, but they had never happened to see one themselves. They followed Lucia out on the balcony. A morning glory vine was trailing up the trelliswork. It was bright with its delicate blossoms, pink and blue and purple. Close beside it was the sensitive plant.

"It came up of itself," said Lucia. "That is, you know, it was not planted by anyone. You see its leaves are wide open now. It is keeping the morning glory blossoms company. Perhaps they are talking together. Who knows? But when night comes it will close up in the same way as the petals of

its next-door neighbor."

"Now, Ramon, just touch the leaves gently."

"Why, it acts as if afraid of me, doesn't it?" said the boy. "See how it shrinks away, even before I take hold of it. I declare, it knows more than some animals."

"Would you like to ride around the plantation? We have three ponies; so each one of us can have one," said their little hostess.

Her visitors were delighted at the idea. While a servant was sent for the ponies the children sat down under a royal palm tree. It stood at least sixty feet high. Its trunk was perfectly straight. Far up at the top was the wide-spreading plume of leaves. There were no branches at the sides.

"I just love this tree," said Lucia. "It seems so strong as well as beautiful. Isn't it queer that the trunk of such a big tree should be hollow?"

"I think it queerer still that the roots should be so small and fine," answered Ramon. "Did you ever eat what is found at the top of the royal palm? Everybody says it is delicious."

"Yes, we had it boiled once for a dinner party," said

Lucia. "It was delicious, but you know it kills the tree to take it off; so father says it is almost wicked to get it. I think he is right."

CHAPTER V

Sugar

By this time the ponies had been brought up, and the young riders started off.

How high the sugar-canes stood! The children could not see over the tops, even from their ponies' backs. The long, narrow leaves hung down much like our own Indian corn. Far up on each plant was a feathery white plume. The stalks were now a golden yellow color. This was Mother Nature's sign that the cane was full of sap.

At Maria's home the cane had been already cut and made into sugar. But there were only two or three fields. Here, on Lucia's plantation, there were hundreds of acres. The men had been working for weeks already, and it was not yet half cut.

"Oh, look, Ramon!" said Maria, "see that dear little black baby asleep between the canes. She can't be more

than two years old. The other children must have gone away and forgotten her."

Ramon jumped down, and, picking up the little tot, lifted her up in front of him on the pony's back. She had been waked up so suddenly that she began to cry. But when the others smiled at her she rolled her big eyes around, and soon began to laugh. She was going to have a ride with white children, and that was a grand event in her life.

A turn in the rough road showed an ox-cart ahead. How small the Cuban oxen are! But they are such gentle, patient creatures, a child could drive them. How they pushed ahead with their heavy load!

When they were young a hole had been bored through the center of their nostrils, and an iron ring was passed through. When the oxen were harnessed a rope was fastened on each side of this ring. The black driver held the ends of the rope, and guided the oxen. He had no whip, for it was not needed.

"Let's follow him up to the top of the hill," said Lucia. "He must carry his load to the boiler-house that way, and I do like to watch the oxen go down a steep place. There,

see! The man will not even get off; he's perfectly safe."

As the heavily loaded wagon passed over the brow of the hill, the oxen squatted down like dogs, and seemed to slide rather than walk, till they reached the foot.

"Bravo!" shouted Ramon. "I'd trust such creatures anywhere. They ought to be rewarded with a good supper tonight. And now that they have reached level ground see how well they trot along. These dear little ponies cannot do much better."

The children still followed the ox-cart, and soon reached the sugar mill. Immense machines were crushing the canes, and the sap was flowing into great tanks from which it was afterward taken to be boiled.

"What does the molasses come from?" you may ask. All Cuban children would tell you at once that it is the drippings from the newly made sugar.

Lucia's father does not sell his molasses, as do many other planters. He thinks it is not worthwhile. You cannot guess what use he makes of it. His work-people spread it on the ground to make it richer for the next year's crop.

His wife does not think of having it used in cooking,

either, as American women do, and so Lucia has never tasted gingerbread in her life. Perhaps you feel sorry for her. Never mind. She enjoys sucking the juice from the fresh sugarcane as well as the black children on her father's plantation; she has as much of this as she wishes, so she never misses the molasses cookies and cakes you like so much.

"Lucia, how is it your father keeps on having the cane cut?" asked Ramon, as the children stood watching the sap boiling down to sugar. "You know, don't you, a new law has been passed ordering the work stopped? It is all because the Spaniards are afraid that the poor insurgents will get food and help from the sugar planters."

"Yes, I know," answered Lucia. "I heard father talking about it. He said he had paid the government a large sum of money to let him keep on. So he's all right. But perhaps I ought not to have said this, for it is his own business, and I should not repeat what I hear."

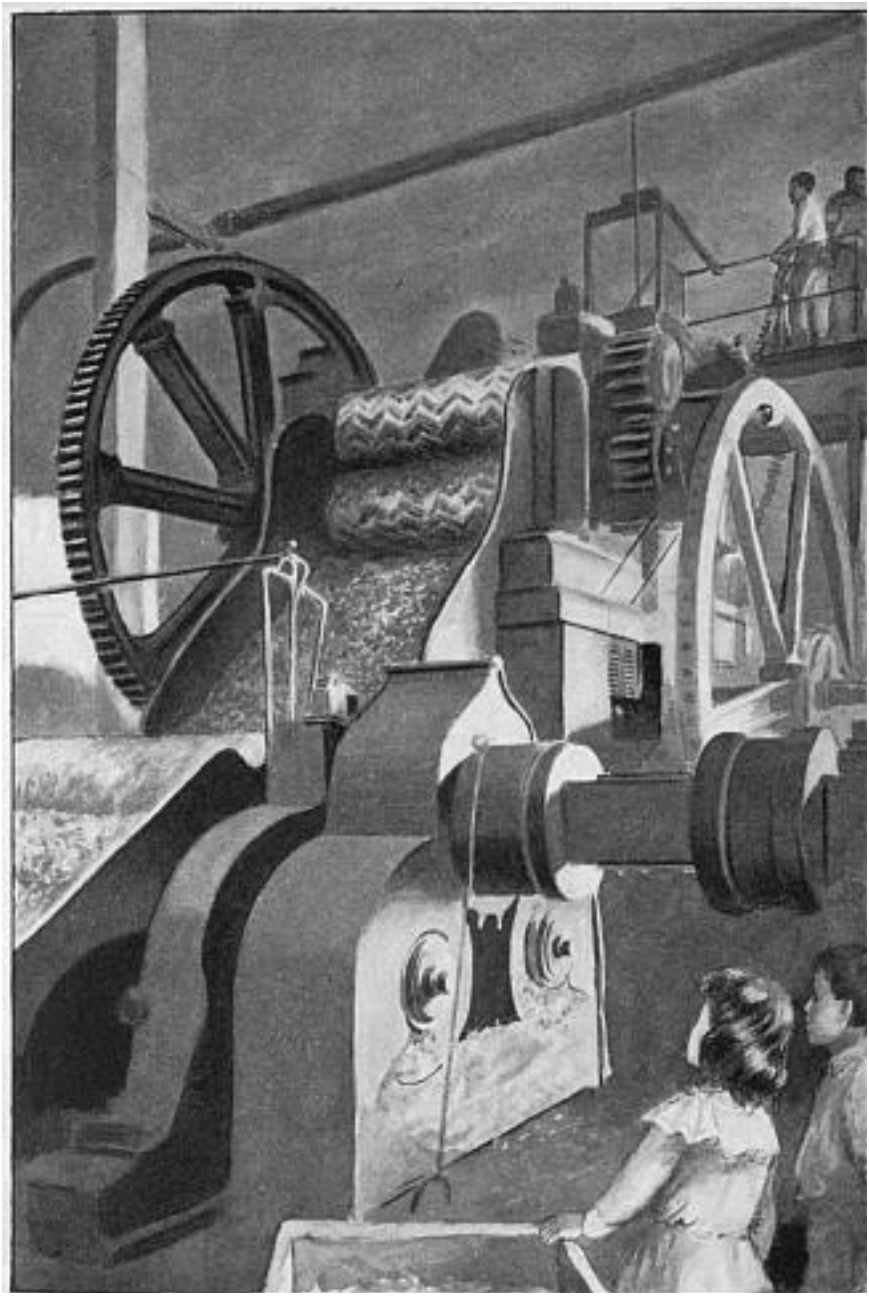
The children entered the sugar mill, and stood watching the workers. Everyone was so busy that no notice was taken of the young visitors. Here were great troughs full of the canes which were being crushed by heavy rollers; the juice

was flowing fast into the tanks below. And there were the caldrons full of the boiling syrup; by their sides stood men with long, heavy skimmers stirring the juice, and taking off the scum which rose to the surface.

There were large, shallow pans close by, where the sugar was placed to cool. The air was full of the sweet smell of the sugar; the engines were clanking noisily; the machines made a steady, grinding sound, and, above all, the cries of the negroes could be heard, as they called to each other at their work.

A few minutes was long enough for the children to stay in this busy, steaming place. Then they went out again into the bright, clear air. After giving the black baby into the charge of one of the negro girls who was standing nearby, our little cousins mounted their ponies, and rode slowly back to the house.

They passed field after field where men were cutting down the tall sugarcanes. How rapidly they moved along, leaving the ground quite clear, as they passed over it! Was it such hard work? They certainly bent over very much as they lifted the heavy, clumsy tools in their hands. These



"The machines made a steady, grinding sound."

tools looked somewhat like long cheese-knives, only they were much thicker and heavier.

Ramon would say, "Why, those are machetes. I wish I could use one now in defending my country. Many a brave insurgent has nothing else to fight with excepting the machete he brought from his little farm. No guns can be obtained, for the Spaniards hold the cities, and will not allow any weapons to get to the Cubans. But those machetes will do great good yet."

As the boy watched the men working, he was thinking how differently he would like to use the machete, but he did not say anything of this kind to Lucia. He was just a little afraid that her father was not as anxious for Cuba to be free as he and his own parents were.

When the children reached the house, Lucia's parents insisted that Ramon and Maria should spend the day, and a delicious luncheon was now waiting for them.

"This afternoon," said the planter, "you may go over to the quarters and see the fun. You know it is a half-holiday, and there will be great good times among the blacks."

CHAPTER VI

The Quarters

After a little rest in the garden, the children started out once more. This time they chose to walk, taking Lucia's big dog with them for company.

Even before they started, they could hear the sound of drums and shouting and laughter coming from the quarters. They did not have far to go before they came upon a crowd of black children. The boys were having a game of ball. It was so confused it would be hard to describe it. It certainly could not be called baseball, nor anything like it.

And here were the cabins, built close together. Cocoanut and mango trees shaded the little huts. Near each one was a small garden where the people raised the vegetables they liked best. Okra was sure to be seen here, for what old mammy could be satisfied with her Sunday dinner unless she had some of this delicious plant in at least one of the

dishes? Here also was the chicota, much like our summer squash, and corn, on which the pigs must be fattened.

As for fruits, there were custard-apple and sour-sop trees, the maumee, looking much like a melon; besides many other things which grow so easily in the warm lands. Chickens were running about in every direction, while there seemed as many pens with pigs grunting inside as there were cabins.

How happy the people all seemed! That is, all but a baby here and there who had been forgotten by his mother and was crying to keep himself company as he sprawled about on the ground. And how grand the women thought themselves in the bright red and yellow bandannas wound around their heads!

You may be sure that all of the jewelry the people owned was worn that day. Maria could not help smiling at one young girl who had immense rings in her ears, three chains of glass beads around her neck, heavy brass rings on her fingers, and broad bracelets that clinked together on her arms. She strutted around as proudly as the peacocks nearby.

They are handsome birds, but very vain and silly, like

this poor black girl who seemed to admire herself so greatly. She tossed her head from side to side as she got ready to lead the dance.

The drummer bent to his work with all his heart; one pair of dancers after another took their places, and moved in perfect time with faster and faster steps. The crowd of bystanders watched them in admiration.

Under the shade of a mango tree two black children were playing a game of dominoes.

"What a nice set it is," said Ramon to his sister. "I am going to ask them if they bought it. It must have cost quite a big sum for them to spend."

The older of the two players heard Ramon's words. He looked up with a proud smile that made his mouth stretch from ear to ear as he said: "I made them all myself, little master. I got the wood from an ebony-tree."

"But of what did you make the white points set into the dominoes?" asked Ramon. "They look like ivory."

"I cut them out of alligator's teeth, little master. Now didn't I do well?"

This was said with another broad grin and a big roll of

his eyes that made Lucia and Maria laugh in spite of themselves.

"Well, I should say so," answered Ramon.

"You deserve a medal. But can you read and write? A boy as smart as you ought to go to school."

"No, little master. But that doesn't trouble me any. I don't need any learning," was the answer. And no doubt the little fellow had no idea but that he was as well off as anyone need be. He could play in the sunshine all day long and he had plenty of good food. Wasn't his mother a fine cook, though! He was right in thinking so, too, for she could make the nicest "messes" out of the herbs and vegetables growing in the little garden behind the cabin.

There were melons and plantains in abundance; salt fish or jerked beef to eat every day, and a long sleep at night on a straw bed in the cabin. Oh, life was a lovely thing! And what should the little black boy know of the cruel war and the Cuban children who had been driven away from their homes? To be sure, he had heard sad stories in his life, but they were about the old times when his people were brought to Cuba as slaves. He had listened to his father's

tales of slavery, although he himself had been free ever since he was a little child.

The boy's grandfather was born far away in Africa where the sun was always hot. He had lived a wild, happy life in his little village under the palm trees by the side of a broad river. As he grew up he hunted the panther and the elephant, and made scarecrows to frighten away the monkeys from the cornfields. He was very happy.

But one day a band of white men took the village by surprise. They took many other prisoners besides himself. The poor blacks were put in chains and driven on board boats in which the white men had come to the place.

Down the river they sailed, never more to see their little thatched homes and have gay feasts under the palms. At last they came to the great ocean, where a large vessel was waiting for them. As they were packed away in the hold of the vessel, no notice was taken of their cries except a lash of the whip, now and then, across their bare backs.

Then came the long voyage, and the dreadful seasickness in the crowded hold of the vessel. Many died before the shores of Cuba came in sight. But when those who still

lived were able once more to stand on dry land they were too weak and sick to care where they should go next.

In a few days, however, they found themselves working under masters on the sugar plantations, and making new homes and friends among those who were slaves like themselves.

The little domino player told Manuel that his grandfather worked so faithfully that after awhile he was given a part of each day for his own use. In this way he earned money enough to buy his own freedom as well as his wife's. But he had children growing up who were still slaves. He wished them to be free also.

Then came an order from the Spanish rulers that all the slaves should be gradually given their liberty. But this was not till many years after their black brothers in America had been set free by that great man, President Lincoln.

CHAPTER VII

Home Again

After Ramon and Maria got home that night they told Paulina about their visit to the quarters, and their talk with the little domino player. Paulina knew him well, and said he was a very bright and good boy.

"Some of those little negroes are too lazy," she declared, "but Pedro is always busy. I wish he could go to school, for he will make a smart man."

She went on to tell more of the old days. There was one story of which she was very fond. It was of a cargo of slaves who were being brought to Cuba. They outwitted their masters. This was the way they did it.

After the ship had been sailing for many days, it began to leak badly. The water poured in so fast that all hands were kept busy pumping it out. It seemed, after a while, to rush in faster than the men could get it out. The ship's

carpenter went around the vessel, and hunted in every part, but could not find a single leak.

"It is the work of the evil one," cried the captain.

The slaves wrung their hands, and wailed, while the crew worked at the pumps till they were quite worn out. When it seemed as though the ship must soon sink, an island came in sight. The Spaniards quickly lowered provisions and water into the small boats, and rowed away, leaving the slaves to die, as they supposed.

But they had no sooner got well out of reach than the ship began to rise out of the water. The black people could be seen dancing about on the deck in delight. The sails were set to the wind, and away sped the vessel.

How was it possible? This was the whole story. The prisoners had gotten hold of some knives, with which they cut through the outer planking of the vessel. Of course, it began to leak sadly. But when the carpenter searched for these leaks the slaves had cleverly filled the holes with plugs packed with oakum, and he could not find them.

In this way the whole cargo of negroes succeeded in getting out of the clutches of the Spaniards. Old Paulina

chuckled as she told the story and thought of the cleverness of her people.

CHAPTER VIII

Startling News

It was a pleasant evening in February. The children felt gay and happy, for their father was getting so much stronger. Why, this very day he had walked with them a mile in an excursion to a cave. Miguel had told them such wonderful things about it, they begged their father to take them there. Although they lived so near, they had never happened to visit it before.

When they reached the spot, they were obliged to crouch down in order to enter the cave. The opening was merely a small hole between the rocks. But, as they crept down under the ground, the passage grew wider, and led into a large room.

"Do you suppose Robinson Crusoe's cave was anything like this?" Maria asked her brother.

But the answer was, "I don't think so; you know it was

not beautiful. And see here, Maria, look at those shining pendants hanging from the roof. They are as clear as diamonds. Oh, look down beside your feet; there are more of those lovely things; they are reaching up to meet those coming from above."

"What makes them, papa?"

Señor Diaz then explained to the children that there must be a great deal of lime in the rocks overhead, and that, when the water slowly filtered through the roof of the cave, it brought with it the lime which formed in these wonderful crystals.

"People pay great sums of money for precious stones," said their father, "but what could be more beautiful than these shining pyramids! The pendants hanging from the roof are called stalactites. Those reaching up from the floor of the cave are stalagmites. Do you suppose you can remember such hard words, my dear little Isabella? But come, children, I have something else to show you here."

He led the children to a little pond, in which they could dimly see, by the light of the torch, fish sporting about in the water.

"Those fishes are happy as can be, yet they are perfectly blind. I made some experiments years ago that led me to discover it. You see how dark it is. The creatures living here would have no use for eyesight, so they gradually became blind. We can only keep the organs of our body in good condition by using them."

It was no wonder the children enjoyed the day with their father, as he always had so much of interest to tell them. This evening, as they sat on the balcony, Maria was talking about the fish that lived in darkness, when Ramon suddenly exclaimed:

"Look! look! the garden is fairly alive with lights. The cucujos are giving us a display of fireworks. Let's catch them, and have some fun. Except in the rainy season, it is not often that we see so many." He ran into the house for a candle, and the three children were soon chasing the cucujos along the walks.

The light of the candle attracted the insects, then it was an easy matter to catch hundreds of them in a fine thread net. We should call them fireflies, but they are much larger and more brilliant than any insect we have ever seen.

As they floated along above the flowers, Maria said they always made her think of fairies with their torch-bearers. The light was soft and cloud-like, yet it was bright enough to show the colors of the flowers, although the night was quite dark.

"Why not make a belt of them for your waists, as well as necklaces and bracelets?" Ramon asked his sisters. "Then you can go in and show yourselves to mother. You can tell her you are all ready for a party."

"All right," answered the girls. "But you must help us, Ramon."

How could the children do such things without hurting the beautiful little creatures, we wonder. But they knew a way, as they had done them before.

Each cucujo has a tiny hook near its head, which can be fastened in a person's clothing without harming it in the least. Grown-up ladies in Havana often adorn themselves in this way when going to a party. They look very brilliant, I assure you.

It was not many minutes before Maria and Isabella were fairly ablaze with lights. Then they danced into the house

to be admired by their parents.

"Now let's take them off and put them in those wicker cages you made last summer, Ramon," said Isabella. "I'm sure the poor little things are tired of hanging from our clothes. They must wish to fly around once more. They will not mind being shut up in the cages for a day or two, if we give them plenty of sugar to eat."

"All right, but I wouldn't keep them shut up long enough to make pets of them," said her brother. "I cannot help believing they would rather be free."

As he said these words, there was a step on the garden walk, and a moment later a strange man stood in front of the children.

"Is your father at home?" he asked. "I have a message for him."

Ramon hurried into the house. Señor Diaz came out and spoke with the stranger in low tones. When he went back into the sitting room he carried in his hand a piece of paper that looked perfectly blank. The stranger had disappeared again into the darkness.

"What did the children's good father do with that

paper?" you ask.

He went quickly to his desk and put it under lock and key. Nothing could be done with it till the morning sun should light up the eastern sky.

"Then what?" you curiously ask again.

If we could have watched Señor Diaz, we should have seen him go to his desk once more, take out the precious paper, and go over it with a hair pencil dipped in a bottle of colorless liquid.

After that, we should have seen Maria running with the paper to the window, where the sun's rays would dry it quickly. Lo and behold! writing began to appear which threw the whole family into a great state of excitement. These were the words: "The U. S. warship *Maine* has been blown up. The Americans are roused. They believe without doubt that the Spaniards are the doers of the terrible deed. Victory shall be ours at last, for the United States will now surely take our part against Spain."

There was no signature to the letter.

That very night Maria's household were wakened by a brilliant light pouring into their windows. It came from the

burning plantation where Lucia had her home. When morning dawned there was no trace of a building left on the whole place. No person was injured, however, but Lucia and her parents went to friends in Havana. The rich planter had become a poor man in a single night.

Who had set the fire? It was probably the insurgents, who had discovered that the planter was a friend of the Spaniards and was secretly working against the freedom of Cuba.

CHAPTER IX

First Years in the New World

"Papa dear," said Maria, one evening not long after this, "why did our people ever leave Spain and come here to make a home for themselves? Of course, they had heard what a beautiful island it is, but was that the only reason?"

"They had indeed heard this, my child, but they also believed they could become rich by raising sugarcane or tobacco. Great fortunes were made in the old days on the plantations here. My own grandfather was a very wealthy man.

"But you know the story of Cuba since then. The heavy taxes and the cruel laws of Spain caused my relatives, as well as thousands of other families, to lose their fortunes. We have tried to free ourselves many times but have not succeeded yet."

"Well, don't be sad, papa dear; the good time is coming

quickly now, you know. We have not had as hard a time as the poor savages Columbus found here, anyway. How I do pity them!" said Maria, with her eyes full of tears.

"Yes, they had a sad time of it indeed," her father went on. "They thought at first the white men were angels and the boats they sailed in were beautiful birds that had brought the visitors straight from heaven. But they soon changed their minds.

"Columbus was greatly excited when he looked upon the plants and trees so different from any he had ever seen. He said: 'I will call this place the "Pearl of the Antilles,'" and so it has been called to this day. He also wrote of it, 'It is as much more grand and beautiful than any other land as the day is brighter than the night.'

"I suppose you know, Maria, that Columbus visited Cuba four times, and yet he never discovered that it was an island."

"I wish you would tell me more about the savages he found here," Maria said. "Of course, I know there is not a trace of them left in the land.

"Their hard work in the mines and the cruel treatment

of the Spaniards soon killed them off. Oh, it is a wicked, wicked shame!"

"Their skins were bronze in color, like the Indians of North America; but they did not know where their own people came from. Once they were asked this question by one of the white strangers. They only answered by pointing their hands upward. It was as much as to say, 'From heaven!'

"The women had long and beautiful hair, but the men had no beards whatever. They painted their bodies with the red earth so common on the island, and adorned their heads with the feathers of brilliant birds.

"They lived mostly in the open air, and slept in hammocks under the trees. They made their hammocks out of the wild cotton you have seen growing in the fields. The women spun and wove this into the only cloth they ever used.

"They had no gardens. They had no need to plough and plant, for nature gave them all they needed. There were many fruits growing wild then, as now. They picked the delicious mangoes, bananas, and custard-apples which were

so plentiful. They gathered the yams and maize which also grew wild all over the island. What more could they wish?"

"I should think they would have liked a little meat once in awhile," said Maria, who had been very much interested in everything her father said.

"Certainly," he replied, "these savages liked hunting, and often brought home game to be roasted. They were very fond of the meat of the iguana. You have often seen this reptile, Maria."

"Oh, I know," she replied; "Ramon shot one only the other day. It is like a big lizard."

"Yes, that is true. The Indians also hunted the voiceless dog, as we sometimes call the creature even now. I hardly know why the Spaniards gave it such a name. It is more like a rabbit than any other animal. There were great numbers on the island in the old times."

"You said the Indians slept mostly in hammocks," said Maria. "Didn't they have any houses?"

"Oh, yes, but they stayed in them very little, except during the rains. They built them of wood and palm leaves. They were clustered together in villages. Sometimes there



"It is like a big lizard."

were two or three hundred houses in one settlement, while several families used one house in common."

"How did they defend themselves?" Maria asked, as her father stopped speaking.

"They had lances pointed with sea shells, and wooden swords," he replied. "These were more for show than for use, for you know they were a sober, peaceful people. Such weapons would have been of little use if they had tried to fight with the Spaniards. The easiest thing would have been for them to leave the island and seek a new home. But they were not wise enough for that, although they had large canoes in which they might have travelled to some distance. They dug them out of the trunks of trees. Some of them were large enough to hold fifty men. Their oars were well shaped, but they used them only as paddles. They had no row-locks.

"They were a happy people, although quiet and serious in most of their ways. They used to dance and sing at their merry-makings, and their music was quite sweet."

"Papa dear, if you are not too tired, won't you tell me again about the great Spaniard who was entertained by the

Indians? It was before they learned to fear the white strangers, and they still believed they were friends."

"Let me see, little daughter. Oh, yes, now I know whom you mean. I told you that story long ago. I am surprised you should remember it.

"It was Bartholomew Columbus, who was sent to act as governor during the admiral's absence. He passed from one place to another on the island to collect tribute from the chiefs. These chiefs had already learned how eager the Spaniards were for gold; so they gave it to the governor freely and cheerfully. That is, of course, those who had it. But if they could not give this they presented the white man with quantities of the wild cotton.

"There was one chief who prepared a grand entertainment in honor of his visitors. A procession of women came out to meet them, each one bearing a branch of the palm tree. This was a sign of submission. After the women, came a train of young girls with their long hair hanging over their graceful shoulders.

"A great feast was spread in the chief's palace and the visitors were entertained with music and dancing. When

night came, a cotton hammock was given to each to sleep in.

"For four days the feasting and games and dancing were kept up. Then the visitors were loaded with presents and their dark-colored hosts kept them company for quite a distance as they journeyed onward to the next stopping-place.

"Could any people do more to show themselves friendly than these poor, gentle savages? Ah! how sadly they were repaid for their trust in the white men!

"But come, we have thought enough about the past. Let us return to the present and the great things that are daily happening around us."

CHAPTER X

The Merrimac

Every day now was full of excitement for the Diaz family. Letters were often brought to the house by some secret messenger. Each time they told of some new and surprising event.

The insurgents were braver than ever before. They dared more because they knew of the good friends coming to help them. Yes, the United States was getting troops ready to meet the Spaniards on Cuban soil. And our great war-ships were gathering also. They, too, were coming to help Cuba.

The great battle-ship *Oregon* was speeding through two oceans that she, also, might take part. The eyes of the whole world were watching her voyage, and millions of people were praying for her safety. How we love the *Oregon* today and the brave captain and sailors who brought her

safely through her long journey!

One little American boy, only nine years old, felt so sorry for the suffering children of Cuba that he wrote these words:

"War, war, war on Spain,
Who blew up our beautiful, beautiful *Maine*.
Think of the poor little Cuban dears,
Think of their hardships, their sorrows, their tears,
Who die every day for the want of some food;
Wouldn't you be in a fighting mood?
Then hurrah! for the soldiers who nobly do fight
In the cause of the weak and for Nature's great right."

This is not very good poetry, but it shows the deep feeling of our children for their little Cuban cousins.

Maria, in her pretty little home under the palm trees, was spared, yet, as she and we knew, there were thousands of children no older than herself who suffered and died before Cuba was free. Our little cousin was delighted when she knew that the American fleet was actually close to the shores of her land.

But the Spanish war-vessels were here too. They were lying in the harbor of Santiago. It was at the other end of the island, but news passed from one to another very quickly among the insurgents. Ramon drew pictures of the two fleets as he imagined they looked. He made new pictures every day. How he longed to see them with his own eyes! I really fear that he would have run away from home and joined the army at this exciting time, if he had not loved his parents so dearly.

Why did the Spanish fleet stay in the harbor of Santiago? Why did they not go out and meet the American war-ships? Were they afraid? It certainly seemed so. They believed they were in a very safe place. There was only a narrow entrance to the harbor. It was defended at each side of this opening, for on the left were new batteries which had lately been set up, and on the right was the grand old Morro Castle which had stood there for hundreds of years. In the olden times it had defended Cuba against her enemies more than once.

"Morro" means hill, and the fortress at Santiago was well named, for it is built on a rocky promontory several

hundred feet high, at the junction of the open sea and the San Juan River.

Mines were sunk in the narrow entrance to the harbor so that, if the American ships should dare to enter, they would explode these mines and be destroyed like the *Maine*. It was no wonder the Spanish admiral thought they were safe in staying where they were.

Then it happened that a young American thought of a plan by which the Spaniards might be caught in a trap. His name was Lieutenant Hobson. It was a very daring plan, but he was a wonderfully brave man.

He said to Admiral Sampson, who commanded the American fleet: "Let me take the *Merrimac*. It is a coaling vessel and very heavy. It has six hundred tons of coal on board. We can place torpedoes in different parts of the ship. A few men can help me sail her into the channel. When the narrowest part is reached we will fire off the torpedoes and escape from her before she sinks. That is, we will do so if we can. But the *Merrimac* will be across the narrow channel and the Spanish ships cannot get out. Our own ships will then be free to attack another part of the island. The

Spanish seamen will have to remain where they are till they are glad to surrender."

Admiral Sampson had thought of many plans, but he liked this one of Lieutenant Hobson's best of all.

But who should be chosen to go with the brave man on this dangerous errand? Chosen! Why, there were hundreds who asked to share his danger, and only six could go with him. You would have thought it was some great festival they longed to take part in, if you could have seen how disappointed the men were, who had begged to go and were refused.

But no, it was a fight with death. To begin with, the *Merrimac* must pass the batteries and Morro Castle. She and those on board might easily be destroyed before she reached the place where the work was to be done. And then, when her own torpedoes should be fired off, how could Hobson and his men expect to escape from the sinking ship?

But they were risking their lives in the cause of those who needed their help. You and I know now that they were brought safely through all the dangers which surrounded

them.

The *Merrimac* passed the guns of the Morro unharmed, for the Spaniards were poor marksmen. She reached the narrow channel where Hobson meant to do his great work. But a shot from the batteries knocked away her rudder, so they could not steer her across the narrow channel. Then a great mine exploded under her and tore a big hole in her side. She began to sink.

Hobson and his men lay flat upon the deck. Shells and bullets came whizzing about them. They dared not rise, even though the ship was breaking apart as the shells crashed through her sides.

At length the *Merrimac* had sunk so low that the water was up to her deck. A raft floated close to the men. It was one they had brought with them to help in escaping. They caught hold of the edges and kept their heads above water.

Just then a Spanish launch drew near. The men on board were about to fire when Hobson cried out and asked if an officer were in the boat, as he wished to surrender. Admiral Cervera, the commander of the Spanish fleet, had himself sent the boat. He ordered the firing to cease and

accepted Hobson and his men as prisoners of war.

When the news of Hobson's brave deed reached Maria, she could think of nothing else for days afterward. She would picture him in his cell at Morro Castle, looking out to sea where the American fleet were still cruising.

"How proud of him they must all be!" she cried to Ramon.

"They can't be any prouder of him than we are to have such friends as he," the boy replied. "Why, he will be looked upon now as one of the greatest heroes the world ever knew. I shall always be proud of Morro Castle because of his having been confined there.

"You know, we went all over the place when we were little, Maria. I believe he is kept prisoner in that part of the castle which is built over the water cave. You know we heard that he can look far out on the sea from his windows.

"Think of the dungeons underneath, where people were locked up years ago. We peeked into one of them that day we visited the fortress and I remember how dark and damp they were. I do hope Hobson is treated well and won't have to stay at Morro very long."

CHAPTER XI

Victory

It was only a few mornings after the news of Hobson's brave venture. The children were out in the garden, where Ramon had discovered a chameleon on a grass plot. It was a sunny day, so perhaps that was the reason the chameleon's skin was such a bright green.

"You know how gray they look on dull days," said Ramon. "Perhaps if I should put him on the branch of that tree, now, he would change to a brownish tint, to look as much as possible like it. He's a stupid little thing, though. If he does change color, I don't believe he knows it himself. Mother Nature takes care of him, you know, and makes him change as a kind of protection. He has no way of defending himself, but if he is of the same color as the substance around him, it is hard for his enemies to find him.

"Oh, dear! it makes me laugh when I think of a battle I

once saw between two chameleons. They stood facing each other. Their small eyes glared as they slowly opened and shut their jaws like pairs of scissors. They moved about once a minute. I did not have time to see which won the battle; it took too long a time for them to do anything."

As the children stood watching the lizard they heard the sound of hoofs down the road. Then there was a cloud of dust as a horseman came riding rapidly along. He turned in at the driveway.

"What news? What news?" cried Ramon, who rushed to meet him.

It was an old friend of the family who had given secret help to the Cuban soldiers throughout their struggle for freedom.

"Of course, you knew the American troops had landed, didn't you? Well, run in and ask your father to come out. I can only stop a moment and I have much to tell him."

The gentleman had hardly stopped speaking before Señor Diaz appeared on the veranda. He was told about the position of the Americans not far from Santiago. They had met General Garcia, the brave leader of the insurgents. The

Cuban and American armies were now working together. Battles had already been fought with the common enemy.

But that which interested the children most was the story of the Rough Riders and their daring charges at El Caney and San Juan Hill. Many of these Rough Riders were men who had led a wild life on the plains in America. Some of them had no book-learning; they were not what one usually calls "gentlemen;" but they were great horsemen and brave soldiers. They feared nothing in the world.

They were commanded by Colonel Wood, and had been recruited by Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt, who had been out on the plains among them when a young man. He admired their spirit and was glad to be their commander now. He knew their ways. He led them up the San Juan heights when the enemy was protected by forts and shooting right and left at the Americans. But the Rough Riders charged onward with great courage and gained the summit. They took possession of the blockhouse at the top, and killed most of the Spaniards and drove the rest away. It was a glorious fight and a glorious victory.

"A few more deeds like that, and war and trouble will

be ended for us," said the gentleman as he rode away to carry the good news to others.

"Hurrah for Lawton and Roosevelt!" shouted Ramon as he danced about the garden. "Santiago will soon be out of the hands of the Spaniards, and they will be clearing out of Cuba altogether. It seems as though I could not rest without shaking hands with our American friends."

The dear boy did not have long to wait, for the very next day came the news that the Spanish fleet had been destroyed. It had tried to escape out of the harbor, but had been discovered by the watchful Yankees. In a few hours all of Spain's war-ships had been sunk or driven ashore.

What was now left for Cuba's tyrants? The battle-ships of the Great Republic were ranged along her shores unharmed and strong as ever. The Spanish troops were shut up in the city without hope of escape. Surrender was the only thing possible to ward off great loss of life on both sides.

The Spanish commander made a formal surrender to General Shafter, and Spain's empire in the West Indies came to an end almost on the very spot where it had begun

four hundred years before.

And now the mines were taken out of the harbor and our battle-ships could enter in safety. As our vessels glided inside one after another they made a wonderful picture. The harbor seemed alive with boats, and it looked like a floating city.

Still grander was the sight on land when thousands gathered around the governor's beautiful palace at Havana to see the stars and stripes of America unfurled. As the flag spread its folds to the breeze, the band struck up the air we love so well. It was the "Star Spangled Banner." Boom! boom! went the cannon, and thousands of American and Cuban hearts were filled with joy.

"Victory! Victory!" shouted Ramon, when the good news reached him that night. And "Victory!" cried little Isabella, who added with all her childish might, "Long live Cuba." Even the parrot echoed the words of the children. He seemed to feel that something very great must have happened, for his voice was shriller than usual.

In fact, the family could have no peace in the house, even if there were peace all over Cuba, till Master Poll's

cage had been covered with a thick, dark cloth, and he was made to believe that night had suddenly fallen upon his home.

CHAPTER XII

Havana

"Children, would you like to go to Havana and visit our good friend Señor Alvarez for a week? He has invited us all to come and talk over the good fortune that has come to our land. You can have a good time seeing the sights."

Of course the children were delighted at their father's words; so it came to pass that Maria found herself, a day or two afterward, in a beautiful home in the very heart of the great city.

It was a grand house to her childish eyes. It was all of stone, covered with a yellowish stucco. It was at least a hundred years old, she was told. It was built around the four sides of an open square, and had no piazzas on the outside like her own home. But the court inside was very beautiful. A fountain played here all day long, and there were blossoming plants standing in pots on the marble floor.

The family spent much of their time on the verandas in this court. It was far pleasanter than inside the house, where the windows were so heavily barred that they made one not used to the custom feel almost as if he were in a prison. The doors of the house were bullet-proof to make it safe against attack. There was but one entrance to the house, and that led directly into the court. Here the family carriage always stood unless it was in use.

The gentleman who lived here had one son, a little older than Ramon. He showed the children all around the city. As they went from place to place, he told them how hard his father had worked to raise money for the Cuban soldiers. His mother sold all her jewels, that she might help, too. But they had to do this secretly, of course. If the Spaniards had discovered it, they might have lost their lives. This boy's name was Blanco. He was a fine, manly fellow, and was looking forward now to coming to America.

"I shall go to Harvard College," he told Maria. "I wish to be a minister, but I'm afraid if I do become one, I shall not feel like praying for the Spaniards."

The boy's heart was still bitter, but perhaps he will feel

more kindly when he grows older.

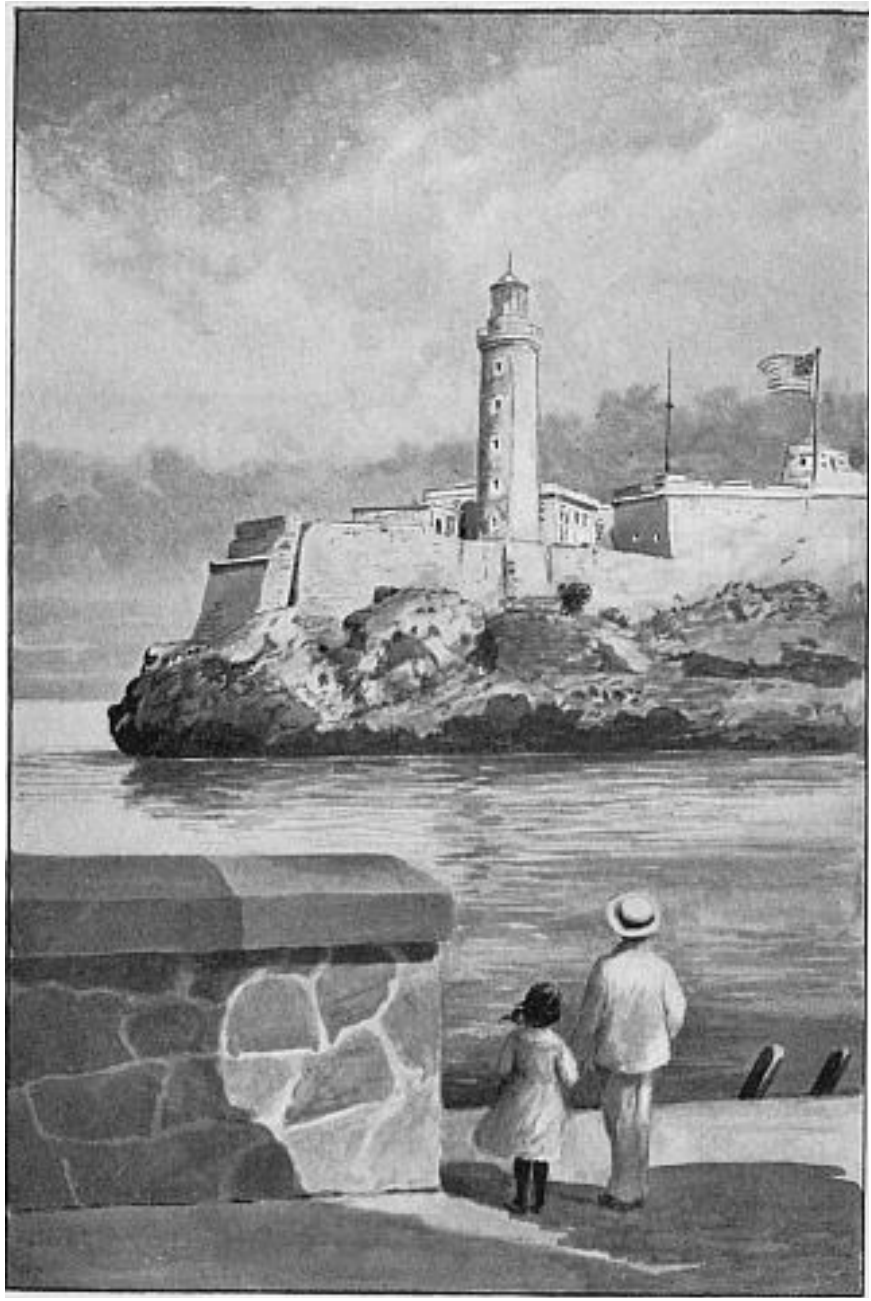
One day he took his young friends out to Morro Castle. Havana has a hill fortress of that name, as well as Santiago. Although Hobson and his men had never been imprisoned in this one, yet the Diaz children were glad to see it.

It stood on a rocky point reaching into the sea. The great guns were still pointing out between the masses of yellow stone. But they were silent. The American flag was waving and peace ruled in the land, although soldiers were on guard here and all through the city.

At the far end of the fortress was a tall lighthouse. It stood like a sentinel to stand watch against possible danger. Once upon a time a wall reached from the great fort in both directions around the city of Havana. But now there was scarcely a trace of it left.

"How narrow and dirty the streets are," said Maria as they left the Morro. "I must say I would rather live in the country, if I could choose for myself."

"It doesn't matter so much about the width of the streets," said Blanco, "or the poor sidewalks, either. Because, you know, we almost always ride. The working



"The American flag was waving
and peace ruled in the land."

people are the ones who walk. But I do not like the dirt. That is all the fault of the Spaniards. They taxed us enough, but they kept the money for themselves.

"Last summer I was very sick with yellow fever. Mother thought I would not get well. She said she believed we had so much of this dreadful disease because the city is allowed to be so unclean.

"But look quickly at that Punch and Judy show! Let's stop and watch it. There is a man playing the harp to make it more entertaining."

The children leaned out of the carriage to see the show. Isabella had never seen Punch and Judy before, and she was greatly delighted. In a few minutes they moved on, but soon stopped again, for here stood a man turning a hand-organ with a monkey beside him dressed in a most ridiculous little suit of clothes. The monkey was dancing to the music. Suddenly he gave a spring and landed in the carriage right in Maria's lap.

Off came the monkey's cap into his little hands, and with the most solemn look it was held up to each of the children in turn.

"Take that, you poor little beggar," said Ramon as he put a silver coin into the cap. Down jumped the monkey and off he scampered to his master.

There were many odd sights for the little country cousins. Among them were Chinese peddlers showing the pretty ornaments which had been brought across the ocean. Once the children passed a cow that was being led home after her morning's work. She had gone with her master from house to house, stopping long enough at each place for her to give as much milk as the people wished.

The cow was followed by a man leading a long train of mules. They were laden with empty baskets. They, too, were going home, as they had left their loads at the markets in the city.

The sun was quite hot and the party hurried home to rest during the noon hours, for, of course, everyone took a nap at this time of the day. They might not all lie down; perhaps some of those who had stores in the busy part of the city would not leave their places of business; they might only lean back and doze in their chairs; but they would certainly keep quiet and close their eyes, if nothing more.

It made one think of the story of the "Sleeping Beauty" to see Havana at twelve o'clock, noon, in the summer season.

As for Maria, the dainty maiden quite enjoyed her rest at the great city house. She could lie very comfortably in a hammock while a little negro girl kept off the flies and mosquitoes with a big fan. She needed the nap in the city more than at home because she was awakened so early by the bells.

Perhaps the children enjoyed Sunday more than any other day during their stay in the city, for it was then that they visited the cathedral containing the tomb of Columbus. There were many churches and grand buildings in Havana, but none could interest the children like this.

It was not very far from the house, but they all went in the carriage, carrying with them the mats to kneel on during the service. It was a grand old stone building, overgrown with moss. There were many bells in the two high towers. They were pealing loudly as the party drove up.

"Just think how old it is," whispered Maria to her brother as they entered the building. "Blanco says that some of the bells were brought from Spain more than two

hundred years ago. Do look at the beautiful marble pillars, Isabella. Isn't it a grand place?"

It was not yet time for the service to begin, so Blanco led the children to the tomb of Columbus, where his ashes had rested for so many years. It was at the right of the high altar. All that could be seen was a marble tablet about seven feet square. Above it stood a bust of the great discoverer.

"They say that Spain has asked the right to have the ashes, and America is going to let her take them. But we shall still have the tomb and the grand old cathedral where they have rested so long," said Blanco.

"Now come and admire the altar."

It stood on pillars of porphyry and was fairly covered with candlesticks, images, and gaudy decorations. Somehow they did not go well with the simple beauty of the rest of the church. But the children admired it, for they were ready to admire everything.

When the service was over, they drove out by the governor-general's palace. It was his no longer, however. The American general who had charge of the city lived

here now. No doubt he enjoyed the beautiful gardens and ponds. He was very active in improving the city. Yes, the work had already begun, and in a few months Maria would no longer be able to complain of the dirt in Havana.

She could say again, but with a different thought in her busy little mind, "Tomorrow is another day."

Yes, although it is but a short time since Maria's visit to Havana, even now everything is changed in the Diaz family. The good father no longer worries; he is fast getting to be a strong, healthy man. He has a fine position under the new government, and Maria lives in a new home just outside the city of Havana. She is rapidly learning to speak English, while one of her dearest friends is a little American girl who has lately made her home in Cuba.

THE END

Our Little Porto Rican Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade
Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



Manuel

Preface

The beautiful island of Porto Rico lies, as you will see by looking at the map, near that great open doorway to North America and the United States which we call the Gulf of Mexico. Very near it looks, does it not?

So the little cousin with whom we are going to become acquainted today is our near neighbour as well. To be sure, a schoolboy or girl from Massachusetts would have to travel a thousand miles or so to see his Porto Rican cousin; and even a child from Florida could not say good morning to his Porto Rican neighbour unless he were to take a sail of several hundred miles.

However, we, who are used to taking little excursions over the world (between the covers of a book), so that we may learn to know our tiny Eskimo cousins who live near the icy pole, and our little African cousins south of the

equator, as well as our Japanese cousins on the other side of the globe, think nothing of the distance between here and Porto Rico. We should expect to feel very much at home after we arrived there, especially now that Porto Rico has become part of our own country.

We shall find our Porto Rican cousins and neighbours, with their dark skins, black hair, and soft black eyes, somewhat different in appearance, indeed, from ourselves; and we shall not be able to understand what they say unless we have learned the Spanish language; for, as we know, the parents or forefathers of our Porto Rican cousins came from Spain to Porto Rico, just as the parents and forefathers of most of us who speak English came from England.

However, these are slight differences; and the Spanish people, from whom our black-eyed Porto Rican cousin is descended, belong to the same branch of the great human family as we do, who are descended, most of us, from English people. That is, the Spanish people and their descendants, the Porto Ricans, belong to the white race. Manuel is thus a nearer relative than the little black cousin, who belongs to the negro race; or the little Japanese cousin,

who belongs to the yellow or Mongolian race; or the little Indian cousin, who belongs to the red race; or the little Malayan cousin, who belongs to the brown race. So we shall welcome the Porto Rican neighbours near our doorway into our nation's family. They were already our cousins by descent; they have become our adopted brothers in our nation.

CHAPTER I

Manuel

It is a beautiful May day. The air is still, yet clear; the sun is shining brightly, but it is not too warm for comfort. There is not a cloud in the sky.

And yet lazy little Manuel lies curled up in his comfortable bed, sound asleep at eight o'clock in the morning. See! A smile lights up his face. Perhaps he is dreaming of his newly adopted American brothers.

Of the things he has read about, he longs to see a real New England snowstorm most of all. To build a snow fort, to make balls of snow and have a mock battle, what fun it must be! To slide down the icy hills, to ride over the snowy roads to the jingle of the sleigh bells, surely there is nothing in his island home to equal sport like that. And so in his dreams our little Manuel takes part in games he cannot play

while awake, until they at last become quite real to him.

But now the door opens, and old black Juana, Manuel's nurse ever since he was born, comes softly into the dark room, bringing a tray in her hand. She steps toward a little stand beside the bed, and sets down the tray. Then she goes to the casement and opens wide the wooden shutter. The sunlight pours into the room, and Manuel slowly opens his big black eyes.

"Oh, it is you, mammy dear, is it?" he says, sleepily, and slowly stretches himself and sits up in bed.

Juana brings a basin of fresh water and a towel for the boy to bathe his hands and face, then draws the stand closer to his side and hands him a cup of steaming chocolate and a roll. What thick, rich chocolate it is, and what a dainty little roll! This is all the boy ever cares to eat in the morning, for he is seldom hungry when first roused. His father and mother are having coffee in their own bedroom at the same time Manuel is drinking his chocolate. This is the way everyone in the family takes the first meal of the day.

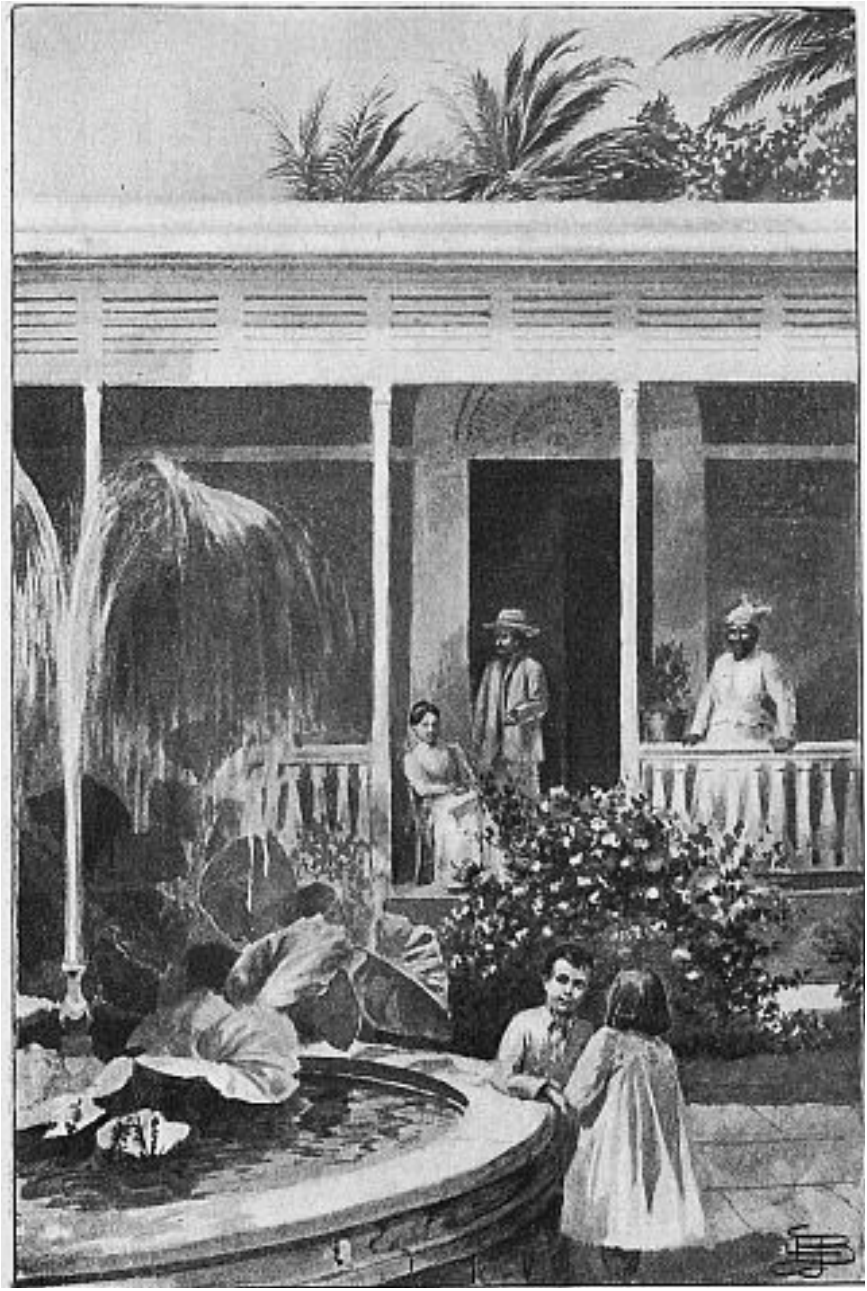
Manuel is a creole. Many, many years ago his great-

great-great (indeed I cannot tell you how many times great) grandfather left Spain and crossed the wide Atlantic Ocean. He came to this beautiful island of Porto Rico to live, and his children and grandchildren liked the place so well they never cared to go back to the mother country. Such people are called creoles; that is, people born in the West Indies of European parents. They set out great plantations of tobacco and sugar and became very rich.

Manuel's father has many acres of their land still, but the fortune of the family has been slowly lost; and, although there are many servants, and a large, comfortable home, there is not much money to spend.

The house is at least a hundred years old. It is made of blocks of stone, built around the four sides of a square courtyard, where orange trees and magnolias stand in immense pots. A fountain is playing in the center of the paved yard and making soft music as the spray falls upon the stones. There is a large aquarium at one side, where Manuel's mother cares for many beautiful fishes.

Vines climb up over the wide verandas; the stone work is nearly hidden by mosses which have made their home



"A fountain is playing in the center of the paved yard."

here; and, over all, the tall, graceful trees of the tropics sway gently to and fro.

There are water-lemon and banana, cocoanut and tamarind trees growing close to the house, and underneath in the rose bushes and acacias hundreds of brilliant hummingbirds are glancing in and out.

At first thought, it may seem strange to us that there are no windows fitted with glass in this old mansion. Our window is an opening in the wall of a building to let in or keep out light and air, as needed. In Porto Rico, where it is summer all the time, people need to have all the air possible in the house; they have no use for panes of glass such as we use. These are rarely seen anywhere in the island, but instead of them, bars of iron are fastened across the casements, or else there are wooden shutters, as in Manuel's home. The slats of these shutters can be set open as much as one likes, or closed tightly when the heavy rains come.

When Manuel has finished drinking his chocolate, old Juana prepares a bath for him. She does not bring any soap, for his mother believes it spoils the skin; but the bath is scented with Florida-water, and the sweet perfume fills the

room.

Manuel is soon dressed, for he wears only a little shirt and loose white trousers during the daytime at home. His feet are left bare, so he may be as cool as possible.

What a handsome fellow he is now that he is wide awake! He is a little smaller than his American brothers of his own age, but he is well-shaped and graceful. People say he looks very much like his beautiful mother. His black eyes are tender and loving, his hair is black, but fine and soft; his skin is dark, yet clear; and his teeth are even and white. Yes, he is not only good-looking, but kind and lovable, we feel sure.

CHAPTER II

Dolores

And now he goes from his room out into the courtyard, for the house is only one story high. His sister Dolores is there already, and runs to kiss him good morning.

"Oh, Dolores," says Manuel, "do you think we have time before our lessons begin to go over to Salvador's and see if he got those fireflies yet? He was to bring them to me last night."

"It's only nine o'clock now, we have an hour yet," answers Dolores, in her sweet voice. "I'm all ready, so let's go."

Both children put on their broad white hats and take a shady path through the fields. They soon reach the huts of the colored workmen, clustered together in a grove of pimento-trees. A "pimento-walk" such a grove is sometimes called, and it would be hard to find anything more beautiful. The trees are of nearly the same height, reaching



Dolores

up about thirty feet from the ground. The branches are covered with glossy green leaves. The berries are not yet ready to pick, but when they are still green the colored boys on the place must climb the trees and break off the twigs; they will throw them down to their sisters on the ground, who will pick off the berries and store them in bags for their master to send to the United States mainland. We call these berries "allspice," and after they have been dried we buy them under that name.

The huts of the workmen are scarcely more than sheds with roofs of thatched palm leaves. Some have sides and doorways, while others are quite open. What do these poor people care for that in this land of summer? If they have plantains enough to satisfy their hunger, plenty of cigars to smoke, and hammocks of the bark of the palm tree to swing in, they are happy and contented.

Within the huts one can see a few earthen pots and gourds; that is all that is needed in their simple housekeeping, whether they belong to the black race or are "jibaros," as the poor whites are called. And most of the people are poor in this beautiful land, although Mother

Nature is so generous here in her gifts to men.

But we must go back to Manuel and Dolores, who are quickly surrounded by a group of little children. They are of all colors: some black as jet, the whites of their eyes looking like windows; others of shades running from dark brown to pale yellow. But they are all noisy, all happy, all talking at the same time, and all naked.

As for Dolores, herself, the dainty little maiden wears only a cotton slip at her play. Many another white child on the island goes about her home with no clothing, and feels very comfortable, too. It is only when the children get to be nine or ten years old that their parents make them dress; and that is a sad time for them, you may be sure.

But Dolores lives in quite a grand way, you know, so she and Manuel were never allowed to go about naked since they were old enough to walk.

But look! one of the little black boys is handing something to Manuel. It is a net filled with the fireflies or beetles he wished to get.

"Come to the house tonight, Salvador," says Manuel, as he takes his treasures, "and I will pay you."

Now what do you suppose Manuel cares for these beetles? They are not beautiful in the daytime. We would far rather watch those lovely green and blue butterflies flitting among the bushes. But Manuel is going to make pets of them. He will put them in a little wicker cage, feed them with sugar, and they will grow quite tame. At night they will be more beautiful than any precious gems owned by his mother.

Let us examine them. They are of a dull drab color, except around the eyes and underneath, where there are rings or bands that glow brightly in the dark, giving forth red and green lights. They gleam like diamonds. Manuel can read by their light, should he choose to do so. The fireflies of Porto Rico are the largest and most brilliant in the whole world.

After the children have finished their lessons today, perhaps they will take some calabashes and bore holes in them. Then when night comes they can put the beetles inside and play outdoors with them for lanterns. Some of the poor people in Porto Rico use no other light at night, except these little creatures.

Manuel carries the net very carefully as he and his sister return to the house. He does not wish a single beetle to be injured or frightened.

"Mamma dear!" he calls as he sees his mother on the veranda, "you shall wear the most beautiful one I have in your lace dress tonight."

What a strange idea this seems to us! but the smiling lady in her white wrapper does not seem at all surprised. She often fastens the living gems under the thin net of her evening gown; perhaps they will glisten on her shoulders, perhaps at her throat, or in her hair. She certainly could not wear more beautiful jewels than these.

"Thank you, my precious child," she answers, "you are very thoughtful; but now your teacher is waiting for you in the schoolroom. Go to her, and give your studies good attention this morning."

CHAPTER III

Lessons

Dolores and Manuel are soon busy with their lessons. Although Manuel is twelve years old and his sister ten, they are both learning to speak French and a little Italian. I fear you would think them rather backward in arithmetic and other grammar-school studies, but their parents do not see the need of knowing as much of such things as do American fathers and mothers.

The children have always had a governess, and have never been in a public schoolroom in their lives. In fact, these are only now becoming common since our people have taken Porto Rico under their care. Think of it, children! In this beautiful island, only one person out of five can read and write at present. Most of these have been brought up in the towns and cities. Those who live out in the country seldom have had a chance to go to school. If they were

too poor to hire a governess or study with the nuns in the convents, they grew up ignorant indeed.

Dolores is taught to embroider and to play a little on the guitar, so her mother thinks her daughter is quite accomplished. Besides, both Manuel and his sister are very graceful dancers and can sing well. These are quite important studies, for wherever one goes in Porto Rico, there he will find music and dancing.

At half-past eleven the books are closed, and the children join their parents for the first regular meal of the day. This is the real breakfast.

It is served in the large, low dining room, where for the first time we see the children's grown-up sister, Teresa. She is a lovely young lady of sixteen, slight and graceful. She has the same black eyes as Manuel and Dolores, soft and beautiful.

She wears no stockings, but her feet are encased in dainty blue kid slippers. They are embroidered with pearl beads, and, no doubt, came from Paris.

An ugly-looking woman takes her place beside Teresa at the table. This is her "duenna." It is her duty to go

everywhere with the young girl. It would not be considered at all proper for Teresa to go driving, or even walking, alone. It would not do for her to go shopping to the town only three miles away unless her duenna were with her; and as for a party or any evening entertainment whatever, if Teresa were to go without her parents or this same duenna, everyone in the country around would be terribly shocked.

But now all are busy eating the breakfast the colored waiter is serving. First, there is a nice omelet, cooked in olive oil. Then come pineapple jam, fish fried a delicate brown, fried bananas, fried chicken, and a salad made of many kinds of vegetables. We must not forget to mention the apricots stewed in honey, nor the tea steeped with the leaves of lemon verbena. It has a delicious odor, and Manuel's father and mother are very fond of it.

There is no butter to eat on the rolls, but the fact is, almost all the butter in Porto Rico comes in tin cans from other countries. On account of the hot climate, it is often rancid, so it is seldom used in Manuel's home. The cooking is done with olive oil. Nearly everything is fried, instead of being broiled or roasted, and no one feels the need of

butter.

Manuel and Dolores, like some other boys and girls we know, are very fond of sweet things, so they eat a great deal of the cooked fruits on the table. But they also seem to like the salad very much, even though it is so hot with Cayenne pepper as to burn the mouth of any one not used to it. But the children are accustomed to highly spiced dishes. Our cooking would seem tasteless to them. Perhaps it is the hot climate all the year round that makes it necessary to have strongly flavored foods to excite the appetite.

After this second breakfast is over, cigarettes are served, and, would you believe it! our little Manuel, as well as his mother and older sister, joins in a smoke. Such is the custom of his country that even children of three or four years use tobacco. It is no wonder, then, that as the boys and girls grow up, they have so little strength. We are no longer surprised that Manuel does not care much for active play.

It is now the hottest part of the day. The boy and his sister play a few games of dominoes and cards out on the veranda, and then sleepily stretch themselves in hammocks

under the palms for an afternoon nap. Manuel's little dog, Ponce, lies on the ground by his side, ready to bark if any stranger should come near his master.

But what do the poor children of Porto Rico do, while Manuel is taking his "siesta," as the afternoon nap is called? They, too, are probably having their siestas, for all classes of people rest during the hottest part of the day. Very little business is done in the cities; the time for work is in the early morning and late afternoon.

The colored children of the plantation would think it a perfect feast to have a breakfast like Manuel's. A bit of salt fish, with some breadfruit, plantains, and coffee—these satisfy their hunger day after day. But in the sugar season, when the canes are ripe and full of juice, then indeed it is hard to make the people work, whether they are white or black. Oh, the delicious sugar-cane! there is nothing like the pleasure of sucking it. Here and there, in every nook and corner, one sees boys and girls, men and women, with joints of the cane in their hands, sucking away for dear life. Then is the time to stop all worry and grow fat.

CHAPTER IV

Through the Woods

When Manuel and Dolores finish their siesta, it is nearly three o'clock. Old Juana appears on the veranda with a pitcher of limeade, made with fresh limes, and Manuel drinks glass after glass. It is very refreshing, and he begins to feel like moving about, so he orders his pet donkey to be brought. He says to Dolores:

"I think I will ride through the woods and around the plantation. I will take my gun, as we may see some rabbits. Please come with me, Dolores."

The little girl is always ready to oblige her brother, so she sends for her own donkey, and the children start for the woods, with Ponce following close behind.

Dear little patient, long-eared donkeys! Just as slow and stupid and stubborn as other donkeys in other parts of the world. Manuel loves his Pedro, as he is called. Pedro has

been his friend and companion ever since the boy was big enough to sit up straight.

Pedro is not obliged to work very hard, and is now quite willing to set off on a gentle trot.

Dolores holds a dainty little parasol over her head, but as they reach the deep shadow of the woods, she shuts it down; then in some magical way changes it into a fan, with which she brushes away the mosquitoes.

What beautiful woods these are! Cocoanut, banana, sago, and palmetto trees grow here, as well as cedar, India-rubber, guava, and many other tall and stately trees belonging to the tropics. More than five hundred different kinds of trees are found on the one island of Porto Rico, every one of them growing over fifteen feet high.

Just think of it, children! Manuel can pick lemons, oranges, bananas, limes, plantains, peaches, apricots, olives, tamarinds, and—dear me! I can't tell you how many other fruits, without stepping off the land owned by his father.

"Listen!" says Dolores to her brother, "don't you hear that grinding, buzzing noise? It sounds like someone

grinding a knife. I wonder what it can be."

The children make the donkeys stop, and look all around them. No one is to be seen. Then turning their eyes up into the branches of a tree close by, they see a strange sight. It is a beetle at least six inches long. He is very busy sawing off a small branch.

"Oh, I know what that is," says Manuel. "Father has told me all about him. Some people call him a razor-grinder because he makes a noise like the grinding of a razor. He is the largest beetle in the world. So come along, Dolores, I want to shoot some pigeons."

"Aren't you afraid, Manuel, to go any farther into the woods?" whispers his sister. "I just heard a queer, rustling noise. Perhaps it is a wild dog. It may spring at us before we can get away."

The children of Porto Rico have more fear of wild dogs than of anything else. They imagine all kinds of terrible things about them, and whenever they come to a dark place in the woods, they begin to fear an attack. The fact is that dogs, as well as cats, often leave their homes and run wild on account of the good times they can have in the woods.

There are so many mice and birds to be caught that they need never go hungry, but there is little to fear from them.

That is what Manuel thinks, sensible little fellow that he is, so he answers:

"Oh, pshaw, Dolores, you never yet saw a wild dog in your life. So come along; I'll take care of you. You know I have my gun."

Just at this moment Manuel spies a brown object behind a rock. Look! now a sharp-pointed nose is thrust straight up in the air, and a pair of bright eyes can be seen.

"That is a dear little agouti. Please don't shoot him. See how shy he looks; he is too scared to run. Oh, what a beautiful glossy coat he has!" says Dolores. "I wish we had one to tame for a pet. Don't you, Manuel?"

At first thought, Manuel was going to shoot the agouti, but he quickly thinks better of it. Anyone would indeed be hard-hearted to wish to kill such a pretty, timid little creature. The agouti is a cousin of the hare and the rabbit, but lives in warmer lands than they.

The children ride slowly along. Manuel shoots a couple of pigeons, and they are about to turn out of the woods

when they spy a big hole in the ground near them. The appearance of the earth shows that it must have been freshly dug.

"I know what that means," exclaims Manuel, "an armadillo is hiding from us. He heard us coming and at once burrowed underground. I don't see how they can dig so fast. Do you? Now let's make our donkeys rest, and see if he will come out when all is quiet."

The children get off and tie their donkeys to some trees, while they themselves sit down at quite a little distance from the hole.

It is not long before Mr. Armadillo appears, reaching his head out from his shell as he climbs. He does not come very far, however, before Ponce spies him. The dog begins to bark furiously, and tries to get away from Manuel, who holds him by his collar. The armadillo flees back into his hole "as quick as a flash," as the saying is, and does not make his appearance again, although the children wait quite a while longer.

What a curious looking animal it is, with its shell of horny plates, and a white horn on its back through which

it blows and makes a loud noise! When in danger, it draws itself completely within its shell. The flesh is a great dainty, but the little animal is hard to catch. The negroes on some of the West Indian islands belonging to England call the armadillo "hog-in-armour." Not a bad name, is it?

Manuel and Dolores, still mounted on their patient little donkeys, leave the woods, and come out upon a path leading through their father's coffee plantation.

CHAPTER V

The Coffee-Tree

When the first white people came to Porto Rico they did not find any coffee among the other tropical fruits. Today it is the most valuable product of the island, yet all the trees growing now came from a few plants brought here nearly two hundred years ago. Perhaps you would like to hear the story.

In the year 1714, all the coffee used in the civilized world was under the control of the Dutch. They were very jealous of other people growing it, but one of the governors of Amsterdam gave a single plant to the King of France. From this plant a few others were raised and sent across the ocean to Martinique, an island of the West Indies belonging to France.

The voyage was long. The fresh water on board the ship nearly gave out, but the man who had the plants in his care

shared his allowance with them. They were thus kept alive, and from them have come the coffee-trees that cover thousands of acres of land today in Porto Rico, Martinique, and the other islands.

Manuel and Dolores delight in riding through the plantation at this season of the year; the rows of small, evenly trimmed trees, with their glossy green leaves, are always a pretty sight. But just now they are more beautiful than at other times, for each tree is a mass of snow-white blossoms, filling the air with their fragrance.

Dolores's mother hires some of the colored children to collect petals of the coffee flowers as they drop upon the ground. She will fill jars with them to scent her drawing room with their perfume; but no one is allowed to pick the blossoms from the trees, for each flower means a berry later on in the season.

As the fruit forms, it is first green, then a pale pink, and at last a bright red. Not all the berries ripen at the same time, as cherries do, so the autumn picking lasts several weeks.

After they have been gathered, the berries are first

washed and then hulled by machinery. Even then, however, they are not ready for market, for they must still be dried. At Manuel's home this is done by spreading them on floors paved with stones, where the sun can shine upon them; but on larger plantations it is usually done by steam or hot air.

The men and women who work for Manuel's father are always busy, for there are many things to do besides attending to the coffee-trees. These stand in rows about fifteen feet apart, and between the rows there are "catch crops," as they are called. One can see sweet potatoes, pigeon peas, eddoes, and other vegetables.

Coffee-trees are quite tender, and need a good deal of shade when they are young, so banana and plantain trees have been planted between the rows to protect them from the hot sun.

Manuel's father does not pay his workmen in money; he gives them a certain number of plantains for each day's labor. They keep enough of this fruit to feed their families, and sell the rest in the towns nearby.

The children stop for a chat with the overseer, then ride

onward to the house, for dinner must be ready.

Just as the meal is over, and the family leave the dining room, the convent bells begin to ring. It is six o'clock, the time for evening prayer, and all bow their heads in silence. Although Manuel is a little boy, he likes these quiet moments in the day. The air is filled with peace; it seems as though he feels God's love more fully than at any other time.

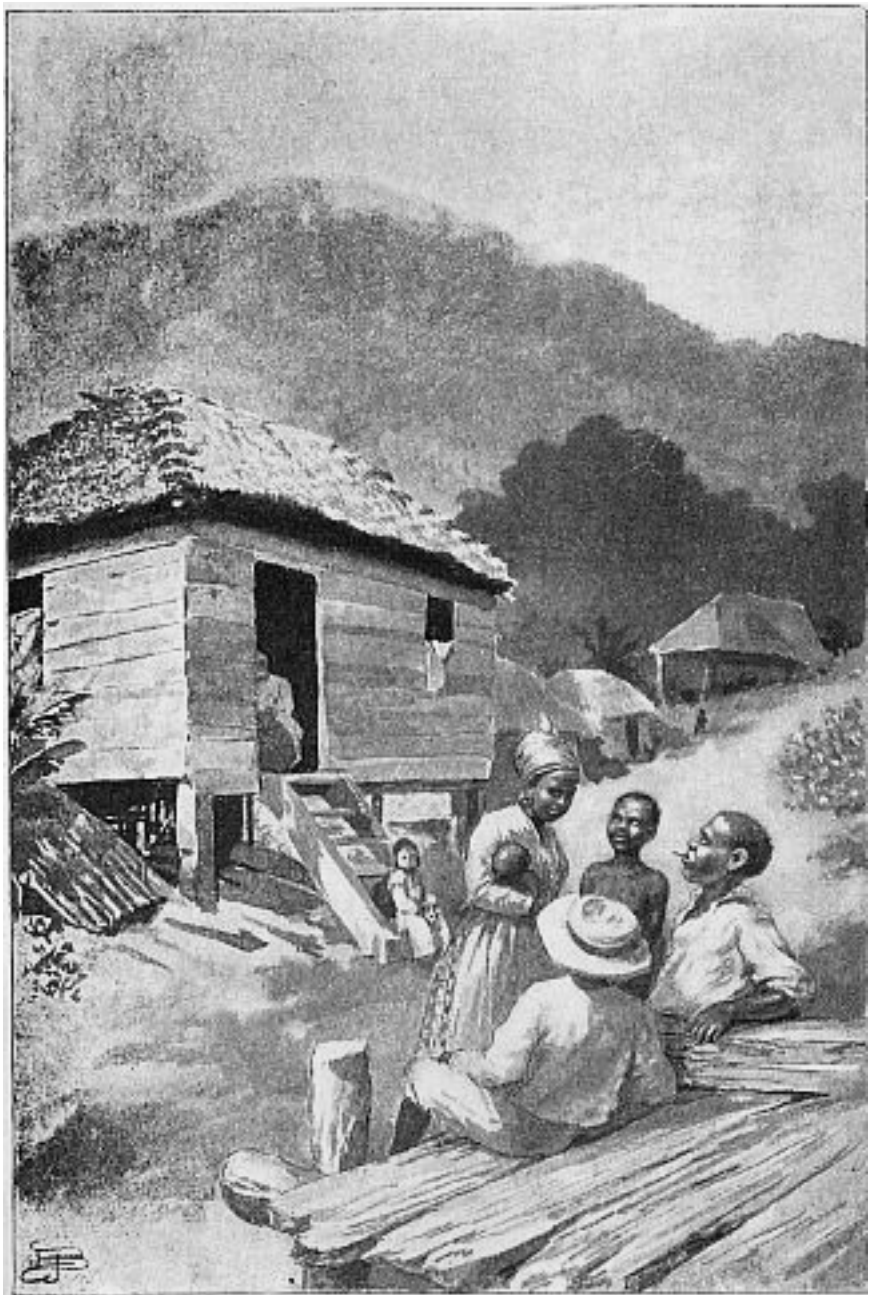
CHAPTER VI

Songs and Stories

Night falls suddenly on this beautiful home. There is no long twilight as in northern lands; and soon the stars are shining, myriads of them. They do not twinkle, but give a strong, steady light.

This is the best part of the day. The planter sits on the veranda, smoking; his wife, in her delicate evening dress, keeps him company. Teresa plays some sweet tunes on her guitar and sings, while her duenna sits back in a rattan chair and dozes. Manuel and Dolores dance together along the garden paths or play with their fireflies.

Hark! listen to that lively music coming from the homes of the workmen. We know there are mandolins among the instruments they are playing, but what is that strange, swishing noise we hear, keeping time with the other instruments? It is somewhat like the sound of shuffling feet. It is



The Homes of the Workmen

made upon gourds notched in many places, with holes in the shape of triangles cut in the necks.

A few nights ago Manuel and Dolores begged their father to take them over to the "quarters," as the cabins of the colored farm laborers are called. Manuel said:

"We want to see the sport. They have such good times over there when their work is done, and do tell such funny stories. But, after all, papa, it's the way they tell them that I like best. Their black eyes are so solemn and look as though they believed every word that is said."

When the planter and his children drew near, they found the colored people squatting in a big circle in front of one of the huts. The sun was just setting in a great round ball in the west. There was still light enough in the sky to show the shining dark faces ranged around. Two rows of glistening ivory teeth could be plainly seen in each face as the workmen jumped up to bow and smile before "Massa, little Massa, and little Missus." They were quite proud to be honored by a visit from these great people. And now the sun suddenly dropped below the horizon, and the air seemed filled with the darkness.

It was the sign to begin, and the blacks, at a motion from their leader, started in with an old, old song not learned from books; it had been handed down from the time when their people lived in their native land of Africa. It was a song about a beautiful star, and before it was ended Dolores and Manuel felt as if the star itself were a living friend and helper of these ignorant, earnest people.

Sing! The word does not begin to describe the music they not only heard but saw and felt. The voices of the singers were sweet and rich; their bodies swayed back and forth, keeping perfect time. Their great round eyes rolled from side to side, and as they sang verse after verse, they seemed to forget their company as well as themselves. Their faces shone with a smile of perfect happiness.

When the song was ended a story was called for, and an old gray-haired man began to tell this tale of the elephant and the whale.

"Once upon a time an elephant was walking on the shore. He saw a whale in the water. He spoke to the whale and said:

"'Brother Whale, I can pull you up on to the shore.'

"'Indeed you can't,' cried the whale.

"'I bet three thousand dollars that I can,' the elephant answered.

"'All right, let me see you try,' the whale said, quickly, and went away.

"Soon afterward they met again. The whale spoke this time, and said: 'Brother Elephant, I can pull you into the sea.'

"'What an idea!' said the elephant. 'No man in the world could pull me into the sea.'

"Brother Rabbit heard the two talking, and said:

"'I'll try it tomorrow at twelve o'clock.'

"He went away and got a piece of rope. He tied one end of it around the whale's neck and the other around the elephant's neck. Then he said: 'When I speak the word you must both pull hard.'

"Now when the whale pulled, he dragged the elephant into the sea. He said: 'You, Brother Elephant, think the little rabbit is doing all this.'

"Then the elephant pulled hard, and brought the whale into the surf. The whale caught underneath a shelf of rock

and the elephant found himself fastened to a big tree.

"These two mightiest of creatures pulled and pulled, till at last the rope broke, and the elephant was jerked way back into the forest and the whale was jerked way out to sea. That is why you always see the whale in the ocean and the elephant in the woods."

There was a great clapping of hands when the tale was ended. After that, there were other songs and stories, while the faces of the people grew more earnest and eager after each one.

It was growing late, and Manuel's father said: "Come, children, we must go now. Your mother will be watching for you. It is long past your bedtime."

As they walked homeward, Manuel was quiet for some time. Then he said: "Father, what nonsense many of these stories are! Yet I like them, too, because they seem to bring one so near all living things. Even the rabbit and the elephant are brothers to them. It's a little odd, though, that in their animal stories they always make the rabbit the wisest."

Sometimes Manuel's father walks over to the "quarters"

with his boy to see the dancing. It is wild and exciting; it fairly makes Manuel dizzy to watch the people twist and turn themselves about. It is so different from the slow, graceful steps he and Dolores have been taught.

One wonders if the children are not afraid of snakes in the long grass at night. No, for in all Porto Rico, it is said, a poisonous serpent has never been seen. In two other islands of the West Indies the most deadly snake of the Western world is found. This is the terrible fer-de-lance whose bite is so much dreaded; but this serpent has never made its way into Porto Rico. It probably drifted on limbs of forest trees from South America to the other islands, but never reached Manuel's home. The boy should be very grateful that it did not.

But there are other things for him to fear. When he goes to bed tonight, he will get Juana to look under his bed and in every corner of the room before he can settle himself to sleep. Is he afraid of burglars, do you suppose? He never thinks of them; but he knows that scorpions and centipedes can creep into the house, and even into his bed, without being seen. And oh! their sting means very great suffering.

Manuel's mother was once stung by a scorpion's fiery tail, and the wound was very painful for a long time.

It was only a few nights ago that Juana found a centipede snuggled away under a cushion in the sitting room. Suppose someone had sat down upon it unawares and been bitten! It makes the shivers creep up and down Manuel's back to think of it.

The word centipede, perhaps you know, means hundred-footed. These little insects travel quite rapidly, and although they do not cause death, they may make very painful wounds.

There are other things, too, to trouble Manuel and Dolores, for mosquitoes and fleas are always plentiful, and sometimes the children are awakened at night by an attack from a small regiment of cruel little ants, and sleep no more till morning.

There is a certain insect in the West Indies known as a "chico," "chigoe," or "jigger," and woe to the toes of the person whom it visits. It gets under the skin, and there lays many eggs and prepares to make itself very much at home. So if any person's toe begins to itch, he needs to have it

examined at once, or there may be trouble. People have sometimes been obliged to have the toe, and even the foot and leg, cut off on account of the inflammation caused by a chico and her family.

But the curious thing about it is that this insect seems to prefer the toes of white strangers, so that Manuel and Dolores, who were born on the island, are pretty safe in going barefooted.

CHAPTER VII

A Cruel Sport

Tomorrow there will be "lots of fun," as Manuel says. After the morning service in the church (for it will be Sunday) his father will take him and Dolores to a cock-fight. Manuel has been brought up to think there is no pleasure like it.

When our government took charge of the island, after the war with Spain, they forbade any more cock-fighting. But all the people, black and white, loved the sport so dearly, and felt so bad on account of the new law, that it has been set aside for the present.

Yes, Manuel, our gentle, kind-hearted little cousin, has seen many cock-fights. Sunday is the day his people take for the cruel pleasure. The boy's father has a very handsome cock he has been training for tomorrow's fight. He has bet quite a large sum on him, and is even more anxious than

his little son for the next day to come. Why, this game-cock of his has been getting as much care and attention as a fine horse or pony generally receives from a loving master!

And now it is Sunday. Not even a flea has disturbed Manuel's dreams all night. Late in the afternoon a carriage comes to the door, and the planter drives away to the town with his two younger children. His wife and Teresa do not go, as it is not considered proper; but it is thought to be all right for Manuel and Dolores, as it is the fashion of this country for boys and little girls to go.

What a crowd there is around the entrance! Men and children, both black and white, are jostling each other, talking loudly, and quarrelling together. See that man elbow his way along! He has a cock under his arm, probably a contribution to the entertainment.

Manuel's father beckons to a servant who has followed him on horseback with his precious game-cock in charge, and together they pass inside. Everyone must pay for admission to the show. And what does one see within? There is a large cleared space covered with sawdust. This is for the cocks; all around are seats for the people who look on.

Over at one side of the pit a man is lifting the cocks, one by one, and weighing them to find their fighting weight. See the care with which each skinny fowl is tied in a bandanna and handled; one would think it something very precious. And, indeed, they are precious, and cost their owners many dollars.

Look! the men are fastening sharp knives to the spurs of the poor fowls, whose necks and backs are bare of feathers. These knives are sharper than the natural spurs, and will help to make the battle a deadly one. They are not always used, however.

And now, in the midst of shouts and yells, the first battle begins. It means death to one or both of the birds. The two cocks enter into the fight as though they delight in it. See the feathers fly from their heads and sides!

Ah! one of them is blinded by the dust. His owner rushes up and squirts alum water in his eyes. The fight goes on till one cock lies breathing his last on the ground, and the other stands beside him dizzy and tottering, yet hanging to him still.

There is silence while the bets are paid; then the noise

begins again, and two more cocks are brought in. Battle after battle is fought till night falls upon the cruel sport.

There is no doubt that these game-cocks enjoy fighting, yet this is no reason they should be pitted against each other by human beings; nor that people should think it sport to watch suffering and bloodshed even among stupid fowls.

It is hoped that Manuel and Dolores will learn better as they grow older. We cannot blame them now, for the customs of their country have made it seem quite right and proper.

A still more cruel sport was brought by the Spaniards to Porto Rico, but it is now forbidden by American law. This is bull-fighting. It is not long, however, since the finest ladies in the land dressed themselves in their handsomest gowns, and with their husbands attended a bull-fight. You would have thought to see the rich jewels and fans, the fine silks and satins, that they were in a ballroom.

Do not let us think of such sad things any longer, however. Those days are gone by forever, let us hope. While Manuel and Dolores are giving their mother an exciting

account of the Sunday's pleasure, let us go back to the Porto Rico of long, long ago.

CHAPTER VIII

Early Times

We find Columbus sailing into one of its harbors after his second trip across the great Atlantic Ocean. The trees and plants look very beautiful to him. But he notices other things; he sees rivers flowing down into the sea, and the natives tell him of stores of gold to be found in the beds of these streams. For this reason he calls it "Puerto Rico," or the "Rich Port," and so it has been called to this day.

He and his men are full of interest in the strange sights around them. In the waters about Porto Rico are wonderful creatures they have never seen before. Among these is the manatee, which, rising up out of the water, looks at a distance somewhat like a human being.

"It is a mermaid," cries Columbus, "but, alas! it is not as beautiful as I expected." He wrote of it in this way in the account of his voyage.

In those days of long ago people had many queer ideas.

One of these notions was that beings lived in the sea who had heads and arms like men and women, but the lower parts of their bodies were shaped like fishes. They were, therefore, half human and half fish. Their home was far down in cool groves at the bottom of the sea. A diver once said he had visited the very place. He found the water perfectly clear, and lighted up by crystal pyramids. There were gardens of beautiful seaweeds, furniture all made of precious stones, and the strange beings dwelling there wore ornaments and combs of shining gold.

They believed that these beings of the sea rose sometimes to the surface of the water. There they would sing sweet songs as they combed their long yellow hair. But they sang only to make the sailors forget their own homes and to lead them into harm.

It was no wonder that Columbus was disappointed when he discovered the manatee, and believed he had at last seen the mermaids of whom he had read so many stories. The sea-cow is certainly not a beautiful creature. It looks somewhat like a small whale; it has a fat body, with small eyes and ears. It is very timid, and probably swam off as fast as it

could when it found the vessels of Columbus near. Of course, the great sailor did not get a good view of it or he could not have believed it to be the mermaid described in song and story.

Not many years after Columbus discovered Porto Rico, Ponce de Leon led a company of Spaniards to its shores and settled there. The Indian chief of the country was very kind to the strangers. He gave them provisions and rich presents, and showed them the fruits and vegetables which grew there. He shared his treasures with them, and, most important of all, he led them to a river where stores of gold could be found in its bed.

Gold! It filled the Spaniards' hearts with greed. This was what they had longed for; now they could go back to their own country with great fortunes.

How did they return the kindness of the gentle, trusting natives? By treating them like slaves! By making them do the hardest labor, and then rewarding them with cruelties.

When they first came to the shores of the island they had said to the Indians: "We are immortal; we cannot die; we will live on forever."

But when the poor Indians had suffered for a long time at their hands, and when many of their kindred had died from the ill-treatment of the Spaniards, they said: "We will prove what these cruel strangers have told us."

They seized a Spanish soldier and held his head under water for two hours. Then they carried his body to the shore of the river, and sat down beside it for two whole days. But it showed no signs of life. At the end of that time they took the body to their chief, who said: "They have deceived us, for this man has died, even as we would die."

You can easily imagine what followed. There was war between the natives and the strangers. But the poor Indians had little chance. They had only bows and arrows, rough spears of wood, and battle-axes of stone. The Spaniards were armed with swords and guns. Those Indians who were not killed were made prisoners and set to work in the gold mines and sugar fields, where they rapidly died from their hard labor.

Years passed by. Ponce de Leon was growing old. His hair was gray; his face was wrinkled; the top of his head was bald. He had many pains in his body and was often ill.

Then he thought of the stories told by his Indian slaves of a wonderful fountain not far away. They declared that its waters were always fresh and pure; not only this, but each draught that a person swallowed would make him younger and happier.

"Ah!" sighed the old man, "I wish I might find this spring of living water, and rid myself of stiff joints and rheumatism. I will start out in search of it at once. If I can only reach it, I shall become young and handsome again, and shall never die."

This was the reason the conqueror of Porto Rico sailed away to find the wonderful Fountain of Eternal Youth of which the Indians had told him.

You probably know the story of the coming of Ponce de Leon to Florida one beautiful Easter Sunday, which in the Spanish language is called *Pascua Florida.* So he called the country Florida, saying: "In this beautiful land must be the wondrous fountain."

Soon afterward, while searching for it, he was shot with a poisoned arrow, and died on the voyage back to the island.

CHAPTER IX

The Caribs

The Indians whom Ponce de Leon and his followers treated so unkindly were gentle and generous, as I have said. They were not eager for war, like many of the tribes on the continent, nor savage in their habits. They wore short girdles of cotton cloth, raised crops of corn and manioc, and built large canoes in which they took quite long voyages. They wrought the gold found in the streams into ornaments.

This tribe of Indians was very numerous at the time the Spaniards first came to the West Indies, but now there is not a single trace of them left. War with the Spaniards, hard work for their masters in the mines and fields—these made the race die out rapidly.

It is sad to think that the Spaniards tortured them also.

Is it any wonder that the natives did not care to share

the Spaniards' heaven, but died hating them with all their hearts?

Long before Ponce de Leon came to Porto Rico, the poor Indians were attacked from time to time by other enemies; but although they suffered much, they were never conquered. These enemies were the Caribs, who seemed to love war better than anything else in the world.

Sometimes the people would be strolling along the shores of the island when they would see something out on the ocean which looked like a mass of floating palm leaves. That did not frighten them, of course, and they would go on with their sports.

When it was too late to give the alarm, they discovered that the mass of palm leaves was the covering of a boat-load of fierce warriors who were all ready to attack them.

Or perhaps their foes would hide themselves from sight in some other clever way until they were all ready to spring out of their boats and take the peaceful islanders by surprise.

You wonder, perhaps, where was the Caribs' home. They told legends of a far-distant land in the north, from

which their own people had come. They had fought their way from Florida to South America, and feared no one in the world. They believed that their tribe had grown up out of the stones which had been planted in the soil.

They belonged to the great Indian, or red, race, as did the natives of Porto Rico, but their customs and natures were very different. They painted their faces to make themselves look as fierce as they felt. They were trained to fight from the time when they were little children. They loved to sail upon the ocean, and guided their boats by studying the stars.

When the Spaniards had settled in Porto Rico, the Caribs thought it would be an easy thing to master them in fight, and trouble them as they had troubled the poor natives. But the white men were a match for them, and, when they landed on the shores of the island, the Spaniards entrapped them and drove them over the side of a cliff down into the water below. Not one Carib lived to tell the story of that fearful day.

Time passed by and many workers were needed, and as the natives became fewer the Spaniards sent ships to the

coast of Africa and brought away the black people to be their slaves. Today the negroes are all free and seem to be happy in their island home; but most of them are very, very poor, as are the greater part of the whites of Porto Rico. The rule of Spain has kept them so; and it was a glorious thing for these people when our soldiers, under General Miles, marched in triumph through the land.

CHAPTER X

A Seaside Picnic

Several weeks have passed since Manuel and Dolores went with their father to the cock-fight. It is a beautiful June evening, and the children are walking through the garden, planning a picnic at the seashore for tomorrow. Their mother comes out hastily on the veranda, and calls:

"Manuel! Dolores! come in at once out of the moonlight! You know well enough that animals will never lie with the moon shining upon them; they are too wise. Oh, the evil I have seen that has come from the moon! Don't you remember poor little Sancho? He is feeble-minded because his careless nurse let him sleep in the moonlight when he was a baby. Come quickly, my darlings, to the shade of the veranda."

Manuel and Dolores are a little frightened, and hurry toward the house, where they join the family in Spanish

songs before going to rest.

When Juana wakes them, early the next morning, they hear the rain falling in torrents outside. That will not prevent the picnic, however, for they feel sure it will not last long. It is the beginning of the spring rains, and there are showers every day, but they seldom continue more than an hour. But, oh, how the rain falls when it does come! It seems as though the heavens opened and all the water in the sky fell at once.

By eight o'clock the shower is over, and Teresa, her duenna, Manuel, and Dolores are ready to start. The planter must be busy today, and his wife does not care to go.

A low, comfortable carriage is drawn up in front, the lunch is packed away under the seats, and the coachman is told to start. Ponce tries to follow, but Manuel orders him back. They will drive at least ten miles, but the roads are fine, it is downhill all the way, and the views are beautiful.

The party soon cross a bridge over a little stream. There they see two women standing nearly knee-deep in the water. They are washing clothes and having a sociable chat at the same time. Two large, flat stones serve as scrubbing

boards, and each one of the women holds a club in her hands.

"What is that for?" one asks. To beat the dirt out of the clothes! The garments are spread on the stones, rubbed with some native berries (instead of soap), then pounded with the clubs. Not a delicate way to handle fine linen, to be sure; but the women seem to enjoy their work, and stop every few minutes to sit on the banks and smoke their pipes.

When the party have nearly reached the seashore, the road leads through thick woods. Suddenly they hear a great scuttling among the trees. The driver stops his horses, and everyone looks to see what is the matter.

It is nothing more nor less than an army of land-crabs on their yearly journey from the mountains to the sea. The children have often found one of them in the garden or the woods near the house, but such a number as this, they have never seen or heard before.

These land-crabs can fight, and can frighten the horses greatly, if they should choose to take the road. So Pedro very wisely uses the whip, and the party soon leave this queer army behind them. The crabs make a dainty dish

when served with lime-juice and Cayenne pepper, and Manuel and Dolores are very fond of them served in this way.

A turn in the road brings the ocean in view. Dolores claps her hands in delight, and cries: "Oh, what a lovely time we will have! I wonder who will find the most curiosities, Manuel, you or I."

Even the sober-faced duenna looks pleased as they drive out upon a smooth beach. How beautiful the ocean looks today! It is such a wonderful blue; much like the color of the sapphire, and not at all like the waters of the northern seas.

The children take little baskets on their arms and trot about barefooted to see what they can find. It is a perfect paradise among beaches. Their American brothers and sisters would dance for joy at the sight of so many kinds of beautiful shells. And the starfish! Manuel finds one big fellow as much as ten inches across. It is not flat like those seen in the temperate zone, but at least six inches through the middle of his horny body. The little boy cannot get him off the rock to which he has fastened, but Pedro comes, and

even he has to use all his strength to pull him away. A New York merchant is to visit the children's father very soon, and Manuel wants to send this starfish to his little son.

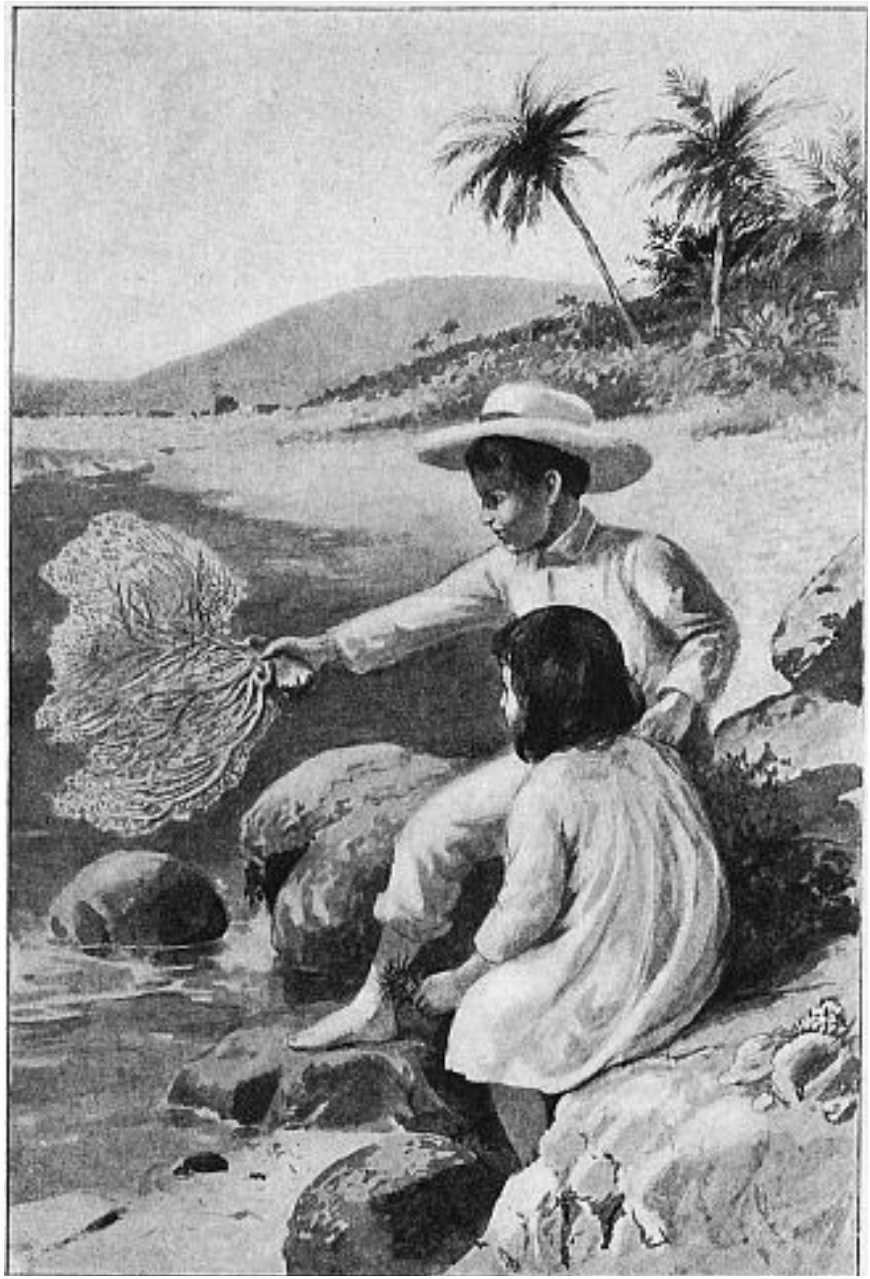
But there are other kinds of starfish here that are pretty and delicate. Dolores finds a dear little daisy-star only half an inch across, with fringes on its sides, and, a moment after, her sister picks up a fern-star.

What delights the children most of all are the bits of coral washed up by the waves. Some of the pieces are red, some black, and others white. One is quite large, and is formed in the shape of a fan, while another spray looks like a mushroom.

After luncheon is over, Manuel says: "Dolores, let's try to find some sea anemones. Do you see that rocky cliff at the end of the beach? Perhaps if we go there we can see some."

The children start off once more, and soon are climbing up over the rock. They creep along till they are able to look over its edge as it juts out over the water.

What a wonderful sight meets their eyes! It is the flower garden of the sea. Deep down under the clear waters they



"One is quite large, and is formed in the shape of a fan."

see many things living and growing that look for all the world like roses and marigolds, pinks and buttercups. What wonderful colors they have! Coral is indeed beautiful, but it cannot compare with the sea anemones.

Manuel and his sister fairly hold their breath with delight.

"Oh, Dolores, isn't it strange that those lovely things are animals and not plants! There they stay in one place for ever, yet they are alive like the coral polyps. We must get Teresa to come and see them, too. She never saw them growing; I've heard her say so."

Manuel whispers these words as though he fears the anemones may hear him and hide themselves from his sight. Dolores answers, in her soft voice: "Manuel, did you ever think about what our teacher told us, that the bottom of the ocean is like the land, with hills and valleys, mountains and caves? Many kinds of creatures live there, just as other kinds live on the earth; but it seems to me that the coral polyps and the sea anemones are the strangest of all."

When the children get back to the others, they beg Alfonso to get a boat and row them around to where the

anemones are growing. Perhaps they can reach some of them. But he tells them that their father has forbidden him to take them out on the water, for the terrible blue shark dares to come quite close to the shore, and, even in a rowboat, they could not be sure of safety if a shark should follow them.

He then tells them of adventures with sharks by people living near their own home.

After these stories Manuel and Dolores are quite willing to give up a row after anemones, nor do they care to go in bathing, even close to the shore.

The time comes all too soon to go home, and all enjoy the ride in the cool evening air. They have not travelled far before the moon rises and sends its light down through the treetops.

Dolores happens to be looking out of the carriage, when she sees an ugly-looking animal peering out from behind a bush. It is an iguana, with jaws and mouth like an alligator. He looks fierce enough to devour anyone, but Alfonso assures the party that he is really a very timid creature, and will not fight unless he is cornered and cannot get away. He

likes to live quietly by himself in the trees and bushes, and no doubt is afraid of the horses.

After awhile the children grow sleepy and doze in each other's arms till home is reached. Their father and mother are watching, and the dinner has been kept waiting until they should arrive.

CHAPTER XI

The Wonderful Cave

They have so much to tell, it seems as though they had been gone a week. Their mother is most interested in hearing about the anemones, while their father wishes he could have been with them when they saw the land-crabs.

"It makes me think," says he, "of a wonderful trip I made when I was quite a young man. I met land-crabs that day in a much stranger place than you ever saw them, Manuel. Did I ever tell you children about my visit to the 'Great Caves'?"

Manuel and Dolores draw close to their father's side and exclaim together: "Why, no, papa. Oh, do tell us, please. I never even heard of them."

The planter smiles and answers: "It is not strange, my dears, for there are people living within a much shorter distance of these caves who have never heard of them, as

well as yourselves. It is, indeed, odd; but you will yet see the day when travelers from distant lands will visit our island for the sake of seeing the wonderful things hidden away in those very caverns.

"When I was younger, I was always looking for adventures. My father was a rich man, and I was allowed to do very much as I liked. So when some friends of mine asked me to join them in a trip to the caves, I was much pleased. They told me the ride would be tiresome and perhaps dangerous, but I liked the idea far better for that very reason.

"We started out early one morning. Two guides went with us. They were men who had been in the caves many times. They knew the best way to reach them. We carried coils of rope and a roll of pitch lights, as well as a good luncheon.

"If we could have gone straight up the side of the mountain, it would have been a short trip; but the trail led up and down, in and out. Now we had to climb a narrow ridge, and then descend again into a valley. One of these ridges was so steep that I had to hold on to the pommel of the

saddle with all my might. I shut my eyes at the same time. I feared I would grow dizzy and slip from the back of the horse down the side of the precipice.

"But this was for only a short distance. Most of the road was very beautiful and lined with fruit-trees. Sometimes we could have picked great ripe oranges without dismounting; in many a narrow pass the clusters of bananas hung down so near us we had to bend our heads to keep from being knocked from the saddles.

"At last we had climbed so high we found ourselves with mountaintops on every side. Far below lay an immense coffee plantation. We could see the great drying-pans near the buildings. Only a short distance ahead of us was a white cliff of limestone. Here lay the caves we had come to visit.

"We tied our horses to some trees, and crept, hand and foot, up through a narrow gorge. Its sides were walls of rock, and its roof was made of vines, ferns, and overhanging fruit trees. How sweet and cool the air seemed!

"Yes, straight in front of us we could just see two great black holes. These were the doorways of the caves. And now the guides handed each one of us a lighted torch. The

burning gum made a sweet incense as it sputtered. It gave the only light we should have for many hours.

"The guides slowly led the way into the dark cavern ahead. The floor was wet and muddy, and we had to take care not to slip.

"Ugh! there were numbers of great black spiders here. Their bite might be poisonous, and we took care not to lay our hands against the walls where they travelled up and down. The place was damp and slippery. There was certainly nothing beautiful to be seen yet.

"Hark! There was a rustling sound over our heads. It grew louder and louder, until we could not hear each other's voices. As we looked up into the darkness, we could see we had startled an army of bats. There were thousands of them. Yes, surely, many thousands. You wouldn't have enjoyed their flying around you one bit, Manuel, good little huntsman even as you are. And as for you, my precious Dolores, I fear you would have screamed and begged to be taken home.

"Over our heads we could hear the sound of running water all the time. We kept bravely on. It began to grow

lighter, and we could see several openings in front of us. Choosing one of these, we crept through a narrow passage and found ourselves at once in a vast hall. It was like Aladdin's palace, which, you remember, was brilliant with beautiful gems.

"I looked up to the high roof and saw hundreds of sparkling white pendants. Some of them were quite small, but others reached down so far that I could touch them. They shone like the finest marble. They were made by the water trickling through the roof and leaving particles of lime as it slowly made its way downward. Such pendants are called stalactites. Some of them were tinted a beautiful blue or green. This was because the water had passed through some mineral substance of those colors.

"And the walls of that hall! Sparkling white columns reached from the floor to the very dome. They were fluted and worked in the most delicate patterns. I can never forget that wonderful picture.

"But what ugly creatures made their home in this wonderful palace of Mother Nature? They were land-crabs, to be sure, that tried to get out of our way as fast as their

clumsy feet would permit. It was your story of the crabs, Manuel, that made me think of that day's tramp.

"You can hardly believe it, children, but we passed from one such hall to another until we had travelled at least a mile underground. Here and there were dark holes leading farther down yet. We could look over the edge sometimes and see other great hallways directly under where we were. The guides said: 'No, no, you must not try to reach them. You may never get back.'

"But I insisted on going into one, at least. A stout rope was fastened about my waist; two men held it tightly, and gradually let me go. Down I went, down, down, down. Would I never reach the bottom? I was growing a little scared, when I found myself on the floor of another great hall, much like the one above it. I groped about and re-lighted my torch, which had gone out as I was lowered through the damp air.

"I found myself beside a stream of running water. It was flowing right by the doorway into the cave. I had heard there was just such an entrance as this—that down on the side of the mountain a person could get into the cavern by

first passing through the water.

"I had read a legend of this very place. It was about a young girl who had hidden herself from her enemies by swimming into the cave through the secret entrance below the surface of the river.

"By this time my friends were getting worried about me. I felt a gentle pull at the rope and I heard them calling. Their voices seemed strange and far away. And now I was slowly lifted upward to find myself in the midst of my friends.

"It was time to turn again toward the daylight. We said good-bye to the cave and its city of palaces. In another hour we were again in open air, looking at mountaintops. We asked ourselves if the day's wonderful sights really had been a dream or not."

CHAPTER XII

The Hurricane

Weeks pass by; it is August, and the midst of the rainy season. This is the time to be ready for hurricanes. No one feels safe, for at any moment he may be taken by surprise, and his home, with its massive stone walls, may be dashed to the ground.

Such a thing never yet has happened to Manuel's family, but that does not keep fear away. Does not Manuel remember the story of Josephine, afterward the beautiful wife of Napoleon? She spent her young days on an island not far from Porto Rico. In a few hours the plantation on which she lived was wrecked by a hurricane and hardly a trace of her home was left. It is fearful to think of what she and her family suffered, but Manuel and Dolores cannot keep the story out of their minds when the midsummer storms arrive.

They are kept in terror at least three months of the year,

for the hurricane season begins the latter part of July, and the great winds may come at any moment from that time on to the end of October.

If the children should visit the shore now, they would find all the boats drawn up high and dry in sheltered nooks. The fishermen are afraid to venture out to any distance for fear of sudden danger.

This very morning Manuel's father looked at the barometer before he left the house, for that is the first thing to tell him a storm is approaching. Then he directed Alfonso to see if the iron bars were in good order for fastening the casements; everything must be in readiness for a sudden departure.

After his ride around the plantation, he stopped at the hill-cave, or hurricane house, and directed one of the workmen to leave the door open for awhile, to air it.

This cave was dug out of the side of a hill near the house when Manuel and Dolores were still babies. It is lined with a thick wall of stones; it has no windows or other opening except a low, narrow doorway. At the first sign of a hurricane, the whole family flee to this cave, and stay there till

the storm is over.

Look! the sky is overcast. And now it has become the color of lead. How sultry it is! Not a leaf moves, except when a sudden gust of wind takes it by surprise. The barometer is falling rapidly. See the lightning flashing over the sky, with no sound of thunder to follow it.

Dolores begins to tremble and cry. Even her mother grows pale, and often crosses herself in silent prayer. The planter moves quickly around, giving orders to the overseer about the workmen and the cattle. Stout-hearted little Manuel is very busy. He must not let Dolores think he is afraid. No, not for anything! He helps Alfonso carry the food and cushions out to the hurricane house, while the doors and shutters of the mansion are being locked and barred.

There is no time to be lost. A man has just ridden by, telling of the strange appearance of the ocean.

"It was perfectly still," he said, "but far out on the water long, quiet, sweeping waves rolled in toward the shore, then broke suddenly at a fearful height close to land."

And now all hasten out to the cave. There is no

laughing; everyone is still and sober. The door is shut and made fast. It is as dark as a tomb within. The air is heavy. But no one thinks of fretting; all are too busy listening to the howling of the wind and the noise of falling trees.

The planter steadily watches the barometer by the dim light of a lantern. Manuel and Dolores cling to their mother, one on each side. Teresa strives to appear calm, and her duenna is the only one who tries to talk.

Hours upon hours pass by. Ah! what does that trembling of the ground mean? It makes one feel dizzy and strange. It is the shock of a slight earthquake. It is over now, and at the same time it becomes quiet outside. Papa once more looks at the barometer, and says it is rising, and it will soon be safe to venture out.

When the door is opened, and they feel the fresh air on their faces once more, they look out on the darkness of night. But the stars are shining with their usual brightness, and the air is filled with peace and quiet.

Was it all a dream? Oh, no! for broken trees and branches bar the pathway to the house, while pools of water are everywhere about. The dear old home is safe except

that a part of the veranda has been torn away.

The sunlight next morning shows that many of the roofs at the quarters have been blown off, while much damage was done to the coffee-trees. No human being or animal on the place has been injured, and all give thanks that the hurricane has passed.

"Let us hope," says Manuel's father, "we shall not see another such storm this year. One bad storm is quite enough for a season, I am sure."

The time of danger passes by, and although there are many severe storms, not one of them is so bad that the family are obliged to hide themselves in the hill-cave. The autumn rains are very heavy, and Manuel and Dolores spend much time in the house or on the verandas.

CHAPTER XIII

The New Baby

November comes, and early one morning Juana enters the children's rooms very much excited. She wakes them with the news that a little sister was born to them last night.

"A baby! a dear, darling little baby in the house!" cries Dolores. "Oh! I have begged mother for one so often! Now we shall always have something to amuse us. Manuel, aren't you glad?"

The children do not care for chocolate and rolls in bed this morning; that is certain. They must see the precious baby as soon as possible.

It is such a dear little mite. It fills all hearts with joy. But it must be christened without delay. Who shall be godfather? The planter and his wife consider very carefully. At last they decide to ask a great friend of theirs, who is the owner of a sugar plantation not far from them. He is very

wealthy, and will no doubt celebrate the christening in grand style.

In the next place, what shall be the baby's name? Of course, she must be called "Maria" to begin with. Every girl-baby is named Maria, and if there are no girls in the family, the boy receives that name as his first. I suppose the name is in honor of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

But what others must be added? Manuel suggests Christina, while Dolores begs that her baby sister be called Lucia. At length it is decided that this tiny tot shall bear the dignified name of Maria Francesca Christina Lucia, and everyone is pleased.

When the baby is just one week old, the christening takes place. Several beautiful carriages drive up to the house, and the friends and relatives take their places inside. The godfather is a fine-looking gentleman with piercing black eyes and black moustache. He has made Manuel and Dolores happy by presenting each of them with a gold piece strung on a ribbon. He has also given each one of the house servants a piece of silver.

The children are dressed in white and look very pretty.

The baby wears a beautiful robe, embroidered by the nuns. As she lies sleeping in her nurse's arms, she does not dream that this celebration is all in her honor.

The christening party drives away to the church, while the mother lies in her chamber, quietly resting. She is not well enough to go with them.

After the service is over, the godfather invites the guests to attend a dinner party in honor of his little godchild, at his own home; but the baby must now go back to her loving mother. She could scarcely appreciate the feast, and is much safer at home. So the nurse is driven off in one of the carriages with her precious charge, while the rest of the party go to the godfather's beautiful house.

Such a feast as is spread before them! Such a display of silver and china! What a richly embroidered table cover! Course after course is served.

First there is a rich soup, followed by fried chicken and rice colored with tomato; there are salads, stews of game, fruits hot and cold, a dainty dessert, cheese and coffee.

Soon after the feast is over, the children return home, for their dear mother must not get lonesome.

The baby grows rapidly, and when she is two months old the planter proposes to take the whole family to San Juan, the capital of the island. Teresa is perhaps more joyful than anyone else, for now she will have a chance to wear some lovely new dresses at the evening parties she will attend there.

Manuel and Dolores are most pleased because they are to travel in a sailing vessel. They will, at last, have a chance to see live sharks as well as other strange creatures of the sea, of which they have heard.

CHAPTER XIV

The City

It is a delightful trip. The weather is just cool enough for comfort, and no one is seasick. The children are never tired of sitting on deck and watching the views, changing hour by hour.

They are never out of sight of land, but sail along the shores of their loved island. Here is a little village of palm-thatched huts, there a grove of breadfruit or cocoanut trees; again one meets another sailing vessel with all its men busy shark-fishing. The skin of the ugly monster is valuable, as well as its fins and tail, which are prized as food by many of the people of Porto Rico.

Looking down beneath the clear blue waters Dolores descries the rainbow fish and claps her hands at its beauty. It is so called because of its many beautiful colors.

And see! Here is a shoal of flying-fish darting over the

waters. They do not really fly, as some people think, but dart up out of the water, with their long fins spread in such a way that they are carried through the air for quite a distance.

Deep down in the water the children see a beautiful object. It is moving rapidly, and its back shines like burnished gold, then changes in the sunlight into many shades and tints of color.

"Papa, do please come quickly, and tell me what this is," calls Manuel.

"That is a dolphin, my dear, one of the most beautiful of all creatures living in the sea," says his father, as he looks over the ship's side. "But he is always hungry, and if he sees those flying-fish ahead of him it will be a sad day for them."

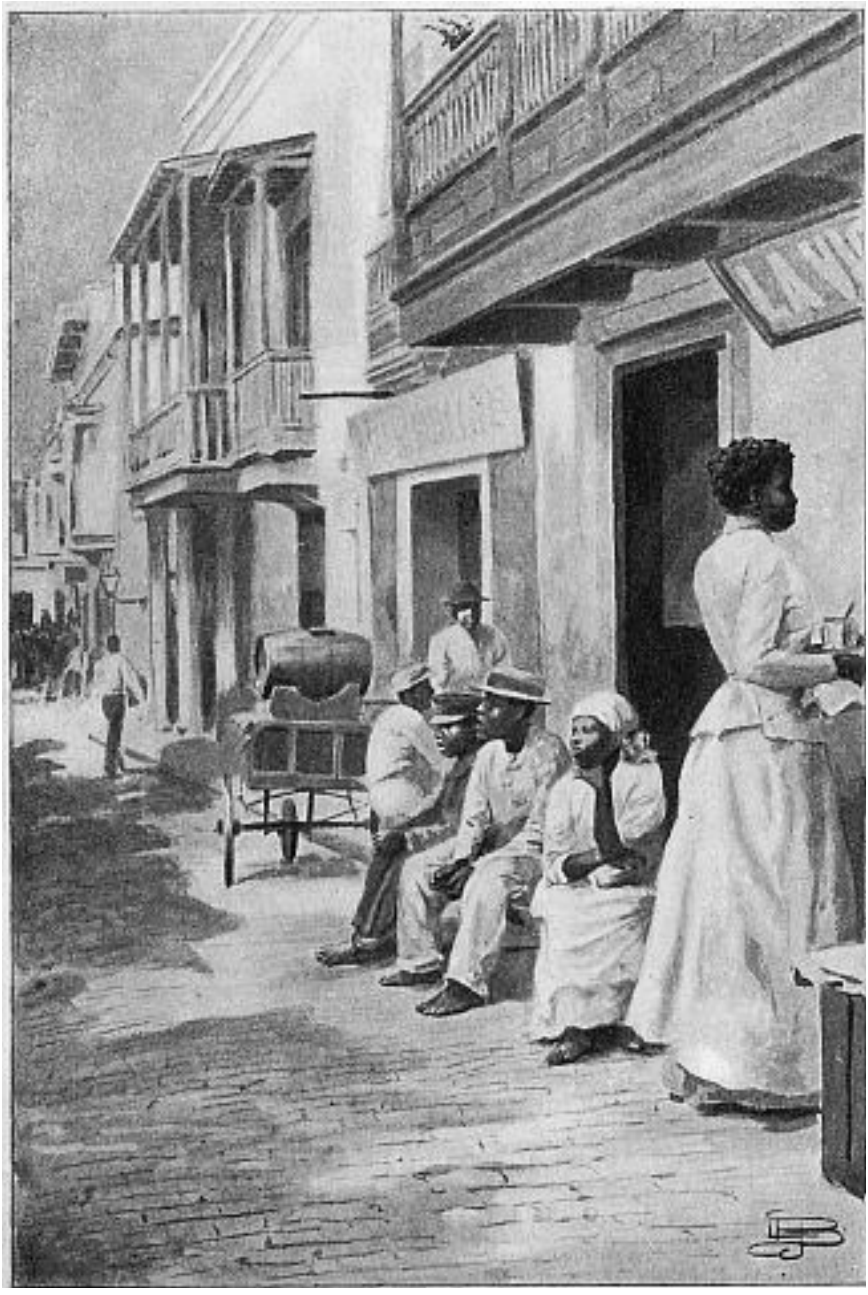
At this very moment the dolphin seems to get a view of his favorite prey. He darts to the surface of the water and leaps forward at the flying-fish with the speed of a bullet; at least it seems so to the watching children, who pity the little fellows with all their hearts. When they discover their foe it is too late for them to escape, for, although they flee with all their might, now in one direction, then in another, the

dolphin gains upon them and snaps them up one by one in his great jaws. In their fright many of them throw themselves clear out of the water with their fins spread, and are carried many feet on the air. It is this that gives them the appearance of flying.

The voyage seems only too short to Manuel and Dolores. When they arrive at San Juan there are so many new things to see that the days pass only too quickly. They have never been in the city before.

The narrow streets, with the still narrower sidewalks, seem odd indeed to these children used to plantation life. Sometimes they cannot even walk side by side without one being pushed into the street. And the houses, although many of them are built of stone like their own, are so close together that Manuel says to his sister: "I wonder how people can like being so crowded together. I should think they would feel choked."

The friends whom they visit live on the upper floor of their house. Although they are quite wealthy, they let the lower floor to a poor, dirty, and ignorant family with many children. Such an arrangement is often made in San Juan;



A Street in San Juan

but the two families do not mingle at all, although living in the same house.

Balconies jut out from the upper story, and Manuel and Dolores like to sit here and watch the passers-by.

It is so odd to see the milkman ride up to the house astride of his donkey, with his milk cans jostling against each other between his legs. Sometimes a cow is led through the streets, and her owner stops at neighboring doorways to draw the milk as the people wish. Dolores thinks the milk must be much nicer when obtained in this way.

"But look, now, Manuel," she says, "at that poor mule! He is almost smothered under an immense bundle of fodder; and, as though that were not enough for the poor beastie, his master is riding on top of the load."

Sometimes the children rise as early as five o'clock in the morning. They like to go to the market held in a public square of the city. They see people of all shades of color selling their goods.

There is the baker with his bags of freshly baked bread and oddly twisted rolls; there is the poultry man with wicker cages full of live fowls hanging to the sides of his half-

starved donkey; there, too, is the butcher with sides of beef hanging by hooks from his horse's harness; while crowded together are those who have brought their fruits and vegetables afoot many a long mile in early morning.

There are great piles of yellow oranges; plantains, green, brown, and yellow; pineapples, melons, onions, guavas, and lemons; while behind them sit their owners, who laugh and joke and make love, and at the same time are busy shouting their wares and making bargains.

Oh, but one must not forget the game-cocks fastened to stakes here and there in the midst of the busy crowd. Many a trade is made, many a bet laid on these ugly, skinny, but greatly admired cocks as they pull at their stakes.

Later in the day no sign of this busy scene is left in the public square. One notices for the first time that there is a band stand, and when the evening comes, Manuel's father and mother are driven with their hosts to this square. Many other carriages, filled with richly dressed ladies and gentlemen, also arrive and take their places at one side of the band stand. Here they sit laughing and chatting or listening to the music; the ladies' black eyes sparkle as a favorite tune

is played, and they keep time by gentle taps of their fans.

Many of these fans are very beautiful. Manuel's mother has one made of the feathers of hummingbirds. It is brilliant, even in the soft light of evening, and the dear lady herself looks very charming with a lace mantilla drawn over her head, its point reaching down over the forehead almost to her nose. To be sure, her cheeks are heavily powdered, but that is the fashion of all the ladies in her land, and so it seems quite natural.

The rest of the square is filled with the crowd of poorer people who cannot afford to ride. They walk slowly about, and seem to enjoy the music and each other's company as much as those who sit in the carriages.

There are many street processions in San Juan, and the children are on the lookout not to miss them. These processions are in honor of some saint. Dolores is out on the balcony one morning when she hears music. It is the voices of children singing.

"O Manuel, Teresa, mamma, do come and see the pretty sight," she calls, as a procession draws near.

People dressed in the costumes of different lands come

marching by; then follows a cart, decked gaily with flowers, and in it stands a little girl dressed to represent the virgin mother of Jesus. There is a band of music playing sacred airs.

The children take their hats and follow the procession to the public square, where the little girl in the flower-decked carriage recites a poem written in honor of the day. All business stops in the stores nearby. All vehicles give way to the procession, and the passers-by stand still to admire and listen.

It seems strange to the children to see the red, white, and blue of the American flag floating over the city, instead of the colors of Spain—the red and yellow they were formerly taught to love.

"But this new flag means friendship, you know, Dolores," says her brother. "The poor will not be taxed so much as they used to be, and the good Americans will not allow any other people to harm us. At least father says so, and he is very wise. Dolores, he has promised to take us sometime to that wonderful city, New York, where we shall see so much we have never even dreamed of. I hope the

time will come soon, for I want to get acquainted with my American cousins in their own land, our own land, now."

THE END.