

REMEMBER
THE
ALAMO

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THE CITY IN THE WILDERNESS.

"What, are you stepping westward?"

"Yea."

"Yet who would stop or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter there was none,
With such a sky to lead him on!"

WORDSWORTH.

"Ah! cool night wind, tremulous stars, Ah! glimmering water, Fitful earth murmur, Dreaming woods!" —ARNOLD.

In A. D. sixteen hundred and ninety-two, a few Franciscan monks began to build a city. The site chosen was a lovely wilderness hundreds of miles away from civilization on every side, and surrounded by savage and warlike tribes. But the spot was as beautiful as the garden of God. It was shielded by picturesque mountains, watered by two rivers, carpeted with flowers innumerable, shaded by noble trees joyful with the notes of a multitude of singing birds. To breathe the balmy atmosphere was to be conscious of some rarer and finer life, and the beauty of the sunny skies — marvellous at dawn and eve with tints of saffron and amethyst and opal — was like a dream of heaven.

One of the rivers was fed by a hundred springs situated in the midst of charming bowers. The monks called it the San Antonio; and on its banks they built three noble Missions. The shining white stone of the neighborhood rose in graceful

domes and spires above the green trees. Sculptures, basso-relievos, and lines of gorgeous coloring adorned the exteriors. Within, were splendid altars and the appealing charms of incense, fine vestures and fine music; while from the belfreys, bells sweet and resonant called to the savages, who paused spell-bound and half-afraid to listen.

Certainly these priests had to fight as well as to pray. The Indians did not suffer them to take possession of their Eden without passionate and practical protest. But what the monks had taken, they kept; and the fort and the soldier followed the priest and the Cross. Ere long, the beautiful Mission became a beautiful city, about which a sort of fame full of romance and mystery gathered. Throughout the south and west, up the great highway of the Mississippi, on the busy streets of New York, and among the silent hills of New England, men spoke of San Antonio, as in the seventeenth century they spoke of Peru; as in the eighteenth century they spoke of Delhi, and Agra, and the Great Mogul.

Sanguine French traders carried thither rich ventures in fancy wares from New Orleans; and Spanish dons from the wealthy cities of Central Mexico, and from the splendid homes of Chihuahua, came there to buy. And from the villages of Connecticut, and the woods of Tennessee, and the lagoons of Mississippi, adventurous Americans entered the Texan territory at Nacogdoches. They went through the land, buying horses and lending their ready rifles and stout hearts to every effort of that constantly increasing body of Texans, who, even in their swaddling bands, had begun to cry Freedom!

At length this cry became a clamor that shook even the old viceroyal palace in Mexico; while in San Antonio it gave a certain pitch to all conversation, and made men wear their cloaks, and set their beavers, and display their arms, with that demonstrative air of independence they called *los Americano*. For, though the Americans were numerically few, they were like the pinch of salt in a pottage—they gave the snap and savor to the whole community.

Over this Franciscan-Moorish city the sun set with an incomparable glory one evening in May, eighteen thirty-five. The white, flat-roofed, terraced houses—each one in its flowery court—and the domes and spires of the Missions, with their gilded crosses, had a mirage-like beauty in the rare, soft atmosphere, as if a dream of Old Spain had been materialized in a wilderness of the New World.

But human life in all its essentials was in San Antonio, as it was and has been in all other cities since the world began. Women were in their homes, dressing and cooking, nursing their children and dreaming of their lovers. Men were in the market-places, buying and selling, talking of politics and anticipating war. And yet in spite of these fixed attributes, San Antonio was a city penetrated with romantic elements, and constantly picturesque.

On this evening, as the hour of the Angelus approached, the narrow streets and the great squares were crowded with a humanity that assaulted and captured the senses at once; so vivid and so various were its component parts. A tall sinewy American with a rifle across his shoulder was paying some money to a Mexican in blue velvet and red silk, whose breast was covered with little silver images of his favorite saints. A party of Mexican officers were strolling to the Alamo; some in white linen and scarlet sashes, others glittering with color and golden ornaments. Side by side with these were monks of various orders: the Franciscan in his blue gown and large white hat; the Capuchin in his brown serge; the Brother of Mercy in his white flowing robes. Add to these diversities, Indian peons in ancient sandals, women dressed as in the days of Cortez and Pizarro, Mexican vendors of every kind, Jewish traders, negro servants, rancheros curvetting on their horses, Apache and Comanche braves on spying expeditions: and, in this various crowd, yet by no means of it, small groups of Americans; watchful, silent, armed to the teeth: and the mind may catch a glimpse of what the streets of San Antonio were in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and thirty-five.

It was just before sunset that the city was always at its gayest point. Yet, at the first toll of the Angelus, a silence like that of enchantment fell upon it. As a mother cries hush to a noisy child, so the angel of the city seemed in this evening bell to bespeak a minute for holy thought. It was only a minute, for with the last note there was even an access of tumult. The doors and windows of the better houses were thrown open, ladies began to appear on the balconies, there was a sound of laughter and merry greetings, and the tiny cloud of the cigarette in every direction.

But amid this sunset glamour of splendid color, of velvet, and silk, and gold embroidery, the man who would have certainly first attracted a stranger's eye wore the plain and ugly costume common at that day to all American gentlemen. Only black cloth and white linen and a row palmetto hat with a black ribbon around it; but he wore his simple garments with the air of a man having authority, and he returned the continual salutations of rich and poor, like one who had been long familiar with public appreciation.

It was Dr. Robert Worth, a physician whose fame had penetrated to the utmost boundaries of the territories of New Spain. He had been twenty-seven years in San Antonio. He was a familiar friend in every home. In sickness and in death he had come close to the hearts in them. Protected at first by the powerful Urrea family, he had found it easy to retain his nationality, and yet live down envy and suspicion. The rich had shown him their gratitude with gold; the poor he had never sent unrelieved away, and they had given him their love.

When in the second year of his residence he married Dona Maria Flores, he gave, even to doubtful officials, security for his political intentions. And his future conduct had seemed to warrant their fullest confidence. In those never ceasing American invasions between eighteen hundred and three and eighteen hundred and thirty-two, he had been the friend and succourer of his countrymen, but never their confederate; their adviser, but never their confidant.

He was a tall, muscular man of a distinguished appearance. His hair was white. His face was handsome and good to see. He was laconic in speech, but his eyes were closely observant of all within their range, and they asked searching questions. He had a reverent soul, wisely tolerant as to creeds, and he loved his country with a passion which absence from it constantly intensified. He was believed to be a thoroughly practical man, fond of accumulating land and gold; but his daughter Antonia knew that he had in reality a noble imagination. When he spoke to her of the woods, she felt the echoes of the forest ring through the room; when of the sea, its walls melted away in an horizon of long rolling waves.

He was thinking of Antonia as he walked slowly to his home in the suburbs of the city. Of all his children she was the nearest to him. She had his mother's beauty. She had also his mother's upright rectitude of nature. The Iberian strain had passed her absolutely by. She was a northern rose in a tropical garden. As he drew near to his own gates, he involuntarily quickened his steps. He knew that Antonia would be waiting. He could see among the thick flowering shrubs her tall slim figure clothed in white. As she came swiftly down the dim aisles to meet him, he felt a sentiment of worship for her. She concentrated in herself his memory of home, mother, and country. She embodied, in the perfectness of their mental companionship, that rarest and sweetest of ties—a beloved child, who is also a wise friend and a sympathetic comrade. As he entered the garden she slipped her hand into his. He clasped it tightly. His smile answered her smile. There was no need for any words of salutation.

The full moon had risen. The white house stood clearly out in its radiance. The lattices were wide open and the parlor lighted. They walked slowly towards it, between hedges of white camelias and scarlet japonicas. Vanilla, patchuli, verbena, wild wandering honeysuckle—a hun-

dred other scents— perfumed the light, warm air. As they came near the house there was a sound of music, soft and tinkling, with a rhythmic accent as pulsating as a beating heart.

“It is Don Luis, father.”

“Ah! He plays well—and he looks well.”

They had advanced to where Don Luis was distinctly visible. He was within the room, but leaning against the open door, playing upon a mandolin. Robert Worth smiled as he offered his hand to him. It was impossible not to smile at a youth so handsome, and so charming—a youth who had all the romance of the past in his name, his home, his picturesque costume; and all the enchantments of hope and great enthusiasms in his future.

“Luis, I am glad to see you; and I felt your music as soon as I heard it.”

He was glancing inquiringly around the room as he spoke; and Antonia answered the look:

“Mother and Isabel are supping with Dona Valdez. There is to be a dance. I am waiting for you, father. You must put on your velvet vest.”

“And you, Luis?”

“I do not go. I asked the judge for the appointment. He refused me. Very well! I care not to drink chocolate and dance in his house. One hand washes the other, and one cousin should help another.”

“Why did he refuse you?”

“Who can tell?” but Luis shrugged his shoulders expressively, and added, “He gave the office to Blas-Sangre.”

“Ah!”

“Yes, it is so—naturally;—Blas-Sangre is rich, and when the devil of money condescends to appear, every little devil rises up to do him homage.”

“Let it pass, Luis. Suppose you sing me that last verse again. It had a taking charm. The music was like a boat rocking on the water.”

“So it ought to be. I learned the words in New Orleans. The music came from the heart of my mandolin. Listen, Senor!

“Row young oarsman, row, young oarsman, Into the crypt of the night we float: Fair, faint moonbeams wash and wander, Wash and wander about the boat. Not a fetter is here to bind us, Love and memory lose their spell; Friends that we have left behind us, Prisoners of content, —farewell!”

“You are a wizard, Luis, and I have had a sail with you. Now, come with us, and show those dandy soldiers from the Alamo how to dance.”

“Pardon! I have not yet ceased to cross myself at the affront of this morning. And the Senora Valdez is in the same mind as her husband. I should be received by her like a dog at mass. I am going to-morrow to the American colony on the Colorado.”

“Be careful, Luis. These Austin colonists are giving great trouble—there have been whispers of very strong measures. I speak as a friend.”

“My heart to yours! But let me tell you this about the Americans—their drum is in the hands of one who knows how to beat it.”

“As a matter of hearsay, are you aware that three detachments of troops are on their way from Mexico?”

“For Texas?”

“For Texas.”

“What are three detachments? Can a few thousand men put Texas under lock and key? I assure you not, Senor; but now I must say adieu!

He took the doctor’s hand, and, as he held it, turned his luminous face and splendid eyes upon Antonia. A sympathetic smile brightened her own face like a flame. Then he went silently away, and Antonia watched him disappear among the shrubbery.

“Come, Antonia! I am ready. We must not keep the Senora waiting too long.”

"I am ready also, father." Her voice was almost sad, and yet it had a tone of annoyance in it—"Don Luis is so imprudent," she said. "He is always in trouble. He is full of enthusiasms; he is as impossible as his favorite, Don Quixote."

"And I thank God, Antonia, that I can yet feel with him. Woe to the centuries without Quixotes! Nothing will remain to them but—Sancho Panzas."

ANTONIA AND ISABEL.

"He various changes of the world had known, And some vicissitudes of human fate, Still altering, never in a steady state Good after ill, and after pain delight, Alternate, like the scenes of day and night."

"Ladies whose bright eyes Rain influence."

"But who the limits of that power shall trace, Which a brave people into life can bring, Or hide at will, for freedom combating By just revenge inflamed?"

For many years there had never been any doubt in the mind of Robert Worth as to the ultimate destiny of Texas, though he was by no means an adventurer, and had come into the beautiful land by a sequence of natural and business-like events. He was born in New York. In that city he studied his profession, and in eighteen hundred and three began its practice in an office near Contoit's Hotel, opposite the City Park. One day he was summoned there to attend a sick man. His patient proved to be Don Jaime Urrea, and the rich Mexican grandee conceived a warm friendship for the young physician.

At that very time, France had just ceded to the United States the territory of Louisiana, and its western boundary was a subject about which Americans were then angrily disputing. They asserted that it was the Rio Grande; but Spain, who naturally did not want Americans so near her own territory, denied the claim, and made the Sabine River the dividing line. And as Spain had been the original possessor of Louisiana, she considered herself authority on the subject.

The question was on every tongue, and it was but natural that it should be discussed by Urrea and his physician. In fact, they talked continually of the disputed boundary, and of Mexico. And Mexico was then a name to conjure by. She was as yet a part of Spain, and a sharer in all her ancient glories. She was a land of romance, and her very name tasted on the lips, of gold, and of silver, and of precious stones. Urrea easily persuaded the young man to return to Mexico with him.

The following year there was a suspicious number of American visitors and traders in San Antonio, and one of the Urreas was sent with a considerable number of troops to garrison the city. For Spain was well aware that, however statesmen might settle the question, the young and adventurous of the American people considered Texas United States territory, and would be well inclined to take possession of it by force of arms, if an opportunity offered.

Robert Worth accompanied General Urrea to San Antonio, and the visit was decisive as to his future life. The country enchanted him. He was smitten with love for it, as men are smitten with a beautiful face. And the white Moorish city had one special charm for him — it was seldom quite free from Americans. Among the mediaeval loungers in the narrow streets, it filled his heart with joy to see at intervals two or three big men in buckskin or homespun. And he did not much wonder that the Morisco-Hispano-Mexican feared these Anglo-Americans, and suspected them of an intention to add Texan to their names.

His inclination to remain in San Antonio was settled by his marriage. Dona Maria Flores, though connected with the great Mexican families of Yturbide and Landesa, owned much property in San Antonio. She had been born within its limits, and educated in its convent, and a visit to Mexico and New Orleans had only strengthened her attachment to her own city. She was a very pretty woman, with an affectionate nature, but she was not intellectual. Even in the convent the sisters had not considered her clever.

But men often live very happily with commonplace wives, and Robert Worth had never regretted that his Maria did not play on the piano, and paint on velvet, and work fine embroideries for the altars. They had passed nearly twenty-six years together in more than ordinary content and prosperity. Yet no life is without cares and contentions, and Robert Worth had had to face circumstances several times, which had brought the real man to the front.

The education of his children had been such a crisis. He had two sons and two daughters, and for them he anticipated a wider and grander career than he had chosen for himself. When his eldest child, Thomas, had reached the age of fourteen, he determined to send him to New York. He spoke to Dona Maria of this intention. He described Columbia to her with all the affectionate pride of a student for his alma mater. The boy's grandmother also still lived in the home wherein, he himself had grown to manhood. His eyes filled with tears when he remembered the red brick house in Canal Street, with its white door and dormer windows, and its one cherry tree in the strip of garden behind.

But Dona Maria's national and religious principles, or rather prejudices, were very strong. She regarded the college of San Juan de Lateran in Mexico as the fountainhead of knowledge. Her confessor had told her so. All the Yturbides and Landesas had graduated at San Juan.

But the resolute father would have none of San Juan. "I know all about it, Maria," he said. "They will teach Thomas Latin very thoroughly. They will make him proficient in theology and metaphysics. They will let him dabble in algebra and Spanish literature; and with great pomp, they will give him his degree, and 'the power of interpreting Aristotle all over the world.' What kind of an education is that, for a man who may have to fight the battles of life in this century?"

And since the father carried his point it is immaterial what precise methods he used. Men are not fools even in a contest with women. They usually get their own way, if they

take the trouble to go wisely and kindly about it. Two years afterwards, Antonia followed her brother to New York, and this time, the mother made less opposition. Perhaps she divined that opposition would have been still more useless than in the case of the boy. For Robert Worth had one invincible determination; it was, that this beautiful child, who so much resembled a mother whom he idolized, should be, during the most susceptible years of her life, under that mother's influence.

And he was well repaid for the self-denial her absence entailed, when Antonia came back to him, alert, self-reliant, industrious, an intelligent and responsive companion, a neat and capable housekeeper, who insensibly gave to his home that American air it lacked, and who set upon his table the well-cooked meats and delicate dishes which he had often longed for.

John, the youngest boy, was still in New York finishing his course of study; but regarding Isabel, there seemed to be a tacit relinquishment of the purpose, so inflexibly carried out with her brothers and sister. Isabel was entirely different from them. Her father had watched her carefully, and come to the conviction that it would be impossible to make her nature take the American mintage. She was as distinctly Iberian as Antonia was Anglo-American.

In her brothers the admixture of races had been only as alloy to metal. Thomas Worth was but a darker copy of his father. John had the romance and sensitive honor of old Spain, mingled with the love of liberty, and the practical temper, of those Worths who had defied both Charles the First and George the Third. But Isabel had no soul-kinship with her father's people. Robert Worth had seen in the Yturbe residencia in Mexico the family portraits which they had brought with them from Castile. Isabel was the Yturbe of her day. She had all their physical traits, and from her large golden-black eyes the same passionate soul looked forth. He felt that it would be utter cruelty to send her among people who must always be strangers to her.

So Isabel dreamed away her childhood at her mother's side, or with the sisters in the convent, learning from them such simple and useless matters as they considered necessary for a damosel of family and fortune. On the night of the Senora Valdez's reception, she had astonished every one by the adorable grace of her dancing, and the captivating way in which she used her fan. Her fingers touched the guitar as if they had played it for a thousand years. She sang a Spanish Romancero of El mio Cid with all the fire and tenderness of a Castilian maid.

Her father watched her with troubled eyes. He almost felt as if he had no part in her. And the thought gave him an unusual anxiety, for he knew this night that the days were fast approaching which would test to extremity the affection which bound his family together. He contrived to draw Antonia aside for a few moments.

"Is she not wonderful?" he asked. "When did she learn these things? I mean the way in which she does them?"

Isabel was dancing La Cachoucha, and Antonia looked at her little sister with eyes full of loving speculation. Her answer dropped slowly from her lips, as if a conviction was reluctantly expressed:

"The way must be a gift from the past—her soul has been at school before she was born here. Father, are you troubled? What is it? Not Isabel, surely?"

"Not Isabel, primarily. Antonia, I have been expecting something for twenty years. It is coming."

"And you are sorry?"

"I am anxious, that is all. Go back to the dancers. In the morning we can talk."

In the morning the doctor was called very early by some one needing his skill. Antonia heard the swift footsteps and eager voices, and watched him mount the horse always kept ready saddled for such emergencies, and ride away with the messenger. The incident in itself was a usual one, but she was conscious that her soul was moving un-

easily and questioningly in some new and uncertain atmosphere.

She had felt it on her first entrance into Senora Valdez's gran sala—a something irrepressible in the faces of all the men present. She remembered that even the servants had been excited, and that they stood in small groups, talking with suppressed passion and with much demonstrativeness. And the officers from the Alamo! How conscious they had been of their own importance! What airs of condescension and of an almost insufferable protection they had assumed! Now, that she recalled the faces of Judge Valdez, and other men of years and position, she understood that there had been in them something out of tone with the occasion. In the atmosphere of the festa she had only felt it. In the solitude of her room she could apprehend its nature.

For she had been born during those stormy days when Magee and Bernardo, with twelve hundred Americans, first flung the banner of Texan independence to the wind; when the fall of Nacogdoches sent a thrill of sympathy through the United States, and enabled Cos and Toledo, and the other revolutionary generals in Mexico, to carry their arms against Old Spain to the very doors of the vice-royal palace. She had heard from her father many a time the whole brave, brilliant story—the same story which has been made in all ages from the beginning of time. Only the week before, they had talked it over as they sat under the great fig-tree together.

“History but repeats itself,” the doctor had said then; “for when the Mexicans drove the Spaniards, with their court ceremonies, their monopolies and taxes, back to Spain, they were just doing what the American colonists did, when they drove the English royalists back to England. It was natural, too, that the Americans should help the Mexicans, for, at first, they were but a little band of patriots; and the American-Saxon has like the Anglo-Saxon an irresistible impulse to help the weaker side. And oh, Antonia! The cry of Freedom! Who that has a soul can resist it?”