The LEAST of THESE- IN COLOMBIA

Maude Newell Williams

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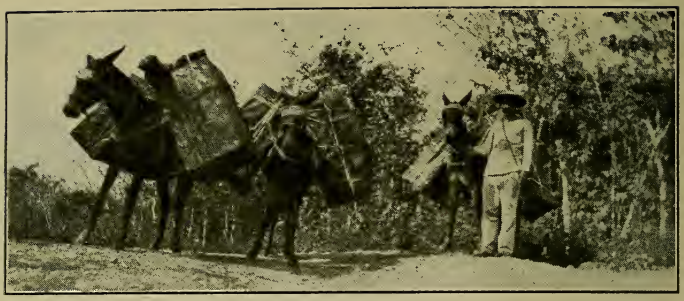

Cesar, who has since developed leprosy.

"Orchids, carnations and ferns, making fairyland of our upper corridor."

A group of boys, Colegio Americano, Bogotá.

THE LEAST OF THESE— IN COLOMBIA

BY

MAUDE NEWELL WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

NEW YORK CHICAGO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 N. Wabash Ave.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 75 Princes Street

TO MY HUSBAND,
THE MISSIONARY

FOREWORD

THIS little book is not abstract and philosophical; it is concrete and specific.

If you wish to learn of the work being done by missionaries in Colombia, this will not help you, for it does not describe or recount that work; if you seek to know of the resources, industries and possibilities of Colombia, look elsewhere, for they are not so much as mentioned here.

This little book is exclusive. It might have told of the educated, refined, Spanish peoples of Latin America, but it does not; it might have described the increasing and interesting artisan class, but it does not; it might have treated of the agricultural class—so much is there to be told of them,—but it does not. Only of servants, and not of all servants, not even of our neighbors' servants, of whom we have known much; of our servants, yet not of all those who have served us; of a few, then, of our servants, is the book written.

And the object? That the thing we Anglo Saxons of North America have so far failed to do, we may be helped a little in learning to do; to understand our Latin American neighbors. To do that we must see them exactly as they are, and not as we think they ought to be; we must form a more correct conception of their environment than most of us now possess.

The object is worthy, this little collection of narratives, insignificant. Yet these are true stories of

real people, and should possess a value in revealing to us the people. If anyone is helped to see them as they are—these servants of Colombia, typical of so large a class,—with the difficulties, the limitations, the impossibilities of their present lives, I shall feel rewarded for my venture.

M. N. W.

Baraboo, Wis.

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I

DOMINGA

BOGOTA sits placidly nearly two miles above the sea. It cuddles against mountains rearing their crests two thousand feet above the city, dominating the vast level plain that stretches away at their base.

Although near the equator this, because of its elevation, is "tierra fria," cold country. The air produces a peculiar light-headed sensation; you are almost certain that, if you could raise your arms and flap them a little, you could sail away to the clouds so intimately near. Chill and clammy are the houses into which no sun ever penetrates; thin and hot is the air of the sunny streets. Thus we doff our shawls and overcoats when we go out and don them in the unheated houses.

There are seasons when it rains every day. One afternoon a terrific tropical storm burst upon us in all its fury. Long sheets of water, wind-driven, fell athwart the world. The pounding of it on the open brick-floored patio was deafening; the dimness of it hid the faces of my pupils in a class-room of the Colegio Americano for Boys.

Dominga, the little char-woman who came to us for a day or two each week, rushed unceremoniously into my presence.

"My Señora, my Señora!" she shrieked; "those children, they are drowning, drowning!"

"Dominga, what is the matter? What do you mean?"

"My children, oh God, my children!" sobbing convulsively. "It makes so much cold and dark in the hut and they both have much catarrh. This morning the sun appeared so bright, so hot, I left open the part above of that door. Window there is none; when I shut both halves of that door it is of a darkness like middle night in that room. I left those children in front of the door opened by the half above and now it is raining; but how it rains! They are wet even now and the hut is full of water. They are surely drowned! Oh, Sacred Mary! Oh, Sacred Mary!"

"Yet I do not understand, Dominga. What have you to do with the children? They cannot be yours; you are just a girl yourself."

"Of course, my Señora, those children are mine."

"I did not dream that you had children! How old are they?"

"Who knows? They are but tiny; one commences to walk a little, the other is small, very small."

"And you leave them alone in a hut all day? Who cares for them while you are away?"

"Certainly no one, my Señora. Who is there? Of course there is not anyone."

"Are they not hungry, cold?"

"But yes, what does that mean to say?"

In my simplicity, for I had not been long in Bogotá, I asked, "Where is their father, Dominga?"

"Who knows? I have not seen him since the most little one was born. He does not come more."

The woman was sent home through the descending floods and instructed to bring the children when she came again. The next morning she appeared, carry-

ing them both. Juanito, the elder, with his sallow pinched face and great appealing eyes, wore one dirty garment which stopped far short of the knees. Carlito, starved, dull little scrap of humanity, was partially wrapped in the filthy rag of a shawl. And we were shivering in our woolens!

The children crawled about the kitchen court while the little mother, content beaming from her face, went briskly about her work.

One morning, some months later, Pabla, the dining-room girl, announced, "My Señora, in that court below, there is Dominga. It is very sick that she is, and who knows what that is that she has?"

"I will go to see, Pabla."

I am so capable of diagnosing any illness! However this case did not require an expert to tell what was the matter. There on the floor huddled Dominga; by her side sprawled the two children whom somehow she had managed to drag on her back for more than a mile to reach the Colegio. No need to lay my hand upon her brow; one glance at her sunken eyes and burning cheeks was enough. Who of my readers can recognize the look of starvation in a human face? One soon learns it in Bogotá.

"Dominga, when did you eat last?" I asked her.

"It was the Wednesday, Señora Mauda, here in the house of you. Now there is no work, all those families go to the country in this month. Nowhere have I work only here with you, now only one day of the week. In this week I pay my rent with those fifteen cents you paid me; since the Wednesday I do not eat."

This was Sunday; and Carlito depending upon her.

We managed to secure her a place in the country for a few months where the children could have fresh air and freedom for play, if not suitable food.

Dominga is one of the sixty out of every one hundred in Colombia for whom there is no marriage. No man in this class takes the slightest responsibility for the upbringing of a child; that is for the mother alone. There is no home life. What does this mean for the little mother who starves herself, works herself to death, for the children she loves as you and I love ours; what does it mean to the child, not to know a father's care or discipline; what does it mean to the father, never to have around him the restraining influence of the child and his mother, never to be called upon to give an unselfish thought to the welfare of a dependent being?

No marriage among the sixty per cent; why? It is not the province of this little narrative to explain the why and wherefore of things. For one who demands reasons for the conditions existing in Latin America there are not lacking learned treatises, easy of consultation, which devote to the subject a discussion worthy of it. Here we deal with results, not with causes.

II

ROSARIO

WITH but three months of Spanish to our credit we had taken charge of the Boys' School. Along with the school there had descended to us as cook, Rosario, and her six-year-old daughter. Squat and grossly stout was Rosario, less coppery in color than some mestizos, betraying the Indian blood principally by her tiny half-shut eyes.

Spanish as I knew it in those first months was culled from grammars, and Spanish as Rosario spoke it was to be found in no dictionary or grammar under the sun; hence some of our conversations were ludicrous to an extreme. One of my duties each evening was to furnish her a list of the things and indicate the quantity of each that I thought would be needed for the next day's meals. Since I knew nothing of Spanish cooking, less of the preferences of our boarding boys, and still less of the prices of things in the plaza, this duty caused me much worry. Why not let the woman make her own list? Very few Colombian cooks, and only those long trained to it, are able to make their market lists. Rosario decidedly was not.

She could not read or write a word, yet in some respects her ability surpassed yours or mine. Each evening having worked out the market list with the assistance of the dictionary and of one of the boarding boys, I read to her the numerous vegetables and

groceries that I had decided upon for the early morning marketing. The next day I produced the list and checked up her purchases. Not one time in ten did she forget a single item; not one time in twenty did she neglect, when reporting its cost, to add a centavo or two to each purchase. Her brain was nimble, too, in the addition of the sums of money paid out. The ten or twelve cents thus gained daily by pretending a higher cost than she had paid gave her a neat little sum for her daily chicha (beer).

Another source of revenue had she. As she left for the market before daylight she was entrusted with a key to the front (and only) door of the Colegio. Twice each day, an hour before the eleven-o'clock breakfast and again before the six-o'clock dinner, I counted out a medium-sized potato for each member of the household and an equal number of small potatoes to go into the soup. Rosario had a custom of subtly preparing the largest of the small potatoes for the table, thus robbing the soup of its due proportion of starch, while she hid the largest of the large potatoes. From time to time she stole out under the cover of darkness carrying beneath her shawl a little basket filled with good-sized potatoes, perhaps a slab or two of chocolate or a few breads upon which she had managed to get her hands. These things she sold at the corner tienda.

Two dollars a month was all that I paid the woman; yet Colombian señoras complain that the foreign mistresses spoil all service by overpaying their servants. Who would not wink at pilfering when wages so grind the faces of the poor?

A stove in Colombia is merely a brick table built solid to the floor on one side of a dark little kitchen. This table is three feet high and three feet wide. At

Sugar-cane.

Carrying wood to the city below. The center figure has two mule-loads.

intervals holes in the table-top occur and extend about half way to the floor where they open to the front. These are the drafts. Across the top of the openings bricks are set on edge to form grates. On these, pieces of charcoal or fagots of wood are laid and puffed into blaze by use of the bellows. Kettles are balanced on the charcoal and the kitchen equipment is complete. It is a simple matter for one piece of charcoal to burn more rapidly than the others and to crumble away, which causes the kettles to topple and their contents to spill over the fire, raising a cloud of cinders and ashes which descends into the cooking food, thus spoiling the portion that remains in the kettle. There is no oven, no chimney. Close beneath the ceiling above the "fireplace," as this table is called, is an opening in the wall, two feet wide and extending the whole length of the wall. Through this, part of the smoke escapes, the most of it remaining in the room to blacken the walls and to stifle the cook. The kitchen has no window and but one small door opposite the fireplace; more openings would interfere with the draft.

In this dark room little Noma, Rosario's daughter, crouched most of the time. She was not apportioned rations as were the rest of the household, Rosario continually assuring me that it was unnecessary. Noma lived off scraps, and was clothed from scraps begged from "my Señora." To judge from appearance neither she nor her clothing was ever washed. Rosario herself showed so intimate an acquaintance with dirt and grease that my standing quarrel with her was on the subject of cleanliness.

Her love of drink proved the woman's pitfall. She tippled all the time, drank heavily on many occa-

sions and was drunk frequently. In my periodic digging out of the kitchen often would I unearth, along with the perfectly good kettles consigned to oblivion because "they are so dirty they serve no more," villainous looking bottles that would threaten the peace of any household.

Rosario had two hours off each Sabbath afternoon with the invariable result that if we had any dinner (and boarding boys must always be fed), I had to assist the poor stumbling drunken creature to prepare it. In desperation I took away her two hours off; if she could not come home in better condition she should stay shut into the servants' room, a dark, empty cubby-hole, all the long sunny afternoon. One Sunday she stayed. At dinner she surprised me by serving to me alone a special little dainty. While the coals of fire thus heaped on my head were burning nicely she came whimpering to be allowed "one only little hour in the street in which to walk but the tiniest little."

Of course she had her little hour. Two hours, three hours, passed and no Rosario. I heard Noma crying, alone and frightened in the servants' room, so brought her upstairs. I was anticipating the worst from Rosario, when it burst upon us; such a pounding at the street-door that only oak planks could have resisted its violence. The Missionary hurried down to open the door, Noma and I rushed out into the corridor and hung over the balustrade.

"Go back into the library and shut the door," peremptorily ordered the Missionary. "Take Noma with you and keep her there."

Startled I obeyed. Then ensued a heavy dragging noise which was unmistakable. Down the length of the lower corridor it echoed until it came to a stop

in the servants' room. A restless half hour later the Missionary joined us in the library.

"Disgusting business," he ejaculated. "The woman is drunk, as dead as a log. A policeman found her in the gutter six blocks from here and, recognizing her, hauled her all the way home by her feet. The skin is worn completely off one side of her face where he dragged her over the cobblestones. Think of it; that ponderous body dragged by her feet! It is a wonder it did not kill her. If she recovers she will be a hideous sight forever. Don't let Noma go downstairs tonight; let her sleep here in the library."

Privately, as I waited upon the forlorn creature, I resolved that Rosario should seek a new situation as soon as she was able to leave the house; but a week with no cook at all, or a different one from the street for each meal, weakened my resolution. I decided to renew my patience with Rosario. Perhaps I could yet help her to reform. I realized, too, that the Missionary Lady in the Girls' School across the city spoke the truth when she said, "After all, Rosario is virtuous and you might be much worse off if you let her go." Rosario virtuous! Of a truth, how our charity increases when we change continents!

The poor woman became forever grateful to us for our forbearance. She never thanked us in words, but her devotion was a thing at which to marvel.

One day she came to ask me how I wished the potatoes prepared for breakfast, made into balls and fried in deep fat or served in Saratoga chips as usual. Feeling that I could not absorb any more lard if I starved instead, I replied that it did not

matter; the boys liked them either way and I should not eat any myself.

At breakfast, with much ceremony and an air of great mystery, Pabla brought in and set before me a plate containing a brownish, stickyish-looking mixture which I could not cut with my knife. Grinning broadly she insisted upon my tasting the concoction.

"But what is it, Pabla?"

"A thing very good. A thing for my Señora if she has not so great an appetite. But prove it."

The Missionary and the boarding boys watched to see what I might do. It would have taken a braver person than I am to have tasted so nauseous a dish without knowing what it was.

"Pabla, unless you tell me what this is, I shall not taste it."

"It is that Rosario has much sympathy for the Señora for that she is not able to eat her rice and those potatoes. Rosario herself was it who went to the street for the purpose of buying the blood of a goat which is now fried for my Señora. It is most strengthening, most delicious, ah, but how much so!"

The boys laughed and the Missionary looked amused but the servants were disappointed, not to say disgusted, because I sent the dainty, untasted, back to the kitchen.

I had taken from Rosario the privilege of going out Sunday afternoons and it was several weeks after her escapade before she asked for any hours off. Then she fawningly begged permission to go after breakfast to make some necessary purchases for herself and Noma.

"The Doctor" (the Missionary) "told me that he goes to put Noma into those classes that she

learns to read. Then I buy her sandals that she looks respectable, if my Señora does me the favor so great to let me go for a little hour."

"And after the little hour, Rosario?"

"Then I return, to be sure. I prepare that dinner, as always. My sister it is that accompanies me and she does not take" (drink). "She it is that helps me hurry myself."

Concealing my smile at the mental vision of waddling old Rosario hurrying herself, I gave her the money she asked for and told her that she might go for an hour. Two hours later I went downstairs to unlock and set out the afternoon lunch for the boys, planning on going directly to the kitchen to commence the preparation of the dinner, since I had no expectation of seeing Rosario again that afternoon. As I entered the dining-room there in the corridor stood the cook, her mutilated face distorted by a smile.

"Why, Rosario, have you not gone yet?" I asked in surprise.

"Of course, my Señora, I have been, I have returned. Allow me one little favor more," and she shuffled off to the kitchen.

I went on upstairs wondering what the woman could possibly want now. A few moments later she lumbered up the narrow stairs and pushed through the doorway, bearing a large tray laden with eight choice varieties of bananas. With much graciousness and with horrible twistings of her features she presented me the fruit as a token of gratitude for her hour off. My reward was so out of proportion to my deserts that I was speechless.

With a show of anxiety, she inquired, "It appears to my Señora that I was very late?"

"Oh, no, Rosario, you returned promptly, but you should not have taken the trouble to bring me all this nice fruit. However, I thank you sincerely."

"For nothing, my Señora. Those thanks are all mine that the Señora, so good, should accept my unworthy gift and I implore her to pardon me if I was late."

I did not tell her I was so relieved that she had returned at all and able to stand that I could have forgiven her a great tardiness.

One morning the Missionary returned from an errand in the street and asked me to send for Rosario. She came into our presence, looking startled but saying nothing. The Missionary held in his hand the market list for the day as he said:

"You bought sixteen dozen eggs this morning; what did you pay for them?"

"Doctor, the Señora and I, already have we arranged all that from the plaza."

"Yes, but I wish to hear what you paid for those eggs."

"That which I said to Señora Mauda; two cents each egg."

"I have just come from the plaza and I priced eggs. They offered me all there were in the market at one and seven; I could have secured them at one and six, or even at one and five, a cent and a half per egg. That means that they are selling at from eighteen to twenty cents a dozen and you are charging the Señora twenty-four cents a dozen."

"And what is it that I know about those dozens? I know nothing of dozens; I paid two cents for each of those eggs. It is a good class of egg that I buy, not those eggs carried for many days from far away. I buy the good eggs."

"And at most you do not pay over one and seven—a cent and seven-tenths per egg. Hand over to the Señora the money you have kept back."

But this she would not do. She departed, grumbling that she had paid two cents—well, that was what she had paid, anyway.

"She probably did not pay over a cent and a half for the eggs," the Missionary remarked. "They charge me more than they would think of asking her because they know that I am a foreigner and will not haggle with them as she does. She has made sixty or eighty cents out of you today on the eggs alone. Of course it must be put up with while neither of us is able to go to the market with her and keep watch of her buying."

That very morning at breakfast the boiled egg served the Missionary "came out bad," and he arose from the table and went to his office without having tasted a mouthful of breakfast. I wondered what were Rosario's feelings when Pabla reported the occurrence to her.

Valentine, like Rosario, was a left-over from our predecessors when we came into possession at the Colegio. He was a lank loose-limbed boy of sixteen, who looked as though he had never in his life had a full satisfying meal. Barefooted, he was clad in tattered, beltless trousers which extended three inches below the knees, and which were surmounted by a calico garment that, before ever it had descended to him, had done its full duty as a woman's blouse. Both garments had been patched and the patches patched (Valentine had a mother!) until most of the colors and materials known to man could be made out on that one gawky figure.

The heavy dullness of Valentine's face was partly

relieved by the steady look from his quiet eyes, which held the expression of a faithful dog. Faithful was the word for Valentine—faithful and reliable. I often wondered, although I never paused in my busy round to count, how many times each day he stumbled up the steep crooked back stairs, tugging pails of water with which to refresh the long rows of orchids, carnations and ferns, making fairyland of our upper corridor. No one ever reminded him, "Valentine, here is a plant that needs water"; oh, you who have lived in South America, take note of such devotion to duty! Were there errands to be done,—a note to be taken to a parent (the Colegio had no telephone), a spool of thread or an extra basket of charcoal to be bought,—"Valentine, Valentine, where is Valentine?" was the cry raised.

So honest and painstaking was he that we felt he deserved a chance in life, so the Missionary decreed that the demands upon the boy's time should be fewer in number and he should enter the primary grade of the school and learn to read and write. This was a great and unusual privilege to grant to one of his class and he was appreciative of it. We secured him clothes which, if they were not much of an improvement in fit, at least were more of a sameness in color and texture than the original suit.

When Valentine left us some years later it was to be apprenticed to learn a trade at which a man in Colombia may at least keep himself alive.

III

PABLA

PABLA, with eyes and hair of the deep, dead black of midnight, with swarthy skin, came nearer being Indian than any other servant I ever had. Broad-chested, thick-necked, with a round little head carrying one of the pleasantest of faces, the woman wearied me with her eternal good-nature. Her spirits were like a geyser, forever bubbling up and overflowing at any and at all times. No one has the right to go through life with nothing and be so utterly carefree. Of course she drank and that deeply, but she was never drunk; the more she imbibed, the wider she stretched her extensive mouth in grins as she incessantly rattled off what were intended as pleasantries. She was even farther than Rosario from being neat; the untidiness of the house served as a thorn in my flesh until I decided that I had perfected myself in the grace of patience. Then I dismissed Pabla.

A wearisome month dragged by. Most of the time there was no dining-room girl, part of the time there were three or four in one day. A large share of the napkins and tableware disappeared with the various applicants. Regularly each Sabbath afternoon Pabla appeared, as bright and fresh as a peony, red ribbons gayly bobbing, as she extended La Señora a peace-offering in the shape of a great tray of brilliant-hued flowers.

"You'd better give her another trial," remarked the Missionary on the fourth Sunday. "It cannot be worse than it is now."

Triumphant was her re-entrance. She was so happy that if the dining-room was mussy or the parlor undusted I pretended to be oblivious of it. In her way she worked hard with apparently no thought beyond that of spending herself for us; her devotion and willingness covered a multitude of her sins of inefficiency.

The routine of our days is of this sort: after the six-o'clock morning coffee I go downstairs, unlock the cupboard and lay out bread and chocolate for each boarding boy and each servant, relock the cupboard and return to our rooms on the second floor. Directly Pabla follows me upstairs.

"My Señora now thinks in sending Valentine for that bread?"

"Not now, Pabla. It is not yet time for that; he cannot go for an hour and he is in class. You must not disturb him."

"Then what hour may it be, Señora Mauda?"

Being informed, she departs. Not one in three of the servant class can tell time from a clock.

I sit down to study Spanish and ten minutes pass while I wonder what the boys are shouting over and if the teachers are as late this morning as usual. All classes open at seven and in a country where sunrise is at six practically every day in the year it is not easy for anyone to be on time at so early an hour. Here is Pabla!

"Is it possible that Señora Mauda does us the favor of descending to the kitchen? Rosario comes from the market."

I go to the kitchen at once, and carefully inspect

the cook's purchases; thirty little handfuls of all sorts of stuff known and unknown to me; rows of tiny bundles wrapped in leaves, neatly folded away from sight if not from smell; eggs, tied four in a row, each in its little cell of dried corn leaf; lard, done up like sausages and bought by the string; leaves, seeds, bark, roots,—what does not serve as food in the deft hands of a Colombian cook?

The woman fingers over each purchase and mentions the price that she paid; I add mentally and make the total result in the two and one-half or three dollars that she was given to spend. I look at her sharply in an effort to read how much money she has in the depths of her large pocket, for both of us understand that she derives a steady income from the marketing. Her twinkling little eyes hold a look of cunning but her face is as innocent as a fresh May morning.

As I unlock the coal-bin and watch her measure out the charcoal, I remark that she may send Pabla upstairs at once for the supplies she needs from the store-room. Keys in hand I await the woman ten minutes. Why attempt to study when I expect her any moment?

Here she comes at last, carrying two bowls, a platter and a basket. The padlock of the store-room door refuses to yield to the key. I struggle, Pabla struggles, and finally she goes down to the Missionary's office to bring him to apply his brain and brawn to the task. The door opened, he renews his promise to secure a new padlock and returns to his waiting class. I get down on my knees to count out the potatoes, climb into a chair to reach the rice which I measure by handfuls, give out a chunk of black rock salt, a cup of green coffee berries, a few

ears of corn for grinding, a handful of wheat for thickening soup,——

"Is that absolutely all that is needed?" I ask as I tuck away what I had laid aside from Rosario's purchases to be brought up to the store-room.

"Of course, without doubt it is, my Señora."

I return to my desk, find my place, commence a translation. Here is Pabla again!

"It is that Rosario forgets that macaroni which she needs."

I drop my work, go for my keys, tackle the padlock. After several vexatious attempts it yields and I take out the macaroni. Again I seat myself at work, listening continually for Pabla's heavy step on the stair, for she is certain to have forgotten something else. It is sugar. I hunt up the hammer, the butcher-knife, some clean paper to spread over the table, and lift the twenty-four pound cake of dark sugar on to the table. Laboriously, with the knife and the hammer to drive it, I hack off a few pieces which Pabla bobs around to pick up as they fly about the room. We gather up the crumbs and she departs while I restore the cake of sugar to the shelf and lock it up.

A few minutes later it is more salt, or an egg, "one egg came out bad." Were I to deal out these supplies before they are needed they would be wasted or sold in the street. In order to keep the income of the school on speaking acquaintance with the outgo it is necessary to watch every expenditure most carefully. Here is Pabla at my elbow.

"And now, my Señora, has the hour come for sending Valentine for that bread?"

"Yes, Pabla. Call him."

He comes, gravely receives his instructions and the

money, takes his basket and departs. Within fifteen minutes he is back, and I count the buns; one hundred fifty, two hundred, two hundred ten,—no real loaves are baked unless specially ordered. Valentine is the only one whom I can trust to bring me change and he cannot do it unless I impress it upon him again and again just what sum he is to bring. His coins—half-cents, cents, two-and-a-half cents—are counted and found to be correct.

He takes two pitchers and goes for the milk, returns; the milk is brought to me for inspection.

"Valentine, there appears to be a little less milk than usual. Why?"

"My Señora, it is possible that a few drops of that milk fell in the street," said with quiet indifference.

"Oh, Valentine, you must not spill milk that costs as much as this does! I fear that I shall have to send you for another pint as here is not enough for the boys' coffee."

Back he goes; ten minutes later I gravely inspect the pint, and he returns to the class-room. A half hour races by, and here is Pabla, lumbering up the steep stairs again.

"My Señora, Rosario sends me to say to you that that milk fell down in boiling. One little minute was it that Rosario comes into the dining-room to say to me a thing that she heard in the plaza and that milk fell over in cooking. She runs, I run; but now there is a lack of milk. She tells me to say to you that if you will do the favor so great of sending Valentine for more milk you may put that charge against her account."

"I will pay for the extra milk, but I do wish that

Rosario would not let it boil over or tip over every morning. Please send me Valentine."

Ten minutes later Pabla appears to ask if it is time for Rosario to put the vegetables on the fire; fifteen minutes later to remark, gazing nonchalantly at the ceiling:

"My Señora forgets to come to take out that fruit for the breakfast."

"Oh, no, Pabla, I forget nothing. It is not yet time to do that."

At half past ten I descend to the dining-room, unlock the cupboard and count out pieces of fruit to lay beside each plate, inspect the table, remind Pabla of the napkins and straighten them out for her as she cannot read the names on the rings, hunt up the missing chairs, help Rosario to dish up the soup evenly, peep into the coffee-pot and the milk-pots to see that all flies have been rescued from a boiling death, and ring the breakfast bell.

The boys march in and stand behind their chairs while grace is said. As usual the Missionary is detained in his office by callers and I send his food back to the kitchen. Mentally, sometimes physically, also, I help Pabla serve the meal. The food for the servants is apportioned and sent to the kitchen, that for the beggars dished up and despatched to the pitiful line squatting in the zaguan (vestibule). Breakfast is over!

At two the chocolate and bread is counted out for the afternoon lunch. As we never know in advance whether two or thirty of the day-pupils are going to take this lunch with us, we frequently find ourselves short of bread and Valentine is again despatched to the bakery. At four we commence again to try to get to Rosario the supplies she needs

for the preparation of the six-o'clock dinner. As sure as I have callers in the afternoon, so certain is Pabla to appear to beg more charcoal; Rosario underestimated her need. At eight a bread and a sweet are set out for everybody in the house and I sigh with relief as I realize that all for whom I am responsible have been granted their daily bread for one day more.

Why are not these supplies given out once for all each day? I tried that. I impressed upon both women, again and again, that they would not receive another thing in the whole day and that they must divide everything into two parts, using only one-half for the morning meal.

In the afternoon when I went to the kitchen court to inspect the washing lying around on the ground "to soak," I found a heaping pan of cooked potatoes thrown out to the doves. With potatoes at two and one-half dollars per bushel! Six times did Pabla come upstairs to ask me for supplies for the dinner; she followed me around when I had callers and begged for food which I persisted in denying her. Fat old Rosario labored up the stairs and Valentine was sent to me twice. Finally all three of them interviewed the Missionary in his office; he told them that the housekeeping was my affair and he would not mix in it, but if I had warned them that the supplies were for the entire day they should have set aside enough for the dinner. Later he remarked to me that perhaps I had better give out rations for the dinner again. I might have done so had I not seen that peck of potatoes thrown away; as it was, I did not do it.

We had almost nothing for dinner, no vegetables, no rice. I sent to the corner tienda as we sat at

table and bought stale soiled breads with which to appease our hunger. It is not customary to serve bread at dinner. The boys ate their meagre meal quietly, while my cheeks burned as I wondered what they thought of my management. The Missionary was grave, the servants, all on the point of leaving and I, worried. The next day I went back to counting beans and potatoes and was glad to do it.

Saturdays Pabla tears up our rooms and generally plays havoc with our things, tackling everything with the force and vim of a whirlwind. She commences by throwing the rugs and cushions over the balustrade into the court below where the boys stumble and crawl over them on the way to the dining-room for morning coffee. Instead of then sweeping the rooms thus bereft of their small rugs, she seizes fiercely upon a pail of water and slops it along the floor around the edge of the large center rug. Down she gets upon her knees to chase after the stream in an effort to sop it up before it shall run into the rug, which, of course, she does not succeed in doing. For half the forenoon, without having swept anywhere, she paddles around in that water, which performance she calls scrubbing. Result: a streak of mud around each large rug.

Then she rushes up with her broom and commences an onslaught upon the large rugs, scraping away at them until it is a wonder they are not in rags. The brooms are rough sticks, two and a half feet long, around one end of which stiff reeds are tied in a bundle no larger than a man's fist. Such a broom is about as easy to sweep with as a cornstalk would be and not much more effective.

After Pabla has pounded and slapped the rugs an hour each and the dust is so thick that one can

scarcely see across the room, she joyfully pronounces her work finished and goes away. The floors, since nothing ever dries in Bogotá, are still too wet to spread down the small rugs, which the woman ran out in a flood of rain to rescue after they were well dampened and which she afterward shook in the closed corridor in front of the supposedly clean rooms. Later she returns to place these rugs as straight as geometrical lines, while she leaves the large rugs billowing like the waves of the ocean, and at all sorts of angles with their surroundings. Nothing is dusted and the cushions are tucked into unexpected corners so that I must hunt for them to find them.

Pabla is the personification of willingness. When the Missionary is sick she cheerfully trots up and down stairs forty times a day and seems honored in the doing of it. Yet without extra service she has work enough for any woman. When the Missionary cannot come downstairs and I am battling in the office with his problems, she goes about the house shaking her black head and mumbling, "Sacred God, but he makes much lack in the house." When I remark that perhaps he will soon be better and able to return to the office, she tries to look lugubrious and exclaims, "Blessed Mary, but it would be his harm." If I attempt to have him sit up a little she declares, to the accompaniment of her choicest swear-words, "But it is a crime to think in such a thing."

One afternoon when Valentine went with his little basket to buy sweets for the boys I followed him to learn where and how he did it. As we left the house we noticed Pabla standing in the lower corridor grinning at us. We bought the sweets the third

door from the Colegio so were gone but a few moments and as we returned I caught a glimpse of Pabla's squat figure scudding around the corner. I went on upstairs and stood in the upper corridor which commanded a view of the door. A moment later Pabla entered breathlessly, on a trot, with an upward glance towards my rooms. When she saw me watching her, she dropped her head sheepishly and ran through the long corridor to the kitchen.

An hour later she came for the dinner supplies and when I looked at her searchingly she grew red and mumbled something about Rosario's needing extra milk and sending her after it.

"But, Pabla, you know that you are forbidden to go to the street, and when Rosario wishes milk she asks me for it."

Poor Pabla, with a breath like a whiff from a grog-ship! These women have had their chicha since they were in their cradles; of what use to attempt to deny them drink now?

I bought a tiny potted rose-bush, said to be of a rare variety, and for four months I carefully tended and watched it, carrying it to the sun, moving it out of the rain, setting it away from the wind, watering it myself for fear that Valentine would keep it too wet or too dry. At last a wonderful yellow rose, as large as an orange, burst into bloom, sitting proudly on the very center of the symmetrical little plant. It was perfect in its beauty, the marvel of all. The second day of its glory Pabla appeared before me grinning broadly and holding out my one lovely rose —plucked!

"A little present for my Señora," she said with the air of giving great pleasure. How is it possible

that even she, as dull as she is, could not see that I did not wish my one precious rose picked?

There were in our school "Big Murillo" and "Little Murillo." The former was a stalwart, uncouth fellow of eighteen years, who had come to us from a distant village; the latter, a well-formed, handsome youth of twenty, was very like his father, a polished gentleman who had never married, and so was desirous of doing something for his talented son. Naturally Big Murillo, with his loud guffaw and coarse manners, acted upon Little Murillo as an irritant, since every instinct of the latter was that of a gentleman. On his part, Big Murillo hated the other because of the scorn with which the smaller man regarded him, and this dislike manifested itself by insinuating remarks, by asking Little Murillo when he had last seen his mother and if he were going to spend his vacation with her. Since everyone knew that Little Murillo did not know who his mother was, such remarks were the veriest insults.

One evening the two young men returned from the mid-week service and, with the rest of the boarding boys, entered the dining-room, seating themselves at the table for the evening lunch. As the Missionary had company we had asked that our lunch be sent upstairs. Suddenly we heard the crash of falling dishes, the rattle of chairs, voices pitched high in excitement. The light in the dining-room flashed out, and a scuffling and screaming ensued. The Missionary started from his chair exclaiming, "Those Murillos again," and bounded down the stairs followed by the two visiting gentlemen.

Big Murillo in passing the other's chair at table had rudely brushed against him and Little Murillo had responded with some insulting remark. The

larger man thereupon struck the smaller, who instantly drew his pocket knife and attacked his enemy. Big Murillo seized a chair and attempted to break his opponent's head. Pabla extinguished the light and the young men wrestled and fought in the darkness until they reached the corridor where the brilliant moonlight enabled them to see each other. Then Pabla rushed in between them, but was knocked down and trampled on. She received a severe cut on one hand from the jabbing knife with which the smaller man fought. The Missionary threw himself between the combatants and held them apart while he tried to calm them enough to induce them to desist. Suddenly Big Murillo, standing behind the Missionary, stealthily attempted to pounce upon his enemy, but one of the visitors, noting the movement, threw himself upon the big fellow and bore him to the floor.

I descended to the dining-room to find Pabla, her smile gone for once, making an effort to straighten things. As she gathered up pieces of china, her hand dripping blood, she cried over the broken dishes and demolished chairs.

One evening, as Pabla was passing an empty schoolroom, she was startled by a slight noise. Entering the unlighted room, she distinguished the form of a man climbing into a window which someone had forgotten to fasten. Doubtless his purpose was to secret himself somewhere and be locked in when the house was closed for the night. Brave Pabla advanced upon the man and ordered him to retreat, which he did at once. The Missionary heard her voice in the dark schoolroom and, coming to investigate, arrived in time to see the robber disappearing into the moonlit street. When Pabla was asked if she were not frightened, she replied:

"Of course, Señor, but what does that mean to say? Surely it is my duty to protect the Doctor's house!"

Pabla's unselfish devotion included not only the Missionary and myself, but also the boarding boys. They imposed upon her, constantly demanding extra service and unscrupulously ordering her about. More work fell to her lot than one woman could expect to do and keep well; she fell ill, we sent her to her sister, and Cleofa came in her place.

IV

CLEOFA

AT first glance Cleofa appeared likable. She had a round vacant face, much lighter in color than Pabla's; in fact she was quite a red and olive blond, as blonds go in Latin America. The Missionary pronounced her better looking than her predecessor, a compliment which did not mean much as he had declared Pabla to be the homeliest woman he had ever seen.

The new girl's display of temper was like a tropical storm; nothing was ever more certain to occur, or was more violent while it lasted, and it burst upon us from a clear sky with no rumblings of thunder. She was forever in trouble with some of the boys and often even with Rosario, who was more tranquil than an Indian summer.

The laundry became a night-mare to me while Cleofa was with us. At least half the clothes each week had to be sent back to be re-ironed and nothing was ever well done at last.

To iron without smudging the clean articles is an art. The utensil used is a tailor's goose, a heavy hollow iron holding burning charcoal in its center. It is not a simple matter to keep the charcoal ablaze and it requires periods of blowing with a bellows, which causes cinders and sparks to fly in all directions. Not infrequently the clothes are burned in

Milk-vendors.

Rural homes.

Four hundred years of Spanish civilization and yet ——

spots by the sparks and rarely do they escape being blackened in places by the cinders.

For six days of the week water runs in a slow drizzle from a faucet in the kitchen court of the Colegio. On Tuesdays there is no water; as everyone gives a different explanation for this and as no two reasons agree, I have never really known why we have no water on that day. Monday the dining-room girl, between the intervals of running up and downstairs, serving two meals, preparing and serving three lunches, and keeping the dining-room as well as our living-rooms clean, dampens all the clothes, wads them up with soap, and strews them around the kitchen court. Tuesday, if she finds time and I remind her of it, she carries water from the front court and pours it over them. Wednesday she commences to pound each article against a flat inclined stone as large as a table, constantly pouring water over the garment as she moves it up and down. Swish, slap, swash, whack, slap, the noise reverberates through the Colegio and escapes into the street. As one walks through Bogotá, he can hear it issuing from all the houses in the city. The parexcellence of a washwoman consists in the force of the abrupt sharp thwacks she can produce on the stone with somebody's fine linen and laces. Handfuls of broken buttons are gathered up after each washing.

When an article comes through this ordeal clean, it is spread on the bushes in the solar to dry. If still not clean, it is returned to soak, usually on a board that it may be moved easily from place to place and left wherever the sun's rays penetrate into the court. The board has rusty nails, the clothes are covered with rust spots, but it occurs to no one to remove the nails. Practically every bush in

Colombia contains dye-stuff in its leaves or blossoms; clothes hung on bushes are dyed in streaks, yet the women object to using a clothes-line, because the sun cannot reach all parts of a garment hung on a line.

When all the clothes are washed and dried they are collected to be blued and starched. The starch is made at night and left to stand until morning when it has become as thick and almost as unmanageable as glue. From one to three hours are spent in beating it up with the hands and the fore-arms; slap, slap, slap, slap, until I wonder at the endurance of the women. The right consistency at last, the mass is blued a deep indigo. Starched dry in that thick paste, everything—table-linen, bed-linen, handkerchiefs—comes out as stiff as a board and as blue as I feel when I see it. Fortunate indeed is the Señora who receives her clothes, ironed and creased in wonderful folds, two weeks after she has sent them downstairs.

For three successive weeks Cleofa spoiled the white clothes by leaving them in soak for a day or two with her red dress on top of them. The first time it happened I upbraided her, and she responded with a long tirade containing a startling flow of swear-words. The second time it occurred I spent a half day balancing a pail on charcoal, trying to boil out the color which persisted in thwarting my purpose. I told her if it happened again that I should expect her to pay for the ruined things (fancy it, from two dollars per month!). Even that threat did not prevent a re-occurrence of the disaster. She was a little frightened when for the third time I found that calico dress on top of everything else, and she went to the street to purchase an acid with which for

nearly a week she worked over the mottled clothes but without success. About everything in the house was eventually stained from that one red dress.

The girl was both foolish and obstinate. She insisted that she did " all thing the very best," and would receive instruction in nothing. For example she sprinkled a week's laundry, then found not a moment in which to iron it. I discovered the things on one of my frequent tours of inspection (the habit of close inspection, my women declared, no Colombian señora ever had and they considered such a custom very improper in me) and told her to take the things out and hang them on the line again. I supposed of course she had done it, but she had not. Several days later I came upon them completely mildewed; nothing escaped, not even the six new long tablecloths which I had just made for the Colegio and which had never before been washed.

When Cleofa had been with us three months, Small Son made his appearance, and the woman assumed the extra work and the longer hours without comment. Up and down stairs, through the long corridors, back and forth she went, forever on a trot. It troubled me that no one could be found to help her but she made no complaint. She did not know how to work and she would let no one show her but she was as far from being indolent as any girl I ever had, and all Colombian servant-women are hard-working.

When Small Son was a week old, Bertilda, a young girl who was acting as housekeeper for me, came to tell me that she could not stay in the house if Cleofa continued so insolent and rebellious. Bertilda cried, Cleofa stormed and swore, the nurse, Bautista, screamed excitedly and pandemonium

reigned. The Missionary in his office heard the clamor and came running through the corridor and up the stairs. Into my room he flew and asked, "What is it?" Waiting for no answer he came to the bed and, putting his head down almost with a sob, asked if I was all right. The women sneaked away.

Not until afterward did I know that the physician did not expect me to get well, and the Missionary had thought me dead when he heard just such a commotion as is raised when a death occurs.

After things had quieted down somewhat, I sent for Cleofa and told her that if she would manage with Bertilda and Bautista I would give her double wages and a new dress when I got up. Three more weeks went by and I was still unable to sit up when the woman came to tell me she was leaving.

"Oh, Cleofa, I know that the work is too hard for one woman, with so much running up and downstairs and so much laundry with no chance to dry anything in this steady downpour; but we are sending for Dominga and things will be easier. Don't go now when we need you so much."

"It is not that work, my Señora. All that I do for Señora Mauda, that is but a pleasure. It certainly is that my brother is sick and it is I myself that he has sent for. In this next week I go."

When Rosario heard of it she told Cleofa that she had no right to leave without giving longer notice, and that we could call in a policeman to keep her. Cleofa came directly to me and asked if that were true; I told her I did not know, it might be. Then she came nearer breaking down than I had before seen her, for she usually tossed her head and giggled on all occasions. She asked permission to go out

for a few moments so I instructed Valentine to unlock the door for her. She went away, but she did not return; and I was owing her a month's wages,—the pay for that month of hard, hard work. The injustice of it troubled me as, in spite of the incredulity of the rest of the household, I believed her story that she was going to her brother in another city.

Two days later she presented herself in my room, gay and flippant. She admitted that she had no brother, that she had found a place where the work was easier, and she had returned for her double wages and the new dress.

Teresa took her place, and for the time being, the char-woman, Dominga, was made responsible for the laundry. A pleasant-faced, sloppy-figured little woman was Teresa, whose eyes, nose and hair proclaimed her what she was,—part negro. She is the only servant with negro blood that I have ever had in Colombia. A born nurse girl, she was a great comfort to me since I could not leave my room until Small Son was more than two months old. Her dark face fairly shone with delight when at last we were able to take the child for his first outing, she carrying him and I trailing after to watch her every step. She remarked, tentatively:

"The foreign señoras of Bogotá have that custom of putting shoes on the girl who carries the baby. Señora Mauda thinks in that thing?"

"No, Teresa," I replied. "I am afraid that if you wore shoes you might stumble; they would hurt your feet and be so stiff that you could not walk. Small Son is safer if you go as you are accustomed to go."

V

BAUTISTA

THE nurse that we employed when Small Son came was considered the best that we could secure in a city where no nurse is trained, as we understand the term. She was highly recommended to us by our physician, a Harvard graduate. She had spent nine months in the city of Paris in a hospital of her church, and had seen many things undreamed of by the nurse-women who had never been out of Bogotá. She was a respectable-looking woman, dressed in a black skirt, with a mantilla draped about her ample form in such a way that nothing of her basque showed. Upon her feet she wore shoes, a sure sign that she did not belong to the servant class. The woman had a kindly, although heavy, face and appeared quiet and trustworthy.

She was with us six weeks, receiving a dollar a day, wonderful wages, and to the best of her ability she was faithful during that time. The physician had said that she would do exactly as she was told, a virtue which he had not discovered in any other nurse in the city. The third day that she was with us he instructed her to give a little medicine to the baby. That afternoon she was gone on her walk longer than usual; shortly after her return I asked her if she had given the medicine.

"No, Señora. I gave the child another remedy which I think is better."

"What will the medico say to that?"

"Oh, I met him on the street when I was out and he said that he had changed his mind and wished me to give this other thing. So I bought it at once and it is administered."

It seemed strange to me that the physician should change his mind after having given a prescription, but I lay puzzling over it without saying anything more to her about it. The next morning when the doctor came he asked me, "Did Bautista give the medicine to the child?"

I told him no, repeating the explanation that she had given me. Never have I seen a man angrier. He sent for the nurse who was keeping discreetly out of sight and roundly scolded her. She excused herself by saying that Doctor So-and-so always gave the other medicine and she had helped him in eleven cases so she had come to believe it the better. Naturally quoting a rival doctor did not serve to calm down our physician; he told her that this was his case, not hers, adding that our lives were not safe in the hands of a woman who changed the medicines at her own discretion. Thereupon he dismissed her. But I could not let her go at such a crisis, so the Missionary was sent for to pour oil upon the troubled waters. The doctor stormed off to his next call, Bautista sobbed and sniffled all day and through the next night, the Missionary watched the woman distrustfully, and the atmosphere of our home was anything but cheerful.

The next morning the doctor laughed it off and said that perhaps she had learned a lesson, yet never again could he recommend her to any señora. He added:

"She thinks because she was in Paris a few months

that she knows more than anyone else; she knows too much, that is all that ails her."

To know something is not so bad a thing after all. Bautista made herself useful to the whole family; she boiled herbs and made remedies for Bertilda's cold, for the Missionary's indigestion, for Pinzon's fever, for Valentine's boil, for Rosario's headache, and washes for everybody for whatever complaint. Would a trained nurse have done as well? She delighted the hearts of the younger boys by making them some wonderful rolls that looked like doughnuts and smelled like sour bread. Over these she worked one entire forenoon after spending two dollars of the boarding-department money for the materials. That afternoon she went home and we discovered that she had secreted over half of the fried rings under her shawl and had carried them home with her; doubtless her wage for making them.

She had a most wonderful way of swathing the new baby in wrappings. He was done up so stiffly that the bundle containing him could almost have stood alone, and nothing showed but his tiny face, since his hands were bound tightly to his sides. When the Missionary asked her if that was an Indian custom, she was greatly insulted.

"Oh, no, Señor Doctor, no Indian does her baby up; they go quite naked. It was in Paris that I learned that most perfect method of keeping a child from getting uncovered in the night."

"Oh, ho, then this is a little Parisian! Well, he looks exactly like the pictures of Siwash Indian papooses." And Siwash he was from that day whenever his father spoke of him.

Bautista had learned another custom in Paris; she could not get through the days, much less the

nights, without frequent drinks of wine. She scorned chicha—nothing but imported wine did for her and she insisted upon having it served with all her meals. She bought it herself, as we refused to serve it. Since we could not prevent her drinking, and it seemed inadvisable to dismiss her, we let it pass.

She had a most astonishing appetite. She had food brought to her every two hours during the day and a great pile stacked up for the night. Neither the Missionary nor I had ever seen anything like it. He said that it reminded him of a mill, Cleofa running up with food, with coffee, with chocolate, with wine, and everything disappearing forthwith. However, Bautista did her work faithfully and her patient lived, so we were ready to forgive her any disgust that she may have caused us.

Friends vied with each other in sending gifts to the new baby. We collected as varied an assortment as ever was seen. Some of the boys of the Colegio went to the market-place on Saturday afternoon and came back tugging a month-old goat which they presented to Small Son as their gift. The forlorn little creature was lonely in the great playground and day and night kept up a pitiful bleating that sounded like the wail of a human baby. During the day the boys tried to comfort and content him by carrying him around in their arms. Rosario's sympathy manifested itself in a practical way; she took the goat to bed with her at night. She, who weighed nearly two hundred pounds, occupied a single width bed, together with her seven-year-old daughter and an enormous cat, which she declared kept her feet warm at night by lying on top of them; yet such was the woman's good-heartedness that she was ready and willing to add on the goat!

I asked the Missionary to make sure that the boards of her bed were strong and new as I did not wish to be startled some night by any sudden crash from the servants' room, and the goat might prove the straw that broke the camel's back.

VI

LA SEÑORITA BERTILDA LOPEZ

IT was with great relief that, a few weeks before Small Son's birth, I had handed over the keys of the house to Bertilda Lopez. Hers was a slim girlish figure, surmounted by a large head with an old face. I wondered if it were her seriousness and conscientiousness that put such an expression on the face of an eighteen-year-old girl.

General Lopez, Bertilda's father, had figured honorably in the last civil war of his country, but he had expended himself and his substance on the losing side; hence life for him had become anything but easy. He had educated his two daughters,—Bertilda had graduated from one of the best girls' schools in the city,—but the family lived in a poor, hand-to-mouth way. So when, as a special favor, we begged Bertilda to act as housekeeper for us, her father allowed her "to make a little visit at the Colegio," and the girl received her monthly stipend as a "gift from the gracious Señora Mauda."

What Bertilda lacked in executive ability she atoned for by her painstaking honesty. Slow to think and to act, she was most delightfully sure, and she had mysterious ways of her own for extracting from Rosario's packets the change from the marketing, a thing I had never yet accomplished. One sensitive point did she possess; she considered that the pupils and the boarding boys did not show her the respect she deserved. Both the Missionary

and I continually admonished the offenders to be careful of their manner toward our friend during her visit in our house, and we ourselves set the example by showing General Lopez's daughter the utmost deference.

On Saturdays, the big market days, Bertilda dressed herself neatly in a black skirt, gracefully draped a silk mantilla about her slender figure, and daintily tripped away on her high heels to carry the money and to assist the cook in her purchases. During the many hours of the week that I was in the class-room with the boys, she watched Teresa and Small Son so that my mind was at rest concerning them.

The Missionary had been very ill and was but traveling the road to recovery. About two o'clock one night, both of us being awake, we caught a faint sound as of distant thunder. Since the storms of Bogotá are usually free from thunder, sneaking upon us unawares, we decided that the low heavy reverberation must mean another earthquake. However, the chairs and tables did not commence to slide around as is usual when a quaking of the ground occurs, yet the murmur increased to a steady rumble which grew in volume. Soon we distinguished the mumble and roar of many voices, the thud and tramp of hundreds of feet. Not understanding the significance of the sounds we felt no fear, only curiosity. Louder and louder grew the tumult until we caught the words shrilled above all else, "Down with the Yankees! Kill the Yankees!"

"We are being mobbed!" cried out the Missionary, as he jumped from bed, stopping only to catch up his bathrobe.

Almost immediately came the thud of stones

against the brick front of the Colegio, followed by the crash of glass. The school awoke with a many-throated scream. Servants and boys rushed into the corridors, wailing and shrieking. The Colegio instantly became a lunatic asylum.

The Missionary leaped down the stairs and running to a school-room applied his feeble strength to moving one of the long heavy study benches, calling upon the older boys and the servants to help him. No one, except Bertilda and one small fourteen-year-old boy, responded. Everyone else in those huddled groups was so busy bewailing his fate and calling upon his favorite saint that he gave no attention to orders, until in desperation the Missionary knocked a few of their heads together to bring them to their senses. Even then they were afraid of the shivering glass and flying stones and hung back.

Bertilda and Enrique worked steadily and rapidly at the Missionary's side, dragging benches to the windows to barricade them, dodging the shattering glass and falling stones as best they could. Although badly cut about the head they faltered not in their task.

When an improvised battering-ram was brought to play upon the door, even the Missionary's heart sank. "Kill the Yankees! Down with the Yankees!" shrieked hundreds of voices, to the accompaniment of breaking glass, of thudding stones, of crunching bricks, punctuated by the boom of the battering-ram against the oak planks of the heavily-spiked door. The door creaked and groaned and strained against the iron bar that secured it; yet it held. The benches, piled high, resisted entrance through the demolished windows, and gradually the mob dispersed.

As soon as quiet was restored in the street we despatched Valentine after a doctor for the Missionary. The next morning the American government through its Minister saw that a guard was stationed around our building. When he was able to do so, the Missionary publicly praised Bertilda and Enrique for their bravery.

The mob solved two of our problems; Enrique, who had been our most mischievous, troublesome boarder, became one of our steadiest boys; and never again did we need to struggle with the household that proper respect be shown the heroic daughter of a well-known general. Rather was it that our young men were soon in a fair way to spoil the señorita.

Whether it was the halo of glory that encircled Bertilda because of her self-possession in time of peril, or her precise, domestic ways that formed her chief attraction, I know not; but suddenly, out of a clear sky in which we had discovered no love clouds forming, Señor Gutierrez, a young man who had come to us recently, proposed to General Lopez for the hand of his daughter. We were very much surprised as, to our certain knowledge, there had been nothing going on that resembled a courtship—no withdrawing into corners, no smiling over secret understandings, no surreptitious glances, no blushing,—none of the things one would expect under similar circumstances in America. But all these and many other evidences of a love affair burst into blaze as soon as the engagement was announced; apparently the fire had only gathered force from its repression.

For six days our transformed little housekeeper walked on air. Her whole appearance was different.

She seemed vitalized, electric; her large plain face beamed with happiness; her voice thrilled her listeners; her step became quick and decisive.

Then the storm burst. The Missionary felt it his duty to find out more about the young man who desired to unite his life with a girl so worthy as Bertilda. Señor Gutierrez had been in our house but a month, having come to us from the coast. We had not been attracted by him, and from the first were suspicious of him. Upon investigation, the Missionary found his suspicions more than justified; the man was so base that we immediately denied him the house.

We were forced to inform poor little Bertilda, scintillating happiness, that her hope was vain; she could not marry Señor Gutierrez. The attitude that the girl took amazed us. Naturally she did not believe our statements and required proof; we had expected that and had the proofs ready for her. Then, instead of recognizing the impossibility of union with such a man, the girl indignantly declared that she saw no reason why she should not marry him; that she would marry him were he twice the villain he had proved himself. She said that we had no right to forbid her meeting him and she packed up her belongings to return at once to her father's house.

One interview did she have with her lover before he sneaked away to the coast. She informed us afterwards that she had promised him life-long fidelity and had assured him that she would marry him at any time he came for her. Then commenced a correspondence, a one-sided affair, for after the first two or three weeks none of Bertilda's letters were answered. A few months later rumor whispered

that Señor Gutierrez had married a woman at the coast.

Several times in the months that ensued did I call upon the Señorita Bertilda. Shut into an ill-smelling, unkempt, damp house, the girl did nothing day after day but sit with folded hands and think of her disappointment. She had already lost all semblance of youth when last I saw her; thin, sallow, slouched, at eighteen she appeared an old woman. All my efforts to arouse her were vain; she was sunken in a half-stupor, leaden, responding to no appeal.

You who are ready to smile at her, pause a moment. Not one girl in twenty of Bertilda's class and circumstances ever receives an offer of marriage; to be of good family and poor is almost fatal to marriage prospects. Practically no avenue of work is open to such an one, unless she be able to teach, an ability that Bertilda did not possess. No pleasures or diversions fall to her lot; she is not expected to perform any of the common menial duties of her parents' home,—those are for the doddering old servant.

Neither be in a hurry to cast the first stone at our Latin American sisters if they do not demand in a husband all that a North American woman does. Were they to make such demands there would be far fewer marriages than there are now; yet of the things that contribute to the existence of present conditions in the most of South America, the lack of marriage is probably the most deplorable. No, there is no condemnation in our hearts for this poor girl. We yearn over her and over all such as are cheated of every woman's birthright, a home and children.

VII

ROSARIO'S VACATION

A MULE-DRIVER asked for the Doctor Reverendo, saying that he had come from a village two days distant from Bogotá and he bore a message for one, Rosario, said to be in the Colegio Americano. The Missionary took the soiled wrinkled slip of paper which was extended to him and sent for Rosario. She came, received the paper and looked at it a long time, unfolding it, turning it from side to side, staring fixedly at the writing it bore. Handing it back to the Missionary, she asked him to read it to her.

The note was written by the use of phonetic syllables, separated here and there to make them appear words, but with no real conception of where one word should end and another begin. Many syllables not in themselves words stood alone, and again many words were written together as though one. Nothing was correctly spelled. Read aloud, it sounded like Spanish; looked at, it made no sense at all. It was, in fact, a fair sample of the letters written by the one or two men in each village who pretend that they know how to write and so serve as amanuenses for the whole village. With the greatest difficulty the Missionary made out from the rambling syllables that the old mother of Rosario lay ill in that town and begged for her daughter.

"I go," declared our cook. "I go even now."

"And what do we do for a cook?" asked the Missionary.

"That little woman whom I know in the plaza, she it is who comes to cook for the Colegio when I tell her."

"If you can put some capable woman in your place in the kitchen, you may go for two weeks, but we shall expect you to return at the end of the fortnight."

"Nothing is more certain, my Señor Doctor. Return I surely do."

"How are you going to reach this town?"

"I walk on my feet, of course."

"It is a long journey for so heavy a woman as you are, Rosario. Could not you go on the train that runs to Zipaquirá? That would take you half way."

"In all my life, Doctor, never have I been on a train. That thing frightens me."

"Nonsense! Take this money for your fare and ride on tomorrow's train as far as it goes; you will have walk enough after that. Remember that we are counting on your coming back in two weeks' time."

"I return, Señor Doctor, God permitting it."

Fifteen days crawled by and nine women pretending to be cooks passed through my kitchen, some of them pausing two or three hours, some of them making a stop of a day or two. Three of them tarried long enough to hide under their shawls the towels and napkins drying on the lines, and most of the little belongings of Teresa.

The reasons for their leaving were trivial. One morning, with the Missionary sick upstairs and Small Son wailing continuously, I was closeted in the office with thirty-three boys, trying to give a

lesson in English. On the only bench in the room were seated twelve boys, while the others were crammed into the window-seat, hanging over book-cases, dangling their feet from the table; boys to the right of me, boys to the left of me, boys to the front of me and boys behind me, and not one caring whether or not he could say in English, "The blue bird sits on the tree."

The fifth rap at the door since the class began! I open the door to find myself confronted by my cook of two days, booted and spurred, as it were, for instant departure. She stands looking at me, saying nothing.

"What does this mean?" I ask, as I see that if there is to be any conversation between us, I shall have to commence it.

"I go. I remain not one little moment longer."

"But why?"

"That Valentine, he it is that says that I myself burn more charcoal than those other women."

"Suppose that you do? You have only to ask for more if you need it."

"It is the truth, then? To my Señora it appears that I burn more charcoal?"

"Yes, you do burn more, but I have not complained, have I?"

"I go. Do me the favor of my money."

"The money is locked away, upstairs, and I am in class. You may come for it in the afternoon."

I turn to the snickering boys. The last pretense of interest in the blue bird on a tree has vanished. The boys know, and I know, that there is but one common thought between us; that deserted kitchen and the breakfast hour almost upon us. When it comes to the choice between studying a foreign lan-

guage and having his breakfast, there is no hesitation on the part of a boy. I dismiss the class and, closing my ears to the needs of my family upstairs, betake myself to the kitchen.

Indeed, during those fifteen days of Rosario's vacation, I spent the most of my time struggling with the toppling kettles, blowing charcoal that would not burn, weeping from the smoke and cinders in my eyes. I discovered why all Colombian cooks have such small eyes and keep them half-shut. For a month after the cook's return, I could do no studying because of the condition of my eyes.

Rosario did come back. Never did I think that she would, and I saw in anticipation a long line of disappearing cooks being unrolled before me, extending to the end of my life, which end I felt would not be long delayed if this experience continued. Then Rosario walked in upon me, and I would not care to say whether the tears with which I greeted her were provoked by the smoke or came from pure thankfulness and joy.

VIII

MARÍA RODRIGUEZ

CALLED "half-lady" was María because she wore shoes on the street, but very much more than half-lady was she in nature. So far as looks went she was not remarkable, just a quiet, neatly dressed woman, nearing forty years of age, who carried a dignity that commanded respect. She came to the Colegio to look after things generally and after Small Son particularly, while I spent eight hours of every day in the class-room with the boys, eleven hours each week in outside Bible classes and five nights out of seven in the church, eight blocks distant.

María was perfectly trustworthy, whether it were money or son that we committed to her care. She knew far more about the possibilities of Colombian food than did Rosario, and our menu never before presented so great a variety or such tempting viands as it did under her supervision. She did not attempt to keep books, as Bertilda had done, but when she turned over her accounts to me they were always correct. She cared for Small Son from the time she dressed and fed him in the morning, after I had gone to class, until she bathed him and put him to bed for the night. Usually I told him his good-night story, but if I failed to appear María invented one for him. In the afternoon she took him for a long walk to a park and returned on a street car, which

always greatly delighted the child. Later, sitting on the floor surrounded by hosiery and blocks, she alternately mended stockings and helped build trains. When I would leave them to go to my work, my son would kiss his fingers at me and remark, smilingly, "May you go contentedly and very far," as his María had taught him to do. I never had reason to believe that she was anything but patient and loving with the little boy whom she trained to obedience and decorum.

Did callers arrive while I was in the class-room, María would take them to the parlor and pleasantly entertain them until I could go to them. When we entertained our friends at dinner I depended greatly upon the woman; she had been head servant for some years at the Spanish legation and she knew what was proper for a dinner in Bogotá. A bower of beauty would she make the dining-room, the table glowing under a wealth of brilliant poppies or soft sweet-peas, dotted with confetti. With her own hands she would prepare delicious soups out of (to me) unknown materials, form wondrous curlicues from ordinary potatoes and produce beautiful creations which she called desserts. Then she would tuck her fluffy dark hair under a tiny lace cap and perform prodigies with the uncouth dining-room girl. María never made mistakes in serving the courses, was always her gracious, attractive self in the doing of it.

A poor old woman, a member of our church, was reported dying. As neither the Missionary nor I could possibly leave our work at that hour to go to her, we sent María, who found the woman dangerously ill from pneumonia, and alone. María thought that she knew someone who might be

Bertilda
and the "Siwash."

María Rodriguez, presiding at small son's third-birthday fiesta.

María Jesus escorts the children to the park, Benigna carrying baby boy.

Tereza, the only Colombian servant with negro blood ever with us.

secured to care for the sick woman, so went to see if she could find the helper. It was nearly dark when she, weary, with white paindrawn face (for she was not a strong woman), returned to report that her quest was vain; she had found no one.

After dinner the Missionary and I hurried over to see the sick woman. We found her in the dampest, moldiest room I have ever seen, festoons of cobwebs hanging from the ceiling, chairs dropping to pieces from decay. There in a filthy bed lay the poor creature, having received no care and but little food for three days. We decided that if we did not wish her to die there alone we should have to take her to the Colegio, since we knew of no one whom we could get to stay with her and care for her.

Of the policeman who was stationed in front of her door, waiting for her to die, we asked permission to move her. He referred us to the captain of the district, whom the Missionary set out to find. I returned to the Colegio and sent back Valentine with bathrobe, steamer-rug, blankets, while María and I cleared the ironing-room, confiscated the bed of an absent boy, and set it up in the room. María heated water, and all was in readiness when the Missionary arrived, bringing the poor old woman in a coach. She was in an indescribable condition, but María did not object to assisting me to bathe her and to put her into some of our things before we laid her on the clean bed. María was herself too ill for me to allow her to stay with the woman that first night, although she offered to do it for me; after that night she cheerfully took her turn at watching, and was faithful in helping us until we found someone who could devote her whole time to caring for the sick woman.

María Rodriguez was the most valuable servant I have ever had, and a sensible companionable woman besides.

We were sent to open a new station in a city out towards the Venezuelan border. When we removed to the city in "hot country," María could not go with us, as we desired her to do, since from the four dollars per month that I paid her she was caring for her old mother who would not consent to leave Bogotá or to have María leave her. Shortly after our departure the doctors said that María should undergo an operation, and she was taken to the city hospital, at that time so crowded that one-half the patients, nearly one thousand in number, some of them surgical cases, were lying on the floors—the cold brick floors of clammy Bogotá!

María was operated upon, successfully, and the doctors said that she would be quite all right within a few days. Two nights later the nuns, who are the only nurses, had the patient sit up in a chair while they changed the bed-linen. María died from hemorrhage a little later—a useful life sacrificed to ignorance.

IX

CESAR

WE were eleven days on our journey from Bogotá to the city in "hot country" where we now dwell. The first three days out we had three mule-drivers, a new one each day. Number One developed a sore foot, and could not go on. Number Two put the cargoes upon the mules so badly that they fell off every few hours and were constantly being readjusted. In the one day the backs of several of the mules were cut and lacerated from the bad loading. Number Three was half drunk, and departed in the stillness of night carrying with him everything about the montura that he could manage, spurs, cargo-straps, a saddle-blanket.

Then our luck changed; we secured Cesar, an intelligent, unlettered youth who had lost all his front teeth. From the first day we enjoyed his quaint conversation, his stories of thrilling adventure, his homely philosophy of life. By his simple recitals there was laid open before us the inwardness of the life of a mule-driver, in all its dreary ugliness; the responsibility for his own animals and for those not his own, the endless hours of plodding barefooted, under blistering sun, up steep trails, down jagged descents, of risking his life to save a cargo when fording turbulent streams, of awkward struggles with "crazy" mules, who persisted in lying down with a cargo, or in crowding some mate over a cliff,

of days with a pitiful allowance of food or with no food at all, of nights lying close crowded in a packed, suffocating hut where he was not able to uncrumple himself and stretch out. All this and more was revealed to us, unconsciously, by our simple-hearted, good-natured man who never once complained of his lot.

He cared so faithfully for our mules, was so wise in the loading and driving of them, that they kept in perfect condition, a thing very unusual in an eleven-day journey. He was equally thoughtful of our comfort and well-being, and helped us to bear cheerfully the hard knocks of the trip, smoothing them all that it was possible for him to do. The almost insurmountable difficulty that beset us upon the whole journey was the obtaining of food for ourselves and our beasts of burden. One may exist for a long time on a little salty water, known as beef-tea (provided that one can obtain the water!), but mules must be fed, unless one wishes to find himself sitting stranded on some mountain side with an exhausted or a dead animal under him.

One night we seemed to have met our Waterloo. By urging our mules over difficult trails we had managed, just before dark, to reach a lone house stretching its considerable length along a rocky ledge, and looking white and inviting as we plodded up to it. 'Tis a way they have, these Colombian hostleries, of appearing chaste and attractive from a distance, especially if the setting sun touches up their white-washed walls with a blaze of gold. But we are not deceived thereby; too well we know the dirty, crawly interior, the filthy, smelly surroundings of the from-a-distance fair white buildings.

As we approached the inn we caught a glimpse,

on the opposite side of a deep gorge that was materializing in front of us, of a narrow river falling a sheer five hundred feet into a pent-in crevice below. The fall was so perpendicular, the distance so great, and the volume of water so inconsiderable that, directly the water had left its mountain bed, it was converted into floating spray which spread out to fill the gorge. Our eyes on this phenomenon we permitted our weary animals to stumble up the last cliff and land us jerkily in the midst of the motionless, staring group of muleteers who lounged about the door of the inn.

Before we dismounted, the Missionary and Cesar extracted such information from the proprietor of the inn as they were able. Why is it so difficult for some races of people to give a direct answer to a direct question? It required a tiresome half hour for us to learn: no, there was nothing for any animal. Yes, of course our mules could spend the night in the corral but there was nothing, no grass, no water in that corral; for weeks it had been dry, but quite dry. No, nothing, but nothing, was there to cut for them. Yes, all those sacks contained green coffee; did the señor think in feeding that to his animals? Impatiently, slouched wearily in our saddles, we sat our humped, spiritless mules, whose ears lopped as dejectedly as though they understood the conversation and realized that their fate hung in the balance.

At last the proprietor admitted that he had green sugar-cane growing, but added that no one could be found to go for it now that the darkness had settled, soft and warm, about us. The Missionary understood the futility of asking any man to risk his life in a canefield after dark, in a wild tumultuous region peopled by snakes. But he offered good money to

any man who would lend him a machete, saying that he would attempt to cut the cane himself. Cesar showed his toothless gums in a grin as he remarked:

"Doctor, you cannot do that thing. Ever in your whole life have you cut anything with a machete?" The Missionary reluctantly admitting that he never had, the man continued, "I go; I cut that cane, the animals are fed. Do you, Doctor, attend to some beds for the Señora, the Señorito and your honorable self."

"But, Cesar, you have three hours' work before you with these mules; they are all to be unloaded, their backs washed down, the cargoes taken care of, —you ought not to go."

"I go, I do it all in time." And off the weary, foot-sore fellow went, cheerfully rendering the extra service.

The Missionary, by paying ridiculous sums, finally induced a half-dozen men to go to Cesar's assistance; thus was the cane speedily and safely cut. Then commenced the monotonous chop, chop, chop, which we had learned to know so well. The cane is haggled into bits before it is fed the mules, who devour it most greedily, stalk and seed.

We held another protracted conversation with the proprietor. It has ever seemed strange to me that Colombian inn-keepers are so reluctant to receive good, paying guests. No, there was no room apart for the Señora. All travelers slept on the floor of the dining-room. Yes, the muleteers would sleep on that same floor. No, the table was too narrow to make up a bed for the Señora; it was just a single plank, could she sleep on that and not roll off on the men under the table? Not a glimmer of humor could we distinguish on

the man's seamed face or in his half-shut eyes as he held his cigarette between his fingers and, with an exceedingly bored expression, replied with the utmost indifference to our questions.

The Missionary persisted until he secured permission for us to sleep in the coffee store-room, which opened into the corral where scores of mules were stabled. Have you any idea what an overpowering, repugnant odor thousands of pounds of fresh green coffee have? We balanced ourselves on the immense sacks and listened to the braying and fighting of the mules, punctuated by the protesting cackle of the barnyard fowls, and the howl of the usual contingent of dogs.

Fortunately the night was short. We arose at half past two and by moonlight, bright beyond all belief, took our plunge in an ice-cold mountain-stream. We were in the saddle long before daylight. Cesar it was that advised so ambitious a start; he was very nervous concerning that day's stretch of trail. We had a difficult bit of travel ahead of us; the descent of a precipice, five thousand feet into a gorge, the crossing of the river responsible for the gorge, and, on the other side, a straight clamber of six thousand feet to a paramo, a tableland desert.

It was an enchanting hour for a ride. The soft dim radiance of the moon with her quiet subdued light had a most soothing effect upon us, after many days of the blistering glare of sun on white rocks. Things around us took phantom shape and grew interesting from their very air of mystery. The gorges on either side of us, as we slowly felt our dim way along the cliff, were brimful of the white chiffon of dropped-down clouds, so close we could almost reach out our hands and touch it. The

drapery of the skies, lavender vestments embroidered with silver stars, seemed about to descend upon our shoulders. The gurgle of a brook near at hand and the music of a distant waterfall were in our ears, the perfume of flowering trees and the scent of dewy shrubs were in our nostrils, the friendly pressing embrace of the woods was about us and the magic of the calm cool night possessed us. We wondered why we had been journeying in the hot, restless day when we might have traveled in the dim, peaceful might. I put the question to Cesar.

"My Señora, I beseech you be prayerful not frivolous at the beginning of this so terrible a journey. And listen to me; let your mule do his will, do not you try to guide him. Look you at the mountains and the gorges, so many are those gorges, and beautiful! When that sun rises it will be wonderful, but wonderful; the thing most beautiful that ever you saw. Look at that, but look not down. Your mule, let him alone; he knows how to go. Do not you touch the reins, neither do you look at the trail."

At the first pink flush of daylight we commenced the descent. By ninety-five steep, short inclines, turning every six feet to face the opposite direction, we slid and floundered down the precipice and two hours after sunrise found ourselves perpendicularly under our starting point, five thousand feet above us. We caught the first faint glimmer of dawn gliding stealthily over the mountains, searching out the giant forms of towering cliffs. We descried the spirit of the night, fleeing, leaping from cliff to cliff, skulking, hiding, trying to escape the mocking smile of her enemy, the sun. Reaching fingers of light pointed out to us, one by one, the gulches, the ravines, the

overhanging cliffs, clothed in clinging draperies of grey mist. Scores of mountain peaks gleamed into view, and dozens of gulches sneaked in the shadows at their bases. The grey mists fled after the night and blue and silver lights slipped into their places. Shadows took form and, here and there, gigantic trees loomed threateningly. Rosy tints kissed mountain crests while the soft blues dropped lower and lower until they blended with the indigo of the gorges. Splashes of color began to dash themselves promiscuously on steep slopes, and rock-layers flamed with brilliant hues. Presently all the battlements and turrets blazed forth in full glory, and the pleasing lights and shadows modestly retired farther and farther into the ravines.

It was with a distinct sense of loss that we watched the full glare of day turned upon this elusive scene. As eager expectation is more pleasurable than fulfillment, so was the mystical light of the moon, which left much to the imagination, preferable to the garish flame of day thrown recklessly on every crack and crevice of jagged mountain side. Like the light of public life it brought out ugliness as well as beauty and strength, and it left nothing to the imagination. Every streak and fault in rock formation, brilliant reds, purples, yellows, thrown boldly against each other, gaping throats of dry river beds, sparkle and dash of mountain cascade,—nothing was hidden. The merciless sun painted everything clearly for our gaze long before he showed his blazing face to us above a mountain.

The contrast in color was most striking; no artist would have dared reproduce it. Limpid lakes of soft blue and silver hung suspended around peaks, the indigo of deep ocean, splashed recklessly with

browns and yellows, daubed mountain slopes, blood-red streaks slashed and gashed faces of cliffs, a narrow silver thread, which was a river framed in vivid green, glinted through each ravine, while peaks, cliffs, gorges, ravines,—all were suffused in the wilder lights of purple and orange. Here was nature most lavish. Within the sweep of the human eye she flashed out all her beauties, and caused puny man to hold his breath in awed amazement.

The descent was made in absolute silence but for the click of the feet of our mules. Once Cesar stood in my path and put a detaining hand on the bridle of my mule as he directed my attention to the sheer fall of thousands of feet below us.

"It was at this point, Señora, that I lost a mule, but my very best, on the trip before this. A fly bit him, he reared, and went over backwards, crashing to the bottom. There it was, at the bottom of the mountain, that I took that cargo of coffee from him; but, oh, it was awful! The Señora thought I need not to be so anxious for this trip; now she sees? In the gorge below there, where you see the shimmer of that big river with the flashing high bridge, there it is that we take our breakfast; but we must be quick. In that vale there is a fly, a most pernicious fly; if he but bites the animals they are dead at once. It is he I am afraid of. It makes six months that he bit one of my mules and she died then."

"So you have lost two mules recently, Cesar? I am sorry for that!"

"You have my many thanks, Señora," with grave dignity. "Yes, it makes me a poor man, to be sure. For neither of those mules had I yet paid; I pay for them now, little by little, and they are both dead."

Cesar helped us find lodging when we reached the large city where we were to commence work, and where we knew no one. On his subsequent visits to our city he came to inquire for our welfare. We discovered that the meagre profit he derived from his trips was eaten up at the tiendas, a combination of inn and grog-shop, so whenever he was in the city we allowed him to stay in our house, after we had succeeded in renting one. One night he brought with him a tall muscular fellow, a giant in strength, whom he introduced as a friend of his and for whom he begged the privilege of being allowed to sleep in the house. After Cesar had set off on his journey to Bogotá, Francisco returned again and again to stay at our house. As he, too, was a muleteer, I wondered at his long stop in the city.

One night when we had left him as usual, lying on the floor of our zaguan with his ruana wrapped about his head and the rest of his body guiltless of bed-clothes, I heard the sudden tinkle of a dish pushed against another. Awakening the Missionary, I whispered:

"Someone is in the dining-room. I believe it is Francisco."

The Missionary, light in hand, hurried to the dining-room. There stood the man, apparently too slow of wit to move or to make any effort to hide himself.

"Francisco, what are you doing here?" the Missionary gravely inquired.

"It is only that I am with a hunger very great and I thought perhaps I find something to eat here."

"If you were hungry why did you not ask us for food? We would have given it you."

"I am no beggar, Señor!" drawing himself up with insulted dignity.

"I will get you food now," and, suiting the action to the word, the Missionary came to ask me for the keys of the cupboard.

"What are you going to do with him after you feed him?" I asked.

"Why, what should I do with him?"

"You will please lock him in some room until morning. I shall not feel safe with him prowling about the house."

"After he eats he will go to sleep, I doubt not. He will be ashamed of himself."

"Do not count on it. Coals of fire rarely burn on a Colombian's head. I prefer that you lock him up."

"But where? There is only one room, the dark room, that I can lock in this house."

"What difference does the darkness of a room make to him in the middle of the night? Put him in the dark room, by all means."

Very reluctantly, and with many apologies to the man, the Missionary locked him in the dark room, releasing him at the first promise of day. I felt that Francisco should be told that, since he had abused his privilege, he could not sleep in our house again; evidently the Missionary did not wish to go to such lengths, as within the week the man again applied at the door for admittance.

X

BARBARA

BARBARA was the first woman to offer herself for service in our new home. After several days of struggling on alone in the extreme heat, trying to arrange our few possessions in the house we had at last secured, I was glad to accept the girl, as unpromising in appearance as she was. A soiled garment, torn places held together by safety-pins, straight black hair hanging unkemptly about a greasy-looking face, feet dirty beyond description,—was it any wonder that the Missionary remarked:

"What do you expect to make out of that creature? We cannot take all that filth into the kitchen."

"She explains that she has come from the country, has been two days on the trail and is travel-stained. She will bathe and change tomorrow and be ready to prepare the noon breakfast. I intend to try her."

Most Colombian servants are specialists of the highest degree. She who cooks will not serve the meal; she who serves at table will not cook; she who irons will not sweep; the dining-room girl will not wash dishes; only a cook can be prevailed upon to do the marketing, but the cook cannot be induced to approach an ironing-board; and there you are! All work that the servants refuse to do falls to the lot of the mistress.

Barbara was simple and unpretending. She was content to be an all-around general housemaid, and was not above doing anything that was asked of her. The vigorous way in which she despatched the six-o'clock coffee, tidied herself up and was ready before seven to do the day's marketing was a refreshing sight. On Saturdays, bent double under the week's supply of vegetables and fruit, she hurried home from the plaza to help me with the sweeping and the cleaning. As we had not yet opened a school, we lived simply and happily with the one servant and she had leisure hours at her disposal, but she drew the line at one thing; she would not scrub. So men, women, children—anything that we could get from the street—were enticed in, by ones and by twos, to try their luck at scrubbing.

We have learned the futility of attempting to teach a Colombian to scrub. Real scrubbing is an unknown art, practiced by no one, and with none to be found with an ambition to learn it. A world that has existed all these ages without scrubbing can continue so to exist for all any Colombian servant cares.

When I was new to Bogotá and lay ill (from overwork and overzeal), I watched seven women on six successive days paddle in water, occasionally splashing and dabbing at one door. Then I arose from my couch in desperation and scrubbed the door myself.

When we were about to move into another of the numerous rented houses in which we have lived in this city, the Missionary remarked:

"There is no use of my trying to secure anyone to clean up that house so that we can live in it. I shall have to do it myself, first or last, and it may

as well be first, before my patience is worn to shreds."

So he took a week's vacation from his ministerial duties (the school being also in vacation) to scrub. One door showed an interesting development. As he scrubbed and scraped with a sharp knife, digging through successive layers of dirt, he came upon what appeared to be bread-dough. He called the man who was pottering around, pretending to help.

"Benito, what is this?"

"Of a truth that ought to be bread-dough, Doctor."

"But see what quantities of it are on this door after I scrape off the top layers of filth!"

"It is of a truth, Doctor; but there is much."

"Was this house ever used as a bakery?"

"It does not so appear to me. It is not so in my life-time."

However Benito's old mother, coming up to hear what the Doctor was talking about, well remembered that, more than twenty years before, the house had been a public bakery, and this very room was used as the mixing-room. It had remained for the American Missionary to clean the dough off the door twenty years after its accumulation.

Speaking of scrubbing, a vivid picture flashes before me. We were in Bogotá and we were trying to teach Dominga to scrub, but our instructions were constantly interrupted by the quarreling and whining of the woman's two children. Suddenly, exasperated, she seized one of her children by the back of the neck and ducked him into the scrubbing-bucket, pushing his head down under the water, not one, but a dozen times, until we protested that the child would be drowned. Giving him a good shake by way of

drying him, she deposited him summarily in the court, in the full blaze of the sun. The Missionary remarked that the little bronze fellow, sitting immovable, looked exactly like a Chinese god.

The flaw in Barbara's character soon made itself apparent. We had purchased a kettle, a good, expensive, made-in-Germany kettle, which we had never yet used. Deciding to have puchero for breakfast, I told Barbara to prepare it in the new kettle since none of the old earthen pots would hold it.

"And where is the kettle, my Señora?" she asked.

"Why, you have it in the kitchen, to be sure."

"I, no! That kettle is certainly not in the kitchen."

A vigilant search, commencing in the kitchen and ending in the parlor, revealed no kettle. It was not in the house, yet no one had access to the kitchen, except Barbara herself.

In Colombia we keep under lock and key all silverware not actually needed for each meal. One day, as we seated ourselves at the table, I found neither knife, fork nor spoon at my place.

"You have forgotten to set a place for me, Barbara," I remarked.

"But Señora, I cannot find either the knife or the fork of you, and the spoons are nowhere. They are not in that cupboard, surely. Who knows where they are?"

"Barbara, you know they must be in the cupboard. You are the only person in the house except ourselves; if they are lost I shall hold you accountable for them."

"There are none, my Señora," doggedly.

And none there continued to be until I went to a trunk, unlocked it, and took out another set. Of

what use to discuss the matter? Of what use to keep back Barbara's paltry wages? She needed them, and all that I could give her besides, to dress herself even half decently to appear on the street as our servant.

Thus it went on. One little thing after another disappeared. One day it was a pair of Small Son's shoes; another, three new umbrellas brought from Bogotá and of value in Colombia. The girl must have realized that we knew she was selling our things in the streets, probably for a small fraction of their value. Why put up with it? I was ill, had undergone an operation under the open sky of our patio, by doctors who never in their lives had performed the operation; they had read up on it, and talked it over with us, so they ventured it. For many weeks I hung to life by a slight thread, with no nurse but the Missionary and no servant but Barbara. She was good to Small Son, not yet four years old, so she stayed.

One scorching afternoon she offered to take the child for an hour to the park, a block away, as for weeks he had not been outside the heated house, where was not a green thing, scarcely a breath of air. The seemingly interminable hours of the afternoon dragged by. Barbara and Small Son did not appear. At last, just as darkness swooped down upon us, she approached my bed, dragging a very weary little boy after her. At the welcome sight of him a great rush of relief stopped for an instant the beat of my heart. Kidnaping is not unheard of, even in Colombia. An attractive foreign child in the hands of an unscrupulous woman who had been selling everything that she could conveniently carry out of the house,—I had cause for apprehension.

"Oh, Barbara, where have you been all these

hours? My heart has been sick, I have worried so about Son."

"It is not that we have been in any place particular, my Señora. It is that we passed by the bridge of that little stream for that street where went you and the Doctor to baptise those children of Don Rafael."

"You never took Son away out there in this heat! Why, it is a good five-mile walk!"

"Of course, no. So far as that we do not go. It is merely that we seat ourselves under a tree by the road; then we return here."

Small Son stood regarding her solemnly, but said nothing. It was not until many months later that he confessed the truth, and even then it was inadvertently done. We were in the States when someone asked us if we had ever tasted the fried ants which in Colombia are considered the greatest of all delicacies.

"No, none of us ever have, although we have had many opportunities to do so," replied the Missionary.

"Yes, Father, I have," spoke up Small Son. "Do you remember the time when Mama was so sick and that day when Barbara took me for a walk? She told Mama that we did not go as far as Don Rafael's, but we did, and they gave me fried ants to eat. I do not like them; they are too peppery."

One morning a few days after the walk, Barbara, dressed in her starchiest things, came to my bed to announce that she was leaving.

"Leaving, Barbara? But why?"

"It makes too much to do with the Señora straight in bed. I go."

And go she did, in spite of our protests. In fact we learned that she had carried away her box the

night before in fear that we should examine it for missing articles, a thing it would never have occurred to us to do.

A meek little woman with a month-old baby tied to her breast took Barbara's place and messed around in the kitchen. She informed us that Barbara had gone to a home of her own, to be established by a policeman in a little hut at the edge of the city. This accounted for the disappearance of our silver, kettles and glassware. Surely Barbara was setting up house-keeping in style!

As a rule these "homes" are not furnished beyond a clay pot or two, a few boxes for chairs, and a mat which, spread on the floor, serves as a bed. There is no table, no bedstead, no chairs. A piece of gourd takes the place of spoons, knife and fork, and the food is eaten from the kettle in which it has been cooked—an easy way to dispense with dishwashing.

Doubtless the transitory nature of this "home" accounts in part for its meagre equipment, for it must be borne in mind that this arrangement is never abiding. It is a thing born of passion, and it endures only until passion flickers, a month, a year, rarely longer. Then the unfortunate girl, her clothing in tatters, finds herself and her unwanted child in the street, penniless, homeless and friendless.

XI

ENCARNACIÓN

WHEN our six-months' furlough in the States had expired, three-months-old Little Daughter was very ill, so the Missionary was forced to return to South America without his family. I followed him a few months later, making the journey with not only the two children, but also a box of blooded chickens with which we hoped to improve the race of domestic fowls in Colombia.

The Missionary had expected to board at an inn until his family came. As soon after his arrival as possible he rented a house in which to live and to hold religious services. Finding that he could not keep well on the grease and garlic of the inn, he secured a woman to cook for him at home. To cheat the scandal-mongers, he employed a tottering old creature with a face that stopped little short of hideous, besides being of a dullness extraordinary.

Old Encarnación knew nothing of cooking, her one idea being to put everything into a pot and call it a "salad." The Missionary lived upon "salad" three times a day for months. Vegetables, fruits, grains, whatever the woman found in the plaza, all went into the salad, were scooped into a bowl and set before the Missionary for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Neither could the withered old creature arrange the table. The Missionary brought out table-linen and attempted to teach her.

"First the heavy pad, then the cloth, evenly, so; then the napkin here."

"Yes, yes, Señor, of course, I see it all."

At dinner he found the table as he had left it. That night when he went to bed he was astonished to see the table-pad spread neatly and precisely over his bed. He removed it, carried it to the dining-room and again arranged the table, which he found bare. The next morning he tried to impress upon Encarnación that she was to leave the table as she found it.

"The husher belongs here, not on my bed. Are you sure that you understand?"

"Yes, yes, Señor, of course, I see it all."

The table remained set during the day. When the Missionary was ready to retire there was the table-pad again staring up at him, stretched carefully over the bedspread.

He tried to teach her to make a bed; yet during all those months that she pottered around believing that she was serving her señor most efficiently, she never could learn that the two sheets of a bed are placed together. The Missionary always found one sheet folded and laid across the foot of his bed with the table-husher on top of it. The woman was not obstinate, she was simply incapable of learning.

One day, only, did she remain after my arrival. She was caring for a sickly little grandson who was about Small Son's age. His weazened face and such of his body as his scrap of clothing revealed, which was the greater part of it, were covered with sores discharging in a revolting manner. During that first day he played with my son, handling the wonderful playthings, the like of which he had never dreamed, in all his starved life. Once I saw him patting the baby's hand as she lay in her cradle, and

he stooped over to kiss her as he had seen her small brother do. After that, although I was loath to do it, I was cruel enough to shut the poor little thing in the solar alone.

At dinner time Encarnación poured all the baby's milk, which I had prepared and set aside to cool, into her salad. At night I told the Missionary he had more patience than I; he had managed with Encarnación for three months, but one day was enough for me. In the morning she should leave.

"You would never turn the poor old creature away? After she has been so good to me, too?"

"I fail to see in what she has been so wonderfully good to you. She herself has been telling me today that she almost never had your salad ready for your dinner when you wanted it at six o'clock, and that she was accustomed to set it on the table and leave it for you to eat after your night classes, at nine or ten. Think of your going without food from eleven in the morning, after lunching upon her wretched salad, until ten o'clock at night, and then eating that stuff cold! No wonder you have been ill so much! Why didn't she have your meals on time? She had nothing else to do in the whole day but to prepare them."

"There are things of which you do not know. Let me tell you what she did a few weeks ago. You know that I go each week to the city of Rio Negro to conduct a Monday evening service for men. One Tuesday morning just before daylight, Encarnación, who was alone in the house, was awakened by the sound of bullets accompanied by yelling. A party of young men had been enjoying themselves all night in some grog-shop, and were finishing off their carousal by shooting up this house. When Encar-

nación sensed what was happening, she seized her machete and rushed out to defy the men, calling upon them to go away and leave her Doctor's home alone. There she stood, clinging fast to her machete, with the bullets flying around her, trying to make herself heard and understood by the drunken men. The neighbors told me of it when I returned, and the woman herself for days could talk of nothing but her fright. Her feeling of responsibility for the house and for me drove that poor timid old creature to an action as brave as that. She is, of course, unable to learn anything, but she has done her best and I do not like to see her turned off, although I realize that she will be of no use to you, who need efficient women. What will she do? She is getting too old to earn her living."

"What did she do before she came here? You may pension her if you like, but not here, as we cannot make a county poor-house of our home, in addition to having it a public school, a church and frequently a hospital. I shall let her go and we must manage someway until we find someone else."

"I do not see how we are to manage," he answered dubiously.

There are certain things in the work of a household that it is impossible for us to do. A gentleman may not carry home the marketing in a basket on his back; there is a knack, which I have never acquired, in grinding food between two stones; there is high art in balancing a kettle of soup upon shifting, crumbling fagots laid upon a brick shelf——

We took the first woman who offered, Beatriz. She was one of your specialists, carrying a hauteur of manner that closely approached insolence. She entered as dining-room girl, nurse girl and laundress;

under protest at that, declaring, "I cannot do so much thing."

All the trunks and boxes, in spite of being encased in rubber, were wet from their mountain journey on mule-back, and their contents were developing an alarming state of mold. When I requested the haughty Beatriz to help me unpack and carry the things into the sunshine, she mumbled and grumbled; it was not so specified in the contract. When I demanded that she do the marketing and help a little in the kitchen until I could secure a cook, she departed with an impressive dignity.

The Missionary remarked, "It is just what you might have expected. No high-class servant can be prevailed upon to work for us, and our simple establishment would never do for a girl of Beatriz's training."

Each succeeding day brought one or more women and for weeks I tried them all. Each in turn proved hopeless, and I myself became more and more so with every day that passed.

Eventually we settled down to Natalia and Elvira. The former had never cooked and she was not big and strong for carrying marketing the distance of a mile from plaza to our house, but she was neat, attentive to instruction and willing to do her best.

I venture to say that no other kitchen in our whole city presented so shining an appearance as did ours while in the hands of Natalia. The new pots and pans that I had brought out from the States hung in glittering rows on the clean, whitewashed wall, and every potato paring and corn husk were whisked out of sight, until the place showed as smiling a face as did the little cook herself. Most Colombian cooks seem to flourish best in a soiled apron; but Natalia,

with no greater weekly allowance of aprons than I had always granted the cook, was ever fresh and clean. Her brisk pecky little ways reminded me of a robin, and made me feel superfluous in the kitchen, so I left her to herself, certain that she needed little supervision. The six months before Natalia broke under the strain of the cook's work in the school which we established, I count as the freest from kitchen worry of any I have experienced in Colombia.

Elvira, heavy of figure yet alert of mind, had worked during her childhood in a convent. There she had learned cleanliness of person, precision in caring for a room, the greatest perfection in ironing that I have ever seen, and a general astuteness in all the affairs of life. I liked her work, I sometimes enjoyed her lively chatter, but I never felt that I could quite trust her. Yet, in the long catalogue of women who have served me, none has ever been more thoughtful in sickness or more respectful in bearing than Elvira.

The Missionary had remarked, "We cannot expect our servants to be self-respecting, clean and honest, if we leave them to exist as most of their class do. What self-respect can a woman have who lies on the floor at night, and sits on the floor by day to eat her food from a kettle with her hands? I shall buy bedsteads for their room and fix up a corner of the corridor with a table and chairs to serve as a dining-room. Do you attend to making their room pleasant and to securing dishes for their use on the table. They should have some sort of a stand with a wash-basin and towels; a mirror and a cake of soap will go a long way toward giving a woman self-respect."

In carrying out his suggestions I went a step farther, furnished the beds with sheets, pillows and pillow-slips, and arranged a place where they might hang their clothes instead of dumping them on the floor. Thus we began our missionary work with our prospective servants on the theory that cleanliness and decency *may* lead to godliness. Many of our women were appreciative of what we had attempted to do for them and made an effort to live up to what was expected of them. Some there were who declared that they had never sat in a chair and would not know how to do it; that they could not manage a knife and fork and preferred not to bother with them; that soap chapped the skin and was injurious; that they had never slept in a bed and were afraid of rolling out if they tried it. But these were few in number, most Colombians being as quick and as eager as "Yankees" in adapting themselves to better conditions.

XII

LUIS

WE cannot purchase good milk in the market-place. It is brought long distances in skins, poured into uncovered mud-kettles which are held between the knees of sweating women who sit on the cobblestones of the unsprinkled plaza. It is full of the infected dust trod by thousands of diseased feet, it sometimes curdles when it is boiled—yet boiled it must be—so we dare not give it to the children.

We bought a cow and a calf. Introducing them through the front and only door of our residence, we assigned them one of the rooms of the house; there are no barns in Colombia. Obviously we could not allow our gentle beasts to pass the days as well as the nights under our roof, yet Natalia had neither time nor strength to lead them for two miles to corral each day.

Water in our city in hot country is a serious problem. All of it, for whatever purpose used, is brought for some distance on the backs of burros or of women. The men who drive the burros are of the most worthless class in Colombia; their promises amount to nothing. "Yes, Señor, I most certainly will bring your honorable self always those eight cargoes of water all those days. Of course I do it."

And of course he does not do it. We go to bed with no water in the house. We get up with no

water in the house; not a drop for baths, to make the coffee, to wash the dishes. The Missionary goes to the street and accosts every driver of water-donkeys that he sees.

"No, Señor, I cannot allow you this water. It is a contract."

"No, Señor, it is not that I am a public water-carrier. This is for a house particular; I am the boy of Don Alejandro."

Disgusted, wearied, having dissipated the forenoon, the Missionary, by paying twice its worth, secures two cargoes of water in time for the cook to begin the preparation of the eleven-o'clock breakfast. The work of the household, as well as that of the Missionary, has stood still awaiting the water.

We decided that it would be economy to bring our own water. Thus we added a burro to our possessions and allotted him a corner of the cow's sleeping apartment. As a consequence of these purchases we acquired a man.

Luis came to us frankly stating that he was just from prison where he had served a long term. He offered to do whatever was assigned him for a mere pittance—his board, if we would give him that much; only allow him a chance to commence again. We did not ask him his crime and he did not confess it, so to this day we do not know for what he was apprehended. Tall, erect, agile, his was an unusual figure for a man of his class. His crafty face, with the shifting eyes, bore a long scar across one cheek and into one eye. He always wore a large hat pulled low over his face. Whatever his failings there was one thing about him that atoned for much in our eyes; he loved the Missionary and his family. Especially was he devoted to Small Son. Could the

Señorito accompany him on this or that errand? Would I allow him a few minutes in which to whittle out a plaything for the Señorito?

Who will ever know what strange life lay back of such a character as Luis'? He had served in the commissariat of the army; he had seen the most of Colombia, having wandered from city to city; he had worked at almost everything, and his knowledge of several of the trades was not inconsiderable,—this in a land where few men of his class know any trade at all. He mended our shoes as well as our chairs, he did our marketing and prescribed us remedies, he waited upon table and painted our house, he swept our patios and cooked our meals, he cleaned our blackboards and read our books; and everything that he did was well done. Through all his work he carried an unapproachable dignity that earned him a bad name with his class. Moody, silent, with fits of unreasoning anger which blazed into mad fury, he was called "difficult" and none liked him. However, we came to repose confidence in him and to think that we could not keep house without Luis to fill every niche and gap.

A strange man and stranger in nothing than in the romance of his life,—for I verily believe that it was the romance of his life; he loved Elvira.

Nothing that she did suited him. With a leering sneer he would make the most biting remarks about her vanity, the while he watched her profusely daubing her brown skin with powdered starch; he was critical of every new ribbon or new waist; he bitterly ridiculed her use of tooth-brush and nail-file; he disagreed with whatever she said, and mocked her every utterance; he found fault with her outgoings and her incomings, with her care of the children, her sweep-

ing. Yet he loved her; his eyes followed her every movement and he never tired of praising her skill in ironing, her quick repartee, her satin skin. But never in her presence,—oh, no! His words of admiration were reserved for our ears alone. He was fiercely jealous of her. Elvira was an attractive girl although not pretty. A pleasing air of crisp neatness and of conscious ability pervaded her, so that when she carried out Little Daughter for her airing the señoras frequently asked me where I had secured so unusual a servant.

I had never heard of, or even dreamed of, anything like the way Elvira and Luis quarreled. Again and again did the Missionary request that I dismiss Elvira so that Luis would behave himself. How could I bring myself to dismiss a woman who was neat? Yet how could we manage without Luis?

"It would cost me more to get a man to paint the house than Luis' wages amount to in a year. Where would we ever find another man who would go for medicines in the middle of the night, or help out in the kitchen at times?"

Thus argued the Missionary, and both servants stayed on, quarreling worse and worse every day in spite of our protestations.

One morning, just at the rising hour, Luis burst into our room in a blazing passion. He was shirtless but he held in his hand and shook in our faces a few tatters of the garment he should have been wearing.

"Look you! The work of Elvira! Elvira!" he screamed. "She tears the shirt from the back of me. The tigress!"

"And what did you do, Luis?" calmly asked the Missionary.

Spanish, fast and furious, poured from his lips, his face distorted by frenzy. He had thrown away her tooth-brush, and kicked over her wash-basin, grinding her scented soap into the brick floor with his heel.

"The things of señoras in the hands of a servant! Bah!"

The Missionary, with his usual tact, despatched the man upon an errand that kept him in the country all day, and remarked to me:

"The explanation of all this lies in the occurrences of last evening. While I was conducting the men's meeting, I saw Elvira in the street walking up and down with the son of the woman who keeps the tienda on the corner. Luis believes that it is because Elvira 'apes the señoras,' as he calls it, that she is noticed by better men than he is. Luis is jealous. You must keep Elvira off the street evenings."

XIII

VISITS

SHORTLY after my return from the States I was again ill, five weeks in "straight bed." Luis and Elvira were thus left very much to their own devices. Fortunately we still had reliable little Natalia in the kitchen. How wise was the great dramatist when he reminded us through the lips of Anthony that it is the evil men do that lives after them! Natalia was too good to have tales told of her. When she left us she entered a German family as nurse girl to a plump little fraulein, and there she is still, grown so corpulent with her easy life that her twinkling little eyes constantly recede more and more from view.

Among those who came regularly to inquire after me was Barbara, bearing upon her breast a sickly little scrap of mankind, her son. The woman was ragged and filthy to a degree and she brazenly begged clothing for herself and the child.

"Are you in service now, Barbara?" I asked.

"The Señora Mauda understands so little! How is it that I can be in service with my little baby? And who is the señora that employs me now? But certainly no one."

"How do you live?"

"Of course, as all the mothers carrying new babies live. On the back I carry the wood and hay, the bananas, the yuca. But I am the very most tired

and always with a hunger very great, and the little one does not continue well. He thinks in dying, it seems to me. He is all that I have; I cannot conform myself to his dying."

"If you would bathe him every day, Barbara, head and all, and try to keep the things around him clean he would grow stronger. Try, too, not to have him done up so tightly in this dirty woolen shawl; see, it has irritated his skin until it bleeds!"

"And how is it that I avoid that, my Señora? That shawl is all that I have with which to strap him to my breast when I carry that cargo on my back."

"It is a pity that you have to carry him all day in the heat, strapped to your perspiring body. He is overheated all the time, and I suppose that you keep even his head covered because of the fierceness of the sun's rays. Poor little thing, how he suffers! But it will help him so much if you will bathe him every day; I would show you how to do it were I able to sit up. Commence with his head, soap it well,—see, it is all festering now!"

"But, Señora Mauda, never would I put water on a baby's head; with that he comes out a fool."

"Oh, Barbara, that is such a silly notion! There is no truth in it at all."

"All the world believes that thing."

"Yes, all your world does believe it, I admit. And see how the babies suffer because of it! Look at those children of mine; are they fools? Have they not good hair?"

"The Little White Angel" (which was what all the servants called Little Daughter) "has the hair most beautiful in the world. It appears pure new silk."

"Yes, it is like raw silk and her head has always been washed with soap. So has Small Son's and he is no fool. Have you any place where you can bathe your child?"

"And what place could I have?"

"Where do you stay nights?"

"I sleep on the earth in a little corner of the hut of one little old woman who lets me, towards there," and she pointed to the south.

"You may bathe your baby here now, if you like, and Elvira shall help you and show you how to do it."

But Elvira would not. Of what was the Señora Mauda thinking to let such creatures in the children's room, using their bath basin?

"Bring the servants' wash-basin then. This child's wailing would cease if it were bathed, powdered well and wrapped in a cool soft cloth."

"No time have I to bathe that brat. I have much that I do now. Surely just for the reason that I am the Señora Mauda's servant she has not the right to put me to bathe such a creature. I do not do it."

There was Indian blood in Elvira; when she wouldn't, she wouldn't. The best that I could do was to have Small Son bring me some of my little girl's things and a box of powdered starch with soap and towel. These I presented to Barbara and she promised that somehow she would manage to bathe the child, head and all, that very day. I had doubts about her keeping her promise, especially as to the head, but it appeared that the woman was ready to try anything that would save her child's life.

A week later she returned very much dressed up in one of my white waists, into which she had every-

where sewed strips of yellowish bagging to make the garment some six sizes larger than it was originally, so that she could stuff herself into it. The puny baby was so transformed that I scarcely recognized him. Reasonably clean, his head better, he hung, quietly asleep, loosely suspended from his mother's breast by the bath-towel. Barbara glowed like a poppy over the improvement in her child. Good news had I for her. The Missionary had secured her a place in the little cigarette factory where, if she proved apt at the work, she might earn enough to keep herself and child alive.

"The only difficulty is that the hours are very long, and you will have to leave the baby alone all day on the damp ground in that dark hole of a hut, for of course you cannot take him with you."

"If I should be able to pay even so few pesos I leave him with one little woman that I know. She is now the woman of a gentleman; her he has established in a little house, even with a servant. Once was she a friend of mine. Now of a certainty she is very proud, but for a little money I believe that she puts my baby, clean and beautiful like he is, to lie by the side of hers. But it is too good that the Doctor and the Señora Mauda are with me, and I merit that thing not at all."

"But you are going to deserve it, Barbara. You will raise up your son to be clean and strong. You must bring him to see me again soon."

Quavering old Encarnación was also among my visitors during those weeks of sickness. She brought the scrawny little grandson with her.

Small Son takes delight in giving away his possessions. It has always been difficult to prevent his stripping himself of playthings and clothing, so

eager is he to share with less fortunate children. One day when he was three years old I caught him handing out through the bars of the window a pair of his prettiest shoes to a group of open-mouthed children, every one of whom was stark naked. Now that he was older he kept a box into which went everything that, after consultation with me, was considered appropriate to be given away. From the box he chose things for the little Juanito while the old woman sat hugging her hands under her shawl and talking to me.

She rambled on, muttering and sputtering, so that I scarcely understood a word of what she was trying to say. After half an hour of this strain, when I was hoping that she would go, since Elvira had already carried out my instructions and set down on the floor at the woman's side a tiny basket of food for her to carry home with her, she suddenly drew back the corner of her old shawl and disclosed a live hen. A pert little black hen was it, that blinked and squawked as soon as the light struck it. Encarnación tucked it more snugly under her arm as I stared at it in astonishment.

"Look at that little hen mine," she said.

"Yes, I am looking at it. What are you going to do with it?"

"No rooster have I; this hen only. But I wish to raise the chickens, for that I bring here the hen. I put her with those hens of the Doctor. Her eggs I carry home and when I have enough I raise those chickens."

The wonder of it; that Encarnación could think all that out so nicely! I laughed at the astuteness of the woman who had never learned the use of a table-pad.

"That seems to me a very good plan, Encarnación. The only question is, how are you going to tell your egg from the other eggs?"

"That egg I know. It is a particular egg."

"Well, if there is any egg at all it will probably be yours as our fancy hens are not laying. They object either to the heat or to living on bran; yet corn is so high we cannot buy it and oats are unheard of in this country."

"Those oats, what might they be?"

"Oh, they are a grain not raised here. Have you seen our fowls lately? Elvira has named them. That tall lanky black rooster she calls John-and-a-half. You know John-and-a-half, of course; Don Señor John Cortes, so exceedingly tall and narrow that the whole town knows him as John-and-a-half? Elvira says that our black rooster of the long legs reminds her of Don Cortes, so the whole school calls him John-and-a-half."

My pleasantries were all wasted on Encarnación. She stared dully at me, comprehending nothing.

"Take your hen to the solar and put her with the others. Son, bring Juanito to his grandmother now; they are going home."

Thus was I rid of them.

Each day thereafter the old woman returned to the house for the egg and if there was any egg to be found in the solar it was given to her. This went on for a long time until one day Luis stood respectfully before me and asked how much longer it was to continue. For a week I had been giving classes to the more advanced of our high school boys, since there was no one else to do it, except the Missionary, already overburdened. But I was greatly hampered

by an over-powering weakness that caused me to hang to the furniture and desks for support.

"Oh, Luis," I answered. "I had forgotten the existence of the old woman and her egg. Is her hen still laying?"

"Most certainly not. It has never laid. Could a thing so small lay an egg? It is not of the bigness of a decent bird."

"But it is no bother to you? You do not object to keeping it here? The poor creature probably cannot buy anything to feed it."

What a disagreeable, sinister smile Luis had! It impressed me most unfavorably.

"My Señora Mauda certainly does that which she likes and it is always the best. But to me it appears not good that the only one fresh egg we have that old woman carries off each day. Señora Mauda needs that egg herself. Is it not that she is of a paleness that hurts me much?"

"Thank you, Luis," I breathed, most humbly. "When the woman comes today you may tell her to take her hen away. It is time she was raising those chickens."

XIV

ELVIRA AND LUIS

WHEN it pleased them to do so, Elvira and Luis could conplot together in a wondrous fashion.

A family whom we had tried to interest in Bible teachings commenced to attend our services, and to show their friendliness towards us they sent us a macaw. The bird was of a splendor and gaudiness that appealed to Small Son, and his delight knew no bounds, but the pleasure derived from the gift was all his; the rest of us did not want a macaw. We could have possessed several had we cared for them, as they are always easy to acquire, but they are dirty creatures, noisy and mischievous. We already had quite enough noise and mischief in the house and to spare, crowded as we were between four walls, jumbled together with schoolboys, servants and children.

Elvira shared our disgust at the introduction of the macaw into the family and, unlike us, she expressed her disapproval in loud and vigorous terms. The Missionary and I dared do no more than smile sadly and remark upon what a gorgeous bird it was. Had we even looked as though we did not greatly appreciate the gift, the donors would have been immediately apprised of the fact, distorted by exaggerations, and the family would never more have appeared at church. No one depends upon the Bell telephone system for the propagation of news in our

city. We have a much more efficient system of our own, without the bother of using receivers. Apparently the air is electric and carries wireless messages impromptu.

One day did the macaw remain with us. The next morning when Small Son hurried to the kitchen to find his pet, who, by the way, was so cross and "angry" that the child did not dare approach it closely, the bird had flown. Just how he had flown with his heavy body and clipped wings was a wonder to all of us. Small Son's laments and sobs made the whole household uncomfortable. Elvira's sympathy with the child was perfect; she tried in every way to console him and when she found there was no comforting him except by securing the bird, she herself offered to go to the neighboring houses to ask if by any chance the lazy macaw had climbed upon our roof and descended into the wrong patio. This is a trick easy for cat or fowl to perform as the roofs on a whole block are joined together at all sorts of angles. Elvira's morning work awaited her, so I said that Luis should be sent on the tour of investigation. He went, most reluctantly. An hour later he returned, reporting that he had failed in the quest; no such bird had been seen anywhere.

What a mysterious disappearance of a creature whose powers of locomotion were not much superior to those of a tortoise! From the first the affair had an element of mystery about it, but we never suspected the truth.

The next Sabbath the new family did not appear at any of the services, which fact we considered very strange. Perhaps they thought that we had not been to a sufficient degree grateful for the gift of the macaw.

On Monday I called at their home and was greeted by the rasping clamor of a macaw squatting humped over in the court. The bird kept up its irritating gabble and, seated in the parlor where I could stare out at it, I remarked:

"That macaw is much like the one you so kindly presented to us. Unfortunately ours would not stay with us; he went off somewhere the second day and left Small Son in great grief. Luis searched for him but he could not be found."

My hostess gazed steadily at me with expressionless face, but made no reply. I terminated my visit without having received any hint whatever as to the reason why none of the family had attended church the day before. They never came again.

Months afterward we learned that Elvira had taken the macaw in her arms after dark and had carried him back to the donors, stating that the Doctor and Señora Mauda did not want the bird and had sent it back. Luis knew this, and when I sent him to hunt the macaw he went to the tienda, stayed an hour, and returned to report that he could not find it.

What must have been that family's opinion of us?

A colorless old woman, María of the Sorrows by name, was slopping around in my kitchen, posing as cook, when Elvira, who was endowed with a lively mind, decided that she was chicken hungry. Forthwith at ten o'clock one night, when the household was slumbering peacefully, she repaired to the solar and, before it could utter one protesting squawk, wrung the neck of one of our hens. Presently the whole fowl, head, feet and all, was bubbling merrily in the pot.

When we have a fowl to eat I insist upon seeing it before it goes into the kettle. Otherwise it appears before us at table with its body perfectly entire, down to the eyes and toe-nails. Even if the finicky foreign señora refuses to eat the head and feet of a chicken they are not therefore wasted; they are boiled apart and enjoyed by the servants who consider them the best part of the meal.

Luis, who had charge of the heavy iron key to the door, was sent by Elvira to purchase macaroni, garlic, and I know not what, at the corner tienda, which is grocery-store, breadshop and saloon in one, and is kept open most of the night.

I can well believe it was a most savory stew that Elvira concocted. No sound or smell of all this penetrated the inner court where we slept. In the "Oasis," where we were then living, the kitchen is so far from the rest of the house that nothing that occurred in it, short of an earthquake, could be heard in the other rooms.

When on the stroke of midnight the feast was ready, Elvira and María of the Sorrows called Luis to partake. But, although it must have sorely tempted him, the man refused to so much as taste the stew.

"And this for why?" asked Elvira.

"I do not rob from the Doctor. Also I do not eat that which is robbed from him."

Elvira grinned at this.

"This is not to rob. Is it not that you tend those chickens and even I put them water all those days? Most certainly this is but pay for the work of us."

"The Señora pays me for my work. I have not to rob from her for that pay."

"You yourself was it that helped me get the fowl ready."

"That certainly I did not do."

"You yourself was it that bought me all the things at the tienda, but now."

"That, yes, is different. It is the business of me to buy all that which is needed here."

"And at ten o'clock at night?" mocked Elvira.

"And at ten o'clock at night if you send me to do it. That has nothing to do with the Doctor's chicken."

No amount of persuasion could induce him to taste of the fowl. He stood at one side leaning against the wall, cigarette in mouth, until the two women had gorged to their limit and had hidden under their beds what they could not eat.

Luis never mentioned this occurrence to any of us. The wireless telephone communicated it to me the next day, but none of the servants ever knew that I found it out. I often wondered about the happenings which the wireless may have neglected to bring me.

One Sabbath morning, six months of scorching weather was broken by a pounding, thudding deluge of rain. All day long did the relenting heavens drench the parched, shrivelled earth until the streets became foaming rivers and the whole city seemed afloat. Gales of driving wind thrust sheets of water into the faces of those who dared challenge nature in her wildest mood by attempting to leave shelter. Six months of evaporation descended in as many hours.

Our head-teacher and his young daughter lived across the treeless little park in front of our house and took their meals with us. It was impossible

for them to venture into the tempest so when the eleven-o'clock breakfast was ready to be served I decreed that someone should carry their food to them. Elvira offered to go. She repaired to her room and reappeared with her ample skirts tucked above her knees, revealing a surprising extent of bare brown limb.

As I was arranging the Ireguis' breakfast in a pail, Luis entered the room. He stared fixedly at Elvira, then turned to me and asked:

"The Señora Mauda sends Elvira to the street today?"

"She has offered to take the breakfast to the Ireguis."

"Does not the Señora Mauda see plainly that this is not a day that a woman should go to the street? The thing is not possible for her."

"Oh, well, Luis, I do not care who takes the breakfast to Señor Iregui so he gets it. The one who goes will have to use the utmost caution to keep on his feet in crossing the street for the force and depth of the water is considerable. Perhaps it is safer for you to go since you are tall and can wade through better than Elvira."

Thus did he attempt to shield Elvira.

The man was despatched and the woman went on with the serving of the meal, when suddenly a section of the mud wall between the court and the solar was washed into the house. Instantly a stream of red water, bearing mud, sticks, stones, poured into the court, through the corridor, and into the dining-room before we could make our escape.

In the Andes mountains nothing is level and all cities appear to roll and tumble about the hills in a most distracting fashion. The narrow streets of

these cities are gouged out by the torrents of water that rush through them when it rains. The fronts of the adobe houses, framing the streets, are on a level with the sidewalk, which would cause the front rooms to be much lower than the rest of the building were it not that dirt is excavated for the rear rooms. Cellars are unknown; the floors are made of soft bricks a foot square laid directly upon the ground. If there be a little wall-enclosed back-yard, called a solar, it is almost certain to lie from two to twenty feet higher than the level of the house.

In the Oasis, as our rented house was called, the solar was quite ten feet higher than the rooms. The newly formed lake in the solar, unable to empty itself by the regular channel provided for water, had undermined the wall and was pouring into the house.

The Missionary, Luis and Elvira, each in as abbreviated clothing as possible, struggled for hours to thwart the malicious purpose of the impromptu lake while the children and I huddled on the beds and watched them. Fortunately it was vacation time and there were few boys in the house.

Nothing could have excelled the amicability with which our two servants worked together. They were like two doves in their agreement of purpose.

An hour before sunset the deluge ceased, as abruptly as it had commenced. Almost at the same time the exhausted Missionary waded through the foot of mud and water that covered our floors to the haven where his family had sought refuge, and announced that the refractory solar was at last under control and he could clean up and rest. The untasted breakfast was still spread upon the table and the household awoke to a cognizance of its hunger.

Wading to the kitchen, I prepared some chocolate. When I returned with the lunch, I found Luis and Small Son bending absorbedly over a shoe-box filled with cotton upon which they were pouring a few drops of kerosene.

"What are you two doing?" I asked.

"Luis makes me a boat of fire," responded Small Son.

The preparation finished, the child launched his boat from the threshold as Luis threw a lighted match into it. The household crowded to the doorway to watch the box. The match caught the kerosene, the cotton blazed up, the shoe-box bobbed and fluttered crazily as it tossed down the foaming stream that raced through the street, and a wonderful boat of fire it was, to be sure.

"Whatever caused you to think of that, Luis?" I asked.

The man only grimaced as he attempted to smile, making no reply.

In ten minutes the street river held dozens of careening, whirling flames of fire as all the boys of the neighborhood instantly seized upon Luis' novel idea of entertainment and copied it. Every doorway was full of smiling faces and dancing shouting children. Boat after boat was launched, some to topple over at once, others to race madly down the swift current, to catch up with, to pass or to override some smaller craft. Occasionally two boats collided without overturning one another and jogged serenely on together, while their delighted owners shouted, "A marriage! A marriage!"

Darkness fell quickly; the little flames that had balanced and danced and raced so bravely on the flood slipped away from sight and the neighborhood

frolic was over. We had laughed together, although there was not one among us who did not have to turn from the fun in the street to a house buried in mud and water. As badly off as was the Oasis, we had escaped more easily than many of our neighbors, some of whom had lost entire walls of their houses or sections of roof.

Monday Luis and Elvira worked heroically to bring us to a scale of ordinary cleanliness.

XV

SOCORRO

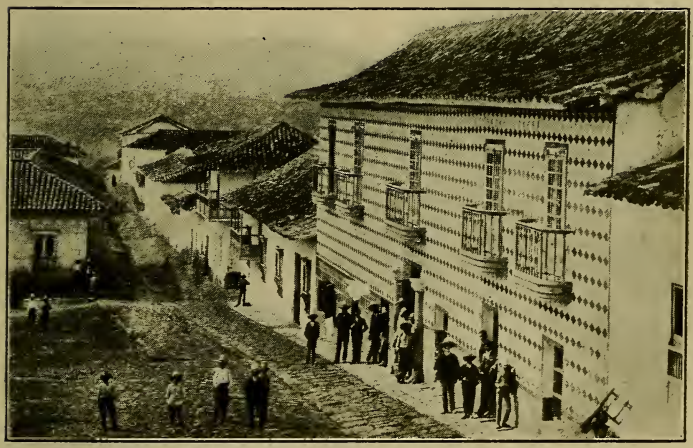
ONE afternoon I felt it my duty to make a long-neglected call. I left Little Daughter with Elvira and took Small Son with me.

We were gone an hour, and as we approached the house on our return, we saw the door standing open and the zaguan filled with riff-raff from the street. We heard screams issuing from the house, terrible yells and hoarse bellowings. Naturally I thought that something had happened to the baby and I grew so limp that I could not run. Small Son was too frightened to go on alone, so for a few moments, horrified, we clung together there in the street. Then we hurried on, more and more afraid to go forward as the distance to the house lessened. What was this terrible thing? What had happened to Little Daughter?

The house gained at last—how long we were in reaching it!—my first act was to clear the doorway of the gamin then, bracing myself, I turned to face whatever awaited me.

There in the patio were Luis and Elvira. The man, blood staining one cheek, was dancing wildly around the woman, madly waving his long machete in her face. She was bravely standing her ground, although the short butcher-knife that she held seemed impotent in comparison with his flashing machete. Her dress was partly torn from her body and hung in long tatters. Her black hair streamed wildly

"The roofs of the houses of a whole block are joined together at all sorts of angles."



A street scene.

about her face, giving her a savage look. Her right hand, swathed in a rag from her skirt, dripped blood. Both combatants were so infuriated that they did not notice me.

My eyes took in all this at the first glance, and my second glance rested upon my little year-and-a-half old daughter, standing in her balustered bed in the room beyond and laughing gleefully at the entertainment her two adorers were giving for her benefit. Rallying from the rush of thankful relief that swayed me, I was about to make some effort to end the disgraceful scene when the Missionary burst through the door behind me and, hesitating not an instant, rushed at the two frenzied combatants, struck Luis' knife from his hand, ordered him to go to the solar, pushed Elvira into her room, locked the door, and pocketed the key.

Then he turned to remark, "This is a pretty affair! I heard that yelling when I was still a block away. I knew in a moment what was going on and I ran all the way when I saw you entering the house. I am sorry that I did not get here before you did and so save you this. Keep Elvira locked in her room until tomorrow, then dismiss her. I think we had better let Luis go too. We shall get on in some fashion."

Elvira, reproachful, feeling herself most unjustly treated, protested against going. Was not her work satisfactory? Why should she leave because of a little matter of quarreling with another servant? That was common in all houses and the señoras thought nothing of it if it did not interfere with the work. Why was the Doctor so unjust? Yet go she did.

Luis, however, stayed on, bending every energy to

help me in all ways possible to him until I should find someone to take Elvira's place.

For the first week Elvira appeared every evening at six to assist with the children's baths and the tucking of them into bed. Baths are not so easily managed when the water must be warmed over coals lying on the fire-place, carried nearly half a block through corridors and courts and poured into a flat tin basin of immense proportions which sits upon the floor. After each bath the basin must be lifted, carried out to the court, emptied, returned and refilled. It requires a strong woman, too, to lift the children into and out of their tin lake. I never offered Elvira money for this kindness, understanding that she would have considered such an offer an affront.

In Colombia birthday anniversaries are justly looked upon as the most important days of one's life and are duly honored. The date of the birth of each member of a family is celebrated by a party to which come all the relatives, and sometimes friends as well. Early in the day well-dressed servants are sent to the home of the one to be honored, each bearing a silver tray heaped with the most exquisite flowers, among which the birthday gift lies hidden. After the fashion of a wedding, all the gifts and flowers are arranged in a separate room where they often make an imposing display. In the early afternoon the sender of a gift arrives with his or her family to salute and congratulate the recipient and to view the gifts. To all these interested ones a collation must be served. This frequently consists of fried chicken and sweet crackers, imported from London, served with coffee and a rich syrup, into which green figs or some other native fruit has been

dropped. Sometimes the chicken is boiled in a thick paste of macaroni which makes a most palatable dish.

An inconceivable amount of work attaches itself to any attempt to entertain guests in Colombia. The silver must be dug out of the trunks and vigorously polished; all extra glassware and dishes, provided there are any left unbroken, must be unlocked and brought to light of day; table-linen, taken from trunks, requires pressing; as ants, cockroaches and damp heat make it impossible to keep on hand many supplies, extra quantities of food must be bought and locked up until the hour of serving; long tables must be constructed out of something and chairs and benches found for them.

A birthday anniversary causes great inconvenience and much work; but what will you? Unless we Americans conform to custom in this matter we are considered unsocial or even niggardly, since we are sometimes invited to the homes of our friends on similar occasions.

Five days after Elvira left our house, Small Son celebrated the sixth anniversary of his birth. Before the fresh day was fairly born, Elvira arrived and until late in the afternoon she lent assistance in the kitchen, dining-room and parlor, while the woman I was trying in Elvira's old position spent the entire afternoon in sewing on six buttons. Luis, likewise, was at his best and vied with Elvira in being pleasant and attentive and in bestowing little gifts upon happy Small Son.

It was with a sigh of real regret that, over the bathtub of the children that night, I listened to Elvira's account of the place she had secured where she would commence work the next day.

At the time we had Socorro in the kitchen as cook. She was good-looking, robust, about thirty-three or thirty-four years old (no servant is ever certain of her age), when according to all precedents she should have begun to appear aged, bent and wrinkled. Strange to believe, she was rosy-cheeked, plump of figure, bubbling with humor. I stared in amazement when she told me that she was the mother of ten children.

"Of ten children, Socorro? You look so young!"

She laughed gleefully. "Certainly I had not many years when my first baby came to me. She was a little girl and pretty, oh, so pretty! All my children are beautiful, my señora, more beautiful than their brothers and sisters."

"Whatever do you mean, Socorro? How can children be more beautiful than themselves?"

She giggled again. "My Señora is so lacking in an understanding of our customs. Those children of mine are more handsome than their legitimate brothers and sisters."

Of course; Socorro had been the concubine wife of some gentleman. Anyone seeing her well preserved body and youthful spirits might have guessed it. She had not toiled in the streets to support her little ones; her good looks had bought her a home, perhaps a two-roomed hut and a servant besides. She and her children had been sufficiently nourished from the baskets of food sent her each week. I understood it perfectly. Were there not a dozen such establishments in our immediate neighborhood? It is the universal "custom of our country."

"But why do you go out to service now, Socorro? Surely your children are little and need you?"

The woman burst into tears as she replied, "He

has chosen another one and it makes me work to give the children to eat."

"The two dollars which I pay you each month will hardly clothe you and feed ten children."

"Oh, no, Señora, neither do I have to feed the ten. Those children he put into service when they each had seven years. Three only are left to me. My little Enrique, oh, but I loved him the most,—almost the most, for was he not the little gentleman, the very image of his father?—him he gave to those Jesuits to make him a priest. Me, the mother of a priest! Most Sacred Mary, is it not wonderful? The most little one is tiny like this little white daughter of you. Oh, if the Blessed Virgin would but let me see her!"

"Where is she?"

"Her I left in that town of Socorro. Surely you understand, Señora Mauda, that I have the name of my birthplace? Socorro" (help) "comes to help you from the town of Socorro," and off she went holding her plump sides in the excess of her merriment.

Each pay day while Socorro was with me she came asking that I write at her dictation a loving little note to the three children in her home town and with the note went the most of the woman's wages. She had no idea where the older children were, having necessarily lost all trace of them.

One day she hurried into the house from the plaza and, without going to the kitchen to deposit the heavy basket of marketing she carried, burst excitedly into my presence.

"My Señora, you yourself cannot imagine what I saw with my own eyes!"

"No, indeed, I cannot; tell me."

"Certainly it was my daughter, my Rosita, my

first little baby. It was none other! Oh, but she has grown so tall and that handsome! It made so much heat in the plaza and I was with a thirst very great, so I went to seat myself for a moment—oh, just one little moment, no more; surely the Señora Mauda could not object to that?—in the grog-shop. A girl, but the most beautiful of them all, gave me my guapo" (hot-country beer). "Then she did not leave me but stood and gazed at me much. Afterwards she said, 'You do not know me? But I know you, certainly; you are Socorro, my mother. I am your Rosita.' Oh, the years, the years that I do not see my child, my Rosita! And how does it appear to you, my Señora, I do not know her? But she knows me, that I am Socorro, of course, the mother of her. Oh, the joy of it! My Señora, you do not know the joy of it!"

As I glanced at my little daughter I silently prayed that I might never know just this particular joy that Socorro was experiencing. I thought of children in North America, sixty years ago, snatched from the breasts of loving mothers and sold into slavery, and I wondered. When will the mothers of Latin America come into their God-intended estate?

XVI

CARMEN

CARMEN'S was one of the most intelligent faces that I have ever seen among Colombian servants.

"Yes, and crafty, too," remarked the Missionary when I told him that I had engaged the woman. "She looks bad. I fear that you will be neither happy nor comfortable with her in the house. You need as honest a woman as you can get for that position as she has so much to do with the children and she handles practically all the clothing, bed and table-linen in the house."

"Yes, but I count every article before it goes to the washwoman, and check it up when she returns it for the bluing and starching. I count it all again after it is ironed and brought to me for inspection. Of course Carmen will have access to the children's boxes and trunks, but I must have someone. This woman's face shows that she can learn if she will. Not one of the poor creatures I have had in these two months since Elvira left could learn anything in a lifetime; they are not endowed with the capacity for learning. I am worn out by their dullness and I shall try Carmen."

I soon found that the Missionary's estimate of the woman was correct. She knew no law, no limit. Her service was creditable, but the blackness of her heart, impenetrable. Nor was she content to walk alone in

her evil way; she corrupted Socorro. She had been in our house less than two weeks and, on pretext that she did not have suitable clothes for escorting the children on their walks, had already inveigled me into advancing her two months' wages, when one Sabbath afternoon she enticed Socorro to a dance and street carousal. Night fell and they did not return; Monday brought no servants. Luis helped out as he was able. I had him nail up all the boxes containing clothes and dishes, as I foresaw a general cleaning out of our possessions if we commenced on a long succession of new servants at that time.

That night Baby Boy came to us. There was not a woman servant in the house and no nurse, other than an old woman who came in for a little time each morning. In desperation, Victoria, a lank, slovenly creature with a sullen face, was taken on in the kitchen. When she recovered from her debauch, Carmen reappeared and went to work as though nothing had happened. There was no shame in her, but Socorro was too penitent to show herself again. I allowed Carmen to stay. How could I do it? She alone knew how to bathe and dress Small Son and Little Daughter, knew where to find their things, understood about their food; she was careful in these duties, and I could not teach anyone else at that time. The children's welfare overcame my scruples and my repugnance to the woman.

The third day of Baby Boy's life the Missionary came to me, as I kept all money and account books under my pillow, and asked for boarding-department money to send Luis to buy supplies for the dinner.

"Luis went to market this morning, as usual," I exclaimed. "He purchased the supplies for the day."

"Victoria has just shown me that there is nothing in the house to eat. The food was all eaten at noon, she says."

"While I am ill Luis in my stead divides the food into portions for each meal before he gives it to the cook. Didn't he do it?"

"Do you know how many we are feeding in the kitchen?"

"Three servants. Yes, four today, because María de la Cruz is here to do some extra washing."

"As I passed through the kitchen just now I counted six women all pretending to do something. Six, besides Luis,—that makes seven to be fed."

"Whatever does it mean?"

"I do not know. I supposed that you had hired them."

"Will you please send me Luis?"

Luis disclaimed all knowledge of the women in the kitchen.

"That Carmen, she it is that is the most disagreeable woman that I have seen, but ever. She says I have nothing that I should do in that kitchen, so of course I eat in the patio, and I know nothing of that which they do in the kitchen."

"Send me Carmen, Luis."

"It is not possible to me, Señora Mauda. I have no conversation with that woman."

"Then please tell the Missionary to send me Carmen."

Which is preferable, too much conversation with the dining-room girl, or none at all? Ah, Luis!

Carmen comes. Upon her face in full development is the look which the Missionary detected at first glance and warned me against. Yes, she is hard,

and I feel weak and discouraged. How can I cope with her?

"Carmen, the Doctor tells me that there are six women at work in the kitchen. What does it mean?"

"It is not a thing for which to agitate yourself, my Señora," she replies in a voice of silk. "It is only that my mother comes today in order to help me but a little with the ironing. There is much, oh, so much of that ironing, and I myself have not time to put my hand to it."

"That leaves two women unaccounted for."

"That sister of mine comes in order to help my mother," nonchalantly.

"The sixth woman?" I held her to it.

"Certainly she is but a poor old woman, the sister of my mother, who comes to help the cook in the cleaning of the vegetables. There are truly so many vegetables that she alone cannot clean them."

"I can well believe it. And what pay have you promised all these relatives of yours?"

"Nothing, my Señora. But certainly nothing. They do all for nothing."

"Ask Luis to come here. I shall have to send him again to market."

"That Luis is not in the house."

"Oh, yes, he is, Carmen; I just saw him. Please call him."

"But Señora, that Luis is a beast. He is not even a Christian." All soft tones are gone now, fortissimo is being played with the loud pedal on. "It is I, I myself, that he insults. I will not call him."

"Then send me the Doctor," I beg wearily as I turn my face to the wall.

"He is not able to come now, my Señora. The Little Angel is sick, she is with vomit."

"Little Daughter sick? Why was I not told? What ails her?"

"Someone gave her many dulces. So much makes her sick."

"Where were you, Carmen, that you allowed anyone to give the child candy? You know it is positively forbidden and I am trusting you to care for the children. There is no one else to do it."

Off she goes, grumbling at the much that I expect of her. How is it possible for one woman to do so much thing? Yet I had reason to know that she spent part of her time sitting in the kitchen, smoking a vile pipe.

An anxious hour passed. No one came near me, although I called repeatedly and Baby Boy from his cradle at the other side of the room added his new little voice to mine. I grew more and more certain that Little Daughter had been poisoned by the filthy dulce and was perhaps dying. As a matter of fact she was very ill and I had her bed placed by the side of mine so that I could watch her at night.

Immediately after the six-o'clock dinner the Missionary came into my room and remarked, "You must get rid of Victoria. We cannot endure her for another meal."

"Of Victoria? Whatever can we do without a cook? What is the matter with her?"

"Have you seen her since she entered the house?"

"No, she came at noon that first day of Baby Boy's life. She has been here only two and one half days, and Carmen has acted as our intermediary."

"Well, call her in and take a good look at her. Make some excuse to speak to her."

She was sent for and in a few moments stood at

my bedside. A "good look" was not necessary; a fleeting glance sufficed.

"Victoria," I commenced wearily, "we find that we cannot manage with you and we shall have to try someone else. You may stay the night if you like and take your coffee here, but you must let Luis prepare the coffee. Here is your money and something besides."

"And this for what? How is it that I do not manage here? Is it that my Señora thinks in me for the fault that the dinner did not reach today? That fault is not of me. That woman who helped me clean the vegetables, she it is who carries away those vegetables in the pocket of her skirt. The fault is not of me."

"No, Victoria, the lack of food for the dinner has nothing to do with it. I do not care to explain, but I wish you to go,—to go now."

The Missionary had seated himself with a book during this interview. When the woman had gone he looked up and asked, "Then you saw?"

"How is it possible for a human being to get so dirty? That unkempt hair flying long over her shoulders, I should think that it would be in all the food."

"It was. That is particularly why I felt that none of us could eat another mouthful that she cooked."

"What shall we do?"

"Luis will attend to the morning coffee."

"Luis to prepare and Carmen to serve! You know they will not do it. Besides Luis cannot manage the midday breakfast nor the dinner. If Carmen would, she could prepare food for the children and for me; but she probably will not do it.

Who is to look after you and the boarding boys?"

"Well, you, at least, will not do it, so why worry? Perhaps the washwoman may be induced to help out until Luis finds you a cook."

No cook was forthcoming. We worried along until I was able to move about a little, then Carmen went into the kitchen as cook which left me entirely without a nurse girl. Baby Boy fell ill.

When the child was about a month old, the Missionary inquired, "Did you sleep at all last night?" Without waiting for a reply he added, "You hire the first woman who comes to you today. Take her for a nurse girl and keep her at your side. Luis can continue to serve table. You see," he added with a laugh, "I can't have these babies left on my hands out here alone. You must take some thought for yourself. I will send Luis to round up someone and you engage her."

A few hours later three children stood in the doorway.

"Luis told us that the Señora needs a nurse girl," remarked the middle-sized one indifferently.

"Yes, but I need a woman, not a child. None of you are old enough to bear any responsibility."

"I have eleven years, and she," pointing to the largest of the three girls, "has fourteen years."

"Neither of you will do. I need a woman."

The Missionary came into the room at that moment and, as he took wailing Baby Boy from my arms, said in English, "You need two women, a nurse and a doctor. Since you have none of these you will hire that largest girl now. It does not matter where she has worked or what she knows." Turning to the girl, he said, "You are engaged. You may go for your box after dinner. You will receive

one dollar and fifty cents the first month and after that two dollars per month if you are satisfactory. This is high wages for even a grown woman to earn, but you will be expected to keep yourself clean and to do quickly whatever the Señora tells you. Please go now to the kitchen and bring me a glass of water for the little Señorita, here. You other girls may go home."

"But you do not know her name, even," I protested.

"Little Daughter will have her drink even if we do not know the new servant's name," was his reply.

When the girl returned I looked at her appraisingly. An ordinary barrel-shaped figure surmounted by a tiny head of which the chin was almost lacking, plump brown limbs, fully displayed by a dress that barely touched the knees,—there was nothing unusual about her appearance; nor was there anything unusual about the strong odor that surrounded her.

"Do you think that we can put up with that odor in a nurse girl?" I asked the Missionary.

"Give her some money and send her to bathe herself now."

"But you know that these women leave at once if you but suggest that they bathe."

"Tell her that you will give her a dime when she gets back if she will do it."

The ten cents worked the trick. She bathed and it must have been a process indeed, for she was three hours doing it. Looking and smelling like another creature she returned to carry out carefully every suggestion and request that I made.

Eldemira was one of the quietest, most inoffensive and obedient of the servants I have known. She was not one who could arise to great occasions and do

wonderful things outside of the daily routine, like María Rodriguez and Elvira. On the contrary there was little that she could do. She had received no training in anything, it seemed to me, and she was very slow; but she could be counted upon to perform the same little duties day after day, once she had learned what was expected of her. Apparently she had no vices; if she chewed or smoked, like Carmen, it was not in my presence and no smell of tobacco clung to her clothing; if she drank, I never saw any signs of it. She made no struggle against keeping herself clean or wearing the white aprons with which I provided her. When I made her a new dress and suggested that we have it reach to her ankles she seemed pleased and quickly assented. Her ready acquiescence in everything and her quiet unobtrusiveness were a comfort to me. The six months that she was with us were among the most trying of my life and Eldemira was of great assistance to me.

XVII

IN THE COUNTRY

THE heat continued intense and gaping fissures in the face of the baked earth stared reproachfully at the insolent blue sky that refused to cover its mocking face with clouds. All nature was parched. The city streets lay full of the excrement and garbage of many months, while the earth awaited its semi-annual bath.

Baby Boy grew no better and, although I was in great need of both, I gained neither strength nor flesh. Small Son had suffered from fevers for nearly a year and sores which the medical men seemed unable to heal had broken out over his body.

We began seriously to consider getting out of the city. One who has not dwelt many days' journey from a railroad, in a country where no civilized man lives outside of a city or a village, can form any conception of what "going to the country" involves in South America.

Several weeks were spent by the Missionary in trying to secure a house. We had hoped to go to a place higher than the city and so escape some degree of the prostrating heat, but it was not possible to secure such a place. A friend who owned a ranch seven miles from the city offered us the use of his house with all the underbrush we needed for fuel for cooking, and the milk from a mountain cow, if we could catch her and her calf.

The question of servants arose; if we went to the country would anyone go with us? Luis could be trusted to remain at the house to see to things, and to bring us food from the city, since nothing to eat is ever found in the country. The Missionary could spend some of the week-days with us, as this was "long vacation,"—December and January. What about Eldemira and Carmen? The former made no objection to going, the latter demurred, was afraid that she would not like the country. After much persuasion she consented to go on condition that I pay her three months' wages in advance. I consulted the Missionary.

"I wish it were possible to get along without her," he said, "but I do not see how it is to be managed. You must rest and Eldemira cannot cook, wash or iron. I will see if we cannot find someone else and so dismiss her."

No one else could be secured, so at last we were forced to agree to Carmen's demands, with her solemn promise given that she would surely stay with us during our six weeks in the country and do all the work of the house, so that Eldemira might be entirely free to look after the three children.

Two strenuous days of packing followed; bedding, our plainest clothes, oldest table-linen, dishes, pans and kettles, food of all sorts, medicines, books and two years' magazines, saved up for vacation time if it ever came. We were obliged to take everything necessary for civilized life in a wilderness, however simple we meant that life to be.

We arrived just before dark. With the Missionary and Luis working at the improvised beds and the indispensable mosquito-nets, Carmen hanging kettles over the three stones that were our stove,

and I preparing the milk over an alcohol lamp for the tired children, I gave no attention to Eldemira. When I returned to the cubby-hole, politely called a bedroom, where I had left her to watch the children, I found that she had made up Baby Boy's bed in the clothes basket, arranged his net over it, brought out clean garments for all three, and spread out everything for the baths quite as though we had been in the Oasis.

A peaceful, restful week followed. There was nothing to mar our comfort except that the trip had been too much for me and I was forced to take to my bed, and that the sand flies by thousands fed upon us, day and night.

It was the afternoon of the day before Christmas. All housework dragged. The leaves of the giant mangoes on every side were motionless, the birds were too oppressed by the heat to make a sound, the very air hung breathless; why should I urge my women to work? Part of the week's washing shamelessly exposed itself to view on a brush fence, part of it lay on stones in the creek-bed, wadded with chunks of soft soap, part of it still remained in the house, unwet. No cooking of any sort had been done for the next day—Christmas. Just before dark Carmen came asking that after dinner she might be allowed to walk to the city, seven miles distant, to attend the Christmas Eve street revelries.

"Why, no, Carmen, I do not think it wise to give you permission. You would not be in condition to return for several days and we cannot manage without you now. The fireworks can be seen from here much better than from any point in the city. We will have a little tree tomorrow for you girls and the children; Small Son has chosen that tiny orange tree

in front of the house and we will have it decorated by seven o'clock in the morning, so that it can be lighted by the sun the moment it appears over the mountain; that will be prettier than any candles. You cannot go. It may mean some sacrifice for you but there are recompenses and you see you promised to stay. You are having a restful vacation out here with no hurry and no ceremony. I cannot give you permission."

Then she had the audacity to ask me for a dollar. I reminded her that she was already paid three months in advance, with the understanding that she was to have no more money during that time. Saying nothing she went back to the kitchen.

Eldemira had come to me as destitute as any woman I ever had. I had been making her clothing and advising her as to the use of her wages when she should receive them. That afternoon she asked me for a dollar, which was practically all that she had as yet earned in my service.

"What are you going to do with money in this wilderness?" I asked.

"This night Luis goes towards that city. I send by him that he buys me some things for tomorrow."

"Eldemira, I forbid your giving anything to the children tomorrow. You need your money for dozens of things and you must not spend it on them."

"I do not spend that money on them; would that I could! Of course, I do my will with that money."

With many misgivings I gave her the dollar. Had any suspicion of the truth crossed my mind I would have refused her it.

After a hurried, makeshift dinner, Carmen departed for the city. Naturally I could not prevent her going. The Missionary had a service in the city

that evening and did not come out to the ranch until the next day. So I passed that night, as I spent many succeeding ones, alone in the wilderness, in charge of three helpless children, a nine-year-old boarder left over from the school, and a young nurse girl.

Carmen never came back. I lost the wages I had advanced her, and what was much worse, Eldemira never recovered the dollar which Carmen had induced the young girl to beg from me to lend to her. The woman must have been heartless indeed to have taken from so poor a creature as Eldemira.

Although from time to time Luis brought out a woman from the city, none of them ever remained long and I did not have a regular housemaid during the rest of the time that we were in the country.

XVIII

COOKS

BACK in the city, school in progress, with at least two of the children sick all the time, I struggled on with a half-dozen cooks the first two months.

There was Delia, whose mother pretended to be a respectable woman, claiming to have been married to the father of her large family, a man long since dead. Delia was a most attractive young woman, white of skin, slender of figure, with a wealth of bronze black hair, soft and fluffy. The look of her told that she was out of place in the servant class. In the States such a girl would grace some office, or at least a factory, but here practically no avenue except that of house-work is open to a girl who must earn her own living.

Delia had long begged to be taken on as cook in our home and her mother had wasted many of my precious hours in repeated efforts to induce me to try her daughter, but the girl was in every way unfitted for service in a school for boys and young men. We had no separate building for the school, nor had we one for the religious services. Everything was brought into the one rented house where we lived. The kitchen, although under the same roof with the dining-room was at least eight rods distant from it. To pass from one room to the other it was necessary to go through two long corridors and two

courts. The larger of these courts was used as a school-room six days of the week and filled by fifty or sixty pupils, boys and young men, while on Sundays and evenings it became a church, with seats all nicely arranged. Through school and church, the work of the household ebbed and flowed, the restless tide that never ceases between a kitchen and the rest of the house.

I soon discovered that Delia was too nice for her position. She would pertly receive instruction for the marketing and trip off, basket on arm. Two hours later she would return with very inferior vegetables, some items always lacking, a few cents unaccounted for. As I found out at last, she did not go to the market at all. She carried the basket as far as her mother's home, a block from the Colegio, then seated herself to gossip leisurely with her elder sister while a twelve-year-old girl was sent to do my marketing. Likewise did she shirk the dishwashing. The little drudge from her mother's came in every day and washed up the accumulation in the kitchen while Delia mended her flimsy apparel.

It may be contended that Delia was not in condition to carry the heavy marketing, as she had been with me only a few days when I discovered that she was facing maternity. Yet she was well and strong. When I dismissed the girl she disappeared, and it was three weeks before any of us saw her. Then she reappeared, thinner and whiter than usual, as slim of figure as a ten-year-old, and asked if I would receive her again in service, adding, "Now, as I am well, I can serve the Señora better."

There was Natividad, tall, slim, lithe, yet not good to look upon. Her shifting eyes and artful expression left us in doubt as to her entire sanity.

Valentine, on left of rear row.

Hulling corn for arepas (corn-cakes).

Saturday is the great market day in our city. Upon that day, after the morning classes—for we have school-sessions six days of the week—the Missionary was accustomed to go to market followed by Luis, bearing over his arm several large sacks, and by the cook, carrying two baskets. All supplies possible to be purchased by wholesale were bought for the week, Luis carrying home the heavier things and the woman bringing the green vegetables and the fruit. Often Luis made several trips before all was safely stowed in the house.

The first Saturday that Natividad was with us she refused to go to market, although she had made no objection to going on the previous days of the week.

"Why do you object to going?" I asked her. "You must have expected to do marketing when you engaged as cook, and I thought that all of you women liked especially to dress up and go to market on Saturdays."

"I do not go those Saturdays," was all the answer vouchsafed me. Exasperated, I finally told her that she would have to leave if she would not go to market on every day except Sunday, and I went back to my class. She followed me into the classroom and communicated the reason in a whisper; on Saturdays her father was in the market and it would make him angry if he saw her there.

"I do not understand," I returned.

"It is that my father is a gentleman. To him it is a disagreeable sight, that of seeing me carry baskets in the plaza. He puts himself very angry with me for that."

"Has he a right to dictate to you? What does he do for you?"

"But nothing. Never in his life does he do anything for me; never does he speak to me in the whole of my life."

"Then what does all this nonsense mean? How do you know that he is angry with you when he sees you in the plaza?"

"Before she died my mother taught me that thing. That I know well."

"Are you sure that your father will be in the market today?"

"Of course. Always he is there on those Saturdays."

"Well, you will have to go to market on Saturdays if you remain with me and you must go today. The Doctor will not care to wait for you either, so you will need to hurry."

She was ready to go when the Missionary came from his classes. Once in the market she stared from side to side, was not behind the Missionary when he turned to deposit some purchase in her basket, and finally lost herself entirely in the crowd. A little later the Missionary saw her and sent Luis to call her. The man returned bringing her in his wake but just as they approached, the woman turned suddenly and skulked out of sight. The Missionary hired another woman to bring home his purchases and on his return asked me what ailed the new cook.

"Is she crazy? I do not go to the market to play hide-and-seek with the cook, and I am thoroughly disgusted. It is the woman's business to keep close behind me and to be on hand when I need her. I have no time to spend in hunting her up."

I promised that she should behave herself or I would secure someone who could do so. When I talked to her about it she explained that she was

dodging from side to side to keep out of her father's sight.

"Who is your father?"

"Certainly the Señora Mauda does not ask of me that? It is not the custom in Colombia to answer that question."

"Well, it does not matter who he is, this nonsense must end."

A few days later she came tearing into the house on a run, her basket empty. I happened to be in the kitchen when she arrived.

"Whatever is the meaning of this? Where is the marketing?" I asked.

"My father! Me he saw in the plaza and out he comes to follow me. By no means can I let him know where I am in service, neither, in fact, that I am in service. I ran, but fast, and he loses me. I hide here in the house."

"Natividad, this mysterious father of yours has upset this household quite long enough. You have bought nothing; by the time that you walk sixteen blocks to the market and back, and buy the supplies, breakfast is two hours late, and you know that we cannot allow a meal to be even ten minutes late in this school. What are you going to do about it?"

"If that Luis should go now to the plaza I commence the breakfast even now."

"If Luis is in the house he will have to go, I suppose, whatever may be the work at which the Missionary has set him. He may do the marketing the rest of the week, also, and next week I shall try another woman. My patience with you is exhausted."

Perhaps I would not have been so ready to dismiss

her had she been satisfactory in other respects, but she was not. Her familiar manner with the older boys of the school disgusted those young men and the Missionary objected to her passing through a room where he was.

The matter of having meals exactly on time in a school is vital. Yet for a month I bothered with a pottering old woman, María of the Exaltation, who would never have a thing even started for the breakfast when I came from my classes, an hour before serving. It resulted in my preparing each meal, and the poor old cook was useful only in washing the dishes, which were never well washed.

Epifania had a mother who was caring for the girl's child, a boy of two years. Was it any wonder that the girl, while cook at our house, considered it legitimate and even a righteous deed to send something each meal of the day to her mother and the child? Before she despatched the food to the table she would dish out a portion into a gourd and hide it under her bed, to be delivered into the hands of the boy whom the mother sent each day to receive it. This was done regularly and the Missionary was not quite sure that I was justified in asking Epifania to leave because of it.

There was María of the Benediction, a girl of fifteen who would have attracted attention anywhere. She was a study in black and white, her jet black hair forming a striking contrast to her olive-white complexion. Delicately curved eyebrows shaded great confiding eyes of soft black. Still and sad was the expression of the sweet face, prematurely old. She possessed an innate refinement entirely lacking in most of her predecessors in our household.

It should be remembered that the mestizos of

Colombia, although spoken of as "Indian," often possess far less Indian than Spanish blood. We number the negroes of the States by the millions; how many are the full-bloods among them? So in Latin America, she who has one drop of Indian blood is called "mestizo," "peon," "Indian," although the other ninety-nine drops be from the highest Spanish families. With all the aspirations and longings of their generations of white fathers surging in their hearts, these girls are condemned to the lives of slaves, to work like beasts, to live like animals, with no outlook, no hope of better things. Education, pretty clothes, innocent pleasures, happy home life, —these things are forever denied to them, I care not how they struggle for them, how they demand them.

No Indian whatever showed in María de la Bendición; she was of a high Spanish type, and apparently nothing had come down to her from her far-away Indian grandmother. She was quiet and attentive, but totally untrained in any department of work.

A New Yorker, long past middle age, had found his way to Colombia on some business venture. He made weekly excursions into near-by villages, but his Sundays were spent in our city and he sometimes attended our services. One afternoon the Missionary remarked:

"I heard that Benson was in town and sick, so hunted him up to find him in a frightful hole; just a cot squeezed into a dark little two-roomed tienda, with flies and unmentionable insects making his life unbearable. He is very sick from a sort of blood poison, caused by the bites of sand flies; he has no care and nothing decent that he can eat. The man

will die if he stays there, and yet I do not see what we can do about it."

"Of course, I know what you would like to do about it," I responded. "If we were to bring him here, where could we put him? We are ready to overflow as it is."

"I do not know where we could put him. There is no place and both of us have far too much to do now."

"The man is an American, and sick, out here thirty days from New York, his home. We must do something for him."

"It looks that way. We cannot let almost the only American we have ever seen here die in such a place."

"If you will see that Luis is at my disposal tomorrow when I finish classes you may arrange to bring Mr. Benson here tomorrow before dinner."

There was no unoccupied room in the house. The Missionary, the three children and I slept in the corridor of a tiny court, in a row of white mosquito-netted beds. There was still a small parlor and a long "office" left us. Luis and I moved the contents of the parlor into the crowded office, and, in the room thus vacated, fixed up the best pretense of a bedroom possible with the materials at hand. Night found Mr. Benson occupying the room.

Truly the man was very ill, but not so ill that he could not make everyone around him most uncomfortable. It was no one's special duty to wait upon him and after two or three trials each, none of the servants except María de la Bendición would do it. Yet she was especially sensitive. Having with my help hopefully prepared something that we thought the sick man might eat she would carry it to his

room, only to emerge a few minutes later, sobbing convulsively, as she fled to the kitchen. While she never refused to go to Mr. Benson's room, as did Luis and Eldemira, yet each visit caused her such suffering, that I did not send her. Eventually the entire care of the sick man fell upon the Missionary and me. He underwent two minor operations in our home and five months later returned to New York as well as ever.

María became less and less able to do her work. The white piteousness of her delicate face smote my heart. A mere child, endowed by her Maker with great beauty and a sensitive soul, yet facing woman's greatest ordeal with no one in the whole world to care what became of her or her offspring, no one to raise a hand to help her, no home, no money, not even a State Institution to which to turn.

At last she came to me in despair, tragedy written on her lovely face, as she said:

"Señora Mauda, there is not to me the strength to work here more. I must go."

"Where do you go, María?" and my voice was gentle, for a great sympathy for her stirred my heart.

"It is in the country that I have a sister who works on a ranch. To her I go. Perhaps I stay there."

"But what can you do?"

"Certainly I work in the coffee-field, but it is better that I go."

"I suppose it is," I replied reluctantly. I thought of the life of a woman on a ranch; work of the heaviest kind, commencing hours before daylight and enduring until long after dark, one meal in each twenty-four hours, and a meagre one at that, with

guapo, guapo, all hours of the day. At night the privilege of lying on the chill earth floor of a vermin-infected hut, without bedding of any sort. Whose was the fault that this frail young girl was condemned to such a life at such a time? And the child to come; to what was it coming? Something is radically wrong with a land where more than half the inhabitants are born to such lives.

Is it to be wondered at that these girls sometimes commit terrible crimes, even the killing of their own children, born or unborn? Like Topsy, springing from nowhere in particular, "just growed," with no teaching, no precedent, no standard, no legal way to realize motherhood, no possibility of avoiding their fate, since they are the prey of all men of whatever class—men who will accomplish their purpose by any means, bribery, violence, drugs,—not one in one hundred of these poor girls escapes. And yet we cannot look upon them as bad. Condemn not the girl-mothers; God Himself can have only loving pity for them.

XIX

TWO MARÍAS

ONE afternoon two estimable-looking middle-aged women came to see me. The younger of the two offered me the elder as cook, remarking that María Jesús was a friend of hers and a capable woman. I seized upon the proffered woman with avidity. Would she come at once? Would she prepare dinner now?

"Oh, no, most certainly no," her spokesman said. "Such is not custom here. María Jesús is a self-respecting woman. She needs time in order to consider that thing. She needs time to take a bath and to wash her clothes. In two more days she comes."

"Will you, María Jesús? Will you come in two days?"

"It is certain, Señora. In those two days I come."

She came and she remained. That was three years ago, and today she may be found in our kitchen, preparing the dinner.

She told me that somewhere in Colombia she had three grown sons and a young daughter from whom she had not heard for years. During the first year that she was with us, she traced the daughter and brought her from the town where she found her to our city. A bright, pretty girl she proved to be, and we easily placed her in a good family as nurse girl.

Do not believe that we have always sailed on smooth seas with María Jesús, who, as do all self-respecting women here, worships the god, custom. "It is the custom" is final; any mistress who chooses to beat herself against that Gibraltar but destroys herself,—she does not change the custom one whit. María Jesús will forever do things as she has always done them; but she is fairly neat, frugal and knows how to cook Colombian food. She is garrulous and fussy, yet always respectful.

Hers is a good business head.

"If my Señora thinks in paying to me a little more I grind that chocolate in the house."

How could I, with but three servants, ever have dreamed of having the chocolate bean prepared for cocoa at home, as is done in all "good houses" where from six to twelve servants are kept to wait upon one family? Astute old María knows that by paying her fifty cents more per month I am saving myself full a third of the cost of the cocoa, of which our family, chiefly the Colombian element of it, uses ten pounds each month.

The chocolate beans, large, brown, kidney-shaped, are purchased in the plaza by the pound. While they are being roasted in a flat pan over the coals, one person is kept constantly stirring them. Two coats has each bean; the first, tough and tenacious, the second, soft and elusive like the inner skin of the peanut. Both of these must be removed, laboriously. One-half day of hard work is required for reducing the beans to a soft sticky pulp by grinding them between two stones. With this paste is mixed warm soft dark sugar, half and half. A thorough, tiresome kneading of the whole mass, then several hours spent in rolling little wads of the paste between the

palms of the hands, and a day's labor is rewarded by the satisfying sight of a table covered with smooth brown chocolate walnuts, neatly arranged in rows. One of these soft balls is dropped into a cup of water, brought to a boil, beaten up with a little stick which is twirled dexterously between the fingers of both hands, and behold!—the Colombian's favorite drink, a foaming, oily, sweet chocolate, highly spiced with cinnamon.

Ours is a city without water; obviously no washing can be done in the houses. In some parts of the world no advance has been made in the profession of washwoman since Eve took the clothes of Cain and Abel to the river for cleansing.

Most Colombian washwomen have weather-beaten faces, shrewd and kindly. The forced contact with sun, wind and water produces in them a cheerfulness and a wholesomeness lacking in many cargo-carriers, from whose faces the life of a beast of burden often wipes every trace of intelligence. The washwoman is not lethargic; she is possessed of a humorous philosophy that keeps her alive under the bite and blister of intolerable conditions.

María de la Cruz, typical of her class, is yet slightly less robust and rather more intelligent than many. She treasures a child, the idol of her heart, a pretty, stolid, rosy-cheeked little girl who "has six years."

Long before the regular six-o'clock appearance of the sun, María of the Cross takes in her hand a small basket containing a meagre lunch and many long slim bars of a soap so soft it is difficult for it to keep its shape. Two of us assist the woman to lift to her back a ponderous bundle made up of a week's washing for our large household. This is

secured to her shoulders and head by a harness, ropes binding her chest, a broad band pressing her forehead. Tugging, heaving, struggling, her back almost horizontal with the earth, she plods to a creek a mile distant for her day's work.

Why start before daylight? The streams that are used as the city's wash-tubs are divided on both sides into sections called "pilas." A pila includes some ten or twelve feet of the river bank, all the water that flows by that point, and the ground extending back from the river. Five cents per day is paid for the rent of a pila. The women who arrive earliest at the stream may choose the pilas highest up and so find the water comparatively clean and clear. The women who come later are obliged to wash lower down with water that the other women have already frothed with soap and dirt. Since quarantine is unheard of, leprosy and worse diseases stalking in hideous forms through the streets and lurking in the foul hovels, infection from the water in which all the world washes her clothes is common. Thus it behooves us to despatch our washwoman early that she may secure a pila high up the stream.

Each article is wet, smeared with soap, bunched into a wad, and thrown upon the ground to soak. The bleaching sun streams down upon it, the woman occasionally takes it up, rewets it, resoaps it and plumps it down again. One by one each article takes its turn on a flat stone at the vigorous slapping and pounding, kneading and rolling, which is supposed to assist the sun and soap in extracting the dirt. All day long under the blazing sun the washwoman stands knee-deep in the cold water of the mountain stream and toils, ever on the alert that a handkerchief or a child's sock does not float away on the

current. She soaps and souses, she pounds and pommels, she rinses and wrings, until at dark she strains slowly home under the crushing weight of the clothes —*wet!* She stumbles blindly into our doorway and drops her load upon the nearest bench, half squatting in front of it while we unbind her harness.

'Tis the way the burden-bearers rest. Through all the streets and trails may be seen logs or stones set up for this very purpose, that the weight of the cargo may be sustained while the exhausted bearer sinks gasping against it, runs her fingers under the band cutting into her forehead, mops at the sweat dripping from her face, eases the binding of the ropes on her chest. Were she to drop the burden on the ground she would be unable to lift it again to her shoulders or to adjust it alone.

What does María de la Cruz receive for fourteen hours of such work? I pay her fifteen or twenty cents, but she requires not less than seventy or eighty cents' worth of soap for each washing. And the clothes, are they clean? Wonderfully clean and beautifully white, it matters not of what color they were when they left the house, pink, blue, yellow— they all return white, at least in streaks and spots. Here is one explanation of the fact that the most of the people of our city wear white; it is more satisfactory to start one's things out white in the first place for no color can resist the sun and soap of Colombia.

XX

LUIS LEAVES OUR SERVICE

IT was while we were in the country that Luis began to lose his hold. Many of the sheets and most of the towels that were sent to the wash the first few weeks after Baby Boy came were never found. We felt that their loss was to be attributed to Carmen or her numerous relatives. So the day after Christmas the Missionary made the trip to the city on foot to securely lock all the front part of the house, leaving Luis access only to the kitchen and the solar. In vain did we explain to the man that this was done on Carmen's account who, on plea that she had some things in the house, might enter during his absence. He preferred to believe that we were doubtful of his honesty. This idea would never have entered his head had he been the same Luis with whom we had often entrusted what must have seemed to him large sums of money. But he had been drinking since Elvira left us, and during the weeks that he was much of the time alone in the house he took some of his meals at a tienda where he received guapo with his food. This naturally increased his thirst.

Only semi-weekly did he bring the marketing to the country. On one of these occasions he arrived drunk, —loudly drunk. He rattled off terrible language to me and leered at me wildly when I ordered him away. I hastily put the three children into the tiny hot bedroom, and shut and locked the door, although

this left us in complete darkness, stifling darkness, as there was no window. The house had three small rooms opening in a row upon a long porch. Up and down this porch tore the drunken man, raving wildly. I was mortally afraid of him, and but for the children I was alone. Eldemira was washing at the creek and Julio, the boarder, was with her.

Not until the man had at last fallen upon the porch floor in a drunken stupor did I venture out. He lay there all night. Before dawn the next morning he arose, stealthily gathered the fagots for the three stones that served as a stove, and slipped away without speaking to any of us. Poor Luis! To so disgrace himself with the family he loved!

Almost never after that night did I see Luis entirely sober. Again and again we dismissed him, but he did not go far away, and always appeared to help out in times of stress. Then he would stay on until we became afraid of him or until we found him pilfering to get money for his liquor when we would again tell him to leave. Although he always took his dismissal quietly, we could see that it was a blow to him.

We were in one of our frequent throes of moving, the disaster that has so beset us in this city. Luis had appeared from somewhere to help. All the world knows that moving is not easy at best. It is an agony when everything must be carried upon men's backs, lashed on so that the little things may not fall off and be lost, tied securely that the whole cargo may not fall apart and topple to the ground. Large, heavy articles are carried on a platform borne on the shoulders of two or more men. Since both the loading and the unloading must be carefully watched that nothing be stolen, every pair of

honest hands and eyes are welcome at such a time as this.

The first and the second day of the moving passed without any worse accidents than were to be expected. The third day Luis grew more and more excited until I asked the Missionary if the man were entirely responsible.

"I fear that he is not," was the reply, "but what can I do? It breaks my heart to turn the poor fellow off again."

An hour later a scream from María Jesús brought everyone on a run to the kitchen. Before we could reach it pandemonium broke loose, a pounding, yelling, wailing, that froze our blood with horror. We had reason to be frightened. Luis had turned suddenly from his work and seized upon Small Son, the person in the whole world whom he most loved, and had attempted to kill him. A boarding boy, just a stripling, had knocked the child from the maniac's hands, thrown Son into an adjoining room and precipitated himself after him. Managing to close the door, he locked it before Luis could turn around and grasp the significance of what had happened. Maddened, the servant was trying to beat down the door to reach the boys.

Everyone was screaming, but no one dared do anything. When the Missionary arrived on the scene he walked straight to Luis, a man much larger and more vigorous than himself, laid his hand upon the man's shoulder and said firmly, "Luis, leave the house."

Step by step, in some miraculous fashion, he slowly forced the deranged creature through the great court, down the long corridor and into the street. Not once did he remove his hand from the man's

shoulder, not once did Luis pause in his ravings. The street reached, the Missionary pushed shut the heavily-spiked, plank door, and slipped into place the long iron bar that secured it. Then he turned to us a face as white as chalk, as he said, "Go to your work, men. Eldemira, bring my son to me in the office."

For more than an hour Luis raved wildly and beat his hands against the immovable door until it was stained with blood from the lacerated knuckles. Finally several policemen appeared and dragged the frantic man to jail. The next day the Missionary looked him up and secured him a position with a painter.

What was the past of that taciturn man, so violent at times, yet with so loving a heart? Had he been a murderer?

His future is easy to read; unless he gives up drinking, a thing most difficult to do in a liquor-soaked, besotted land, he will be killed in some drunken debauch.

Why make mention of the incompetent, irresponsible men who followed Luis? Men who allowed the cow to lose herself, and the donkey to run away, who could not be trusted to sweep, mop and spread lime each morning in the bedroom of our domestic animals, who insisted upon sweeping the courts and the street in front of the house on Sundays, who paid far more than they should have paid for forage that was poor and marketing that was bad, who forgot to bring the bread, who let the plants burn up and the bath run dry.

To have borne a child makes all classes of women akin. Each morning after my own little son's bottles and milk had been attended to, with equal care I fol-

lowed the formulas for mixing sterilized milk and boiled water for the large bottles presented me by the wretched child-mothers who, clasping their skinny babies to their unclean breasts, squatted in our zaguan. Each morning I took the dirty nursing bottles from the grimy hands of these girls and tried to teach the poor creatures how to cleanse the bottles and the nipples.

One among this pitiable group offered to enter our house to care for the donkey and the cow until we could secure a good man. For a few weeks Dolores made a supreme effort. Without a single inherited or acquired instinct of cleanliness, the poor woman found our requirements difficult; that she should bathe her wailing infant was an imposition, that she should keep it wrapped in a clean garment, an indignity; "so much of work, my Señora." If a woman can see no necessity for keeping herself or her child clean, what may be said of the condition of the bedroom of the cow under her ministrations? Dolores was incapable of coming up to the standard we set for her, and when I persisted in requiring that she should care for her son properly, since I could not endure his piteous constant wail, she left in high dudgeon.

I do not say that Dolores was exceptional; she, like the rest of us, was individual, hardly typical. We have not found Colombian servants lacking in a desire to improve their condition or in gratitude to him who attempts to help in such improvement.

At last we secured Benito, a miniature man who stands scarcely higher than the donkey. Benito's name lacks but one letter of being beautiful,—bonito —but how great must be the importance of that letter! It is amusing to see him hopping about the

donkey, who is more obstinate on occasions than any mule, in a futile effort to induce the beast to obey his orders. In size and intelligence two Benitos might be made from one Luis. Such an insignificant figure does not lend dignity to the Missionary's establishment, but so long as the donkey does not step on him, we shall probably keep Benito. He is strenuously doing his little best.

XXI

ELDEMIRA

ONE day as I was dismissing my last class of the morning, Eldemira announced:

"Señora, there is a policeman among those who wait to see you."

I give the classes with the children playing on a mat at my side or in the court within my line of vision. They form quite enough interruption to class-work without one of the servants running in every few moments to say, "The Señora leaves me no sugar; all is locked up," or, "I forgot it myself to buy extra milk; I need that at once. I must have more money." There is a penalty, slightly less than the death penalty, hanging over anyone who disturbs me when I am in class. Even callers must wait; everything and everybody waits, and it all piles up until the class is dismissed when it descends at once in an avalanche upon my head.

"What does the policeman want?" I asked Eldemira.

"Who knows?" shrugging her shoulders. "There he is."

Even as the Bible attended to matters of the law before it gave attention to love and charity, so friends and beggars waited while I addressed myself to the officer of the law, standing at attention on our threshold.

"In the Señora's honorable household is there a girl named Eldemira?" he asked.

Eldemira and the children, in the country.

Bautista, with three-days-old small son.

"Yes, Señor," I replied.

"She is to go with me. Here is the paper." And he thrust out a warrant for Eldemira's arrest.

"But she is only a young girl and I cannot let her go alone to the police-station. Of course you have no idea for what she is needed?"

"But certainly no, honorable Señora."

"Strange that these warrants never state for what one is arrested. Since I suppose that she must go, I shall go with her."

Having called María from her duties in the kitchen to watch the babies, Eldemira and I set off, she tagging the policeman and I bringing up the rear. Our peculiar wireless telephone was in excellent working order on this occasion. Long before we reached the police station I discerned the chief of police standing at the door, bareheaded. As I commenced to climb the steps, he hastily descended and, hat in one hand, gracefully offered the other hand to escort me up the steps. However he would not let me enter the building.

"This is no place for the illustrious Señora," he said. "If the honorable Señora does not wish to leave her servant here alone, the girl may return with her to her home. I shall do myself the honor to call upon the Doctor Reverend and explain the matter."

I despatched Eldemira to the house at once. Since I was down town I thought that I would buy a spool of thread I needed, so proceeded towards a shop, when almost immediately I met the Missionary. For once, and I believe for the only time in my life, I found him excited. Words poured so rapidly from this quiet man's mouth that I could say nothing.

Eight gentlemen, all of them from the best families in the city, had that day interviewed him, all with

the same complaint; Eldemira had contaminated their sons—twelve young boys in all——

"Eldemira!" I exclaimed. "It is not possible! The girl is never in the streets at night. She never asks permission to go out of the house and she has had no hours off for weeks because the children are always sick. I know it is not she. It couldn't be; there is some mistake."

"These gentlemen would not make an accusation that they could not prove. I do not understand it any better than you do, but there must be some explanation."

"There is, and it is that they are mistaken in the woman. Too, Eldemira is so young, it is impossible to credit the story."

"We shall see. However, I have just left word at the medico's office that he come at once and examine the girl and the three children. Think to what we have exposed those babies, with such a nurse girl! The thought drives me mad," and he shuddered.

The doctor pronounced the children sound as yet, but he would repeat the examination later. The girl was in bad condition. When he informed us of this, Eldemira flew into a passion, declared that he lied, that it was all a conspiracy to drive her from the only home she had ever known, to prejudice against her the only friends she had ever had.

"I shall still be your friend, Eldemira. Never can I forget the nights that we have hung over Baby Boy's cradle, or how patient you have been with Little Daughter. The medico says that he can cure you in a few months' time; if you will go somewhere to stay I will pay your board and buy your remedies until you are well, then you may return to me."

"But nothing ails me, Señora Mauda. You are no friend of mine if you believe the medico's lies."

In a terrible rage she packed her box with the clothes that I had made her and hastily departed.

Little by little we learned the whole wretched business. Eldemira had never known a mother's care—nor in fact the love and care of anyone. The old hag who raised her had begun to hire her out before she was ten years of age. The poor child had never known any other life, had never been taught anything until she came to us. With us she had learned much, but not enough; she had not taken to herself the strength of Christ to help her in reforming.

Each morning when she carried Baby Boy in her arms, with Little Daughter clinging to her skirts, she had not gone to the park, as I had supposed, but to the houses in the worst part of the city, where she had left the babies in the arms of diseased wretches while she met the boys who ran away from the Jesuit school. While I gave classes at home and waited upon Small Son, always in bed, sick of fevers, comforting myself with the thought that the two little ones, at least, were breathing fresher air and rejoicing in the shade of the mango trees, they were, in reality, in the most polluted air, being caressed and kissed by the foulest creatures under God's fair sky. Their escape from contamination was due to nothing less than a miracle and we so recognized it.

"This is what our practicing economy has led us into," remarked the Missionary. "In no other house in the city is the nurse girl allowed to go out alone with the children. Always from two to three serv-

ants are sent along so that each can watch the others. From now on, we hire two women, not one. A woman is needed to help María Jesús in the kitchen, to do the ironing and the sewing that are taking the last ounce of strength out of you. Why, any seamstress would consider it one woman's constant work to keep this family in clothes where nothing can be bought ready-made. But in addition to all the sewing you teach most of the day, iron, count beans, bananas and what not, keep accounts, interview beggars and stay up all night with the children. You must get two women, and when the babies are taken to the park, send María Jesús with them, if Small Son is too ill to go along to watch them." I never saw Eldemira again. In less than a year she was dead. Tossed on the limitless sea of passion, buffeted by gales of suffering, struggling in the cruel waters of indifference, this human wreck, scarcely out of childhood, sank rapidly. Friendless and homeless and dying, she blindly groped her way to the "hospital" which flanks the city cemetery, was admitted and allowed to lie upon the dirty, ragged, brick floor with no cot, no mattress, supplied her. That night, left alone in torture of body and agony of mind, the poor girl slipped away from the world that had been so unkind, and another soul stood for judgment in the presence of its Maker. Of that judgment, none can guess; only God knows. But I seem to hear words echoing through the ages, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Who shall say whose was the soul weighed in the balance when Eldemira faced her God? The child never had a chance.

María Jesús heard that Eldemira had gone to "hospital," and she went early in the day to see if

there were anything she could do to help the girl. As the cook entered the building, a woman, known as a "nurse," who was passing through the corridor, accosted her.

"Are you a relative?" pointing to the dead body on the floor.

"No, I am only any neighbor's child" (just anybody who happens along).

"Then what were you to her?"

"Once she was employed in the house where I am cook and I liked her much."

"How does it seem to you, they tell me she leaves many pretty things, footwear, dresses; is it not so?"

"Who knows?" was the non-committal reply.

"She had relatives?"

"Who knows?"

"But where are these things of hers?"

"I know nothing." María Jesús was alert. She would not assist this woman, who had rendered no single service to Eldemira, to come into possession of the few things the girl had left.

While our cook stood there, two men entered carrying two long poles held in parallel position by means of short cross-bars. Laying the poles upon the floor, they carelessly dragged the inanimate body upon the rude bier, lifted it, and trotted rapidly over the few feet of ground that intervened between the spot where the body had lain and a row of shallow graves, always kept dug, awaiting occupancy. Arrived at the grave, the men lifted one side of the bier and rolled the corpse into the opening. Thud! —it fell into the grave and the men, stopping not to straighten the body, commenced to shovel earth over it. Earth that was replete with fragments of human bodies, bones, skulls, for this ground is re-

peatedly dug for new graves. The opening filled, the men returned to the house for another corpse.

After this fashion they die and are buried. Such burials are not made necessary by the stress of war, where the many are mowed down and must be covered in ditches; they are every-day affairs. The horror is not that of a passing day, the unthinkable tragedy of a few years of war; it is a continuous horror, unbroken, undiminished, the same throughout generations, throughout centuries.

XXII

ELVIRA

EVENTUALLY Benigna and Jova were introduced into the family. Forever displaying a fine row of white teeth, dark, squat little Benigna was well named "benign." She was the most orderly being I have ever dwelt with. She could get up at any hour of the darkest night and at once lay her hand upon the thing needed at the moment. Never a pin nor a button was found out of place while Benigna fussed around our things.

Jova was decidedly pretty, with rosy cheeks; a buxom lass who could do the heaviest washing, carry it wet on the head and back, and never lose her color or her spirits. They were two of the most normal girls I have known in Colombia; full of life, ready for fun and romance. What a terrible pity that neither fun nor romance can legitimately enter into the life of servant girls here! No amusement of any sort is provided for them other than that of the saloon and the street revelry. All the innocent little pleasures possible to young people in the States are denied these young girls. Homes and family life are forever beyond their reach, yet many of them have the nicest instincts of homekeeping and of the care of children.

During the interval between the departure of Eldemira and the coming of Benigna I had several women for short periods each. Among them was

Socorro, my former cook. Luis knew of Eldemira's going—as who did not? Our telephone system with no metallic instruments is most perfect,—and he came to inform us that Socorro would be very glad to come back to us but that she was ashamed to offer herself. I sent him to say to her that I should be happy to see her again in my house if she would promise not to repeat her offense. Socorro was not a bad woman, she was merely weak, and too good-natured.

She proved motherly—naturally, with ten children to her credit!—but ignorant of the first principles of caring for a child. She was eager to please and not garrulous, but was most inattentive. The children might have stood on their heads in a row, or have taken to the air and have flown away, and she never would have noticed it or have thought there was anything strange in it if she had noticed. She was decidedly too indulgent to the "Little White Angel." Anything the child wanted she immediately had, if Socorro were near. I often thought pityingly of those ten and wondered how they lived through it!

One night as we finished tucking the three children, fresh and sweet from their baths, into their little white beds and were carefully securing each mosquito net, Socorro told me that she was soon leaving our house.

"But my dear woman, what is the matter? Are you not content here?"

"That woman in the kitchen! That María Jesús! But who can live in the same house with her?"

"Oh, never mind María Jesús! We do not pay any attention to her fault-finding; it is just her way. She is a good woman, a good servant and I place great confidence in her."

"It is not that I am alone in that. Certainly they are many who leave my Señora for that woman's tongue. Is it not the truth?"

"That has nothing to do with the matter, Socorro. If the young girls that I have tried do quarrel with the cook, you should show more sense. You are a woman of experience and should have patience. You are foolish if you leave a good place where you have plenty to eat, clean clothes to wear and kind treatment, because of anything that María Jesús can say. Her sputterings amount to nothing; she grumbles at the Doctor and me, too, but we only laugh at her."

"That, yes, is certainly different."

"Well, Socorro, you are not as sensible as I took you to be if you desert me now on account of María Jesús."

The next night, with many blushings and hesitations, the woman confessed to me that María Jesús was not the cause of her leaving.

"I thought it strange," I replied. "You are too good-natured and meek-tempered yourself to quarrel with anyone. What, then, is the cause?"

She confided with whispers, nods and giggles that a certain barefooted butcher, much given to drink (not that she mentioned bare feet and liquor; I learned of these facts later), wished to set her up in a little hut of her own.

"Oh, Socorro," I gasped. "At your age! With a grown daughter in this very city and seven other living children somewhere on earth, not to mention the two in heaven! Woman, what can you be thinking of?"

Socorro's nature ever showed itself as April weather; a dash of rain could be expected at any

time between the floods of sunshine. Now the tears vanquished the smiles and poured themselves copiously over the little white beds of the children.

"Oh, Señora, it is just that. Those children of mine, I miss them so! I want another little baby in my arms. I leave tomorrow, Señora."

On the morrow she departed, as radiant and happy as any bride ought to be!

It had been nearly a year since Elvira left us after her last fight with Luis. At first she frequently returned to visit me. When Baby Boy came she hurried in, dressed in her starchiest, to congratulate me and to "know the new baby." On that occasion she wore a thin gold chain from which was suspended a jeweled cross. Although neither of us mentioned the chain it loomed like a black wall between us. I felt its presence every moment and I knew that she was quite as conscious of it as I. Because of it neither of us could speak naturally, and I am sure that she was as glad as I when her short call terminated.

That night I spoke of it to the Missionary. "Do you suppose it is Lozano?" I asked.

Lozano was a fine young man, just approaching his majority, the son of a jeweler in the city. He was one of our most trusted boys.

"I do not think so; yet you never can tell," the Missionary responded. "He never looked at her when he saw her here in the school every day. I think it is a gentleman from the coast, a salesman who has been in the city for a few weeks. I have seen him speaking with Elvira in the street."

"Does he sell jewelry? That exquisite chain is such an unusual gift."

"I do not know. Don't worry about it for who-

ever it is we cannot help it. Did the girl say whether she is still in service or is she in an establishment of her own?"

"She is still ironing at the Gomez home where she went when she left here. Anyone who has Elvira for an ironing-woman is fortunate."

I did not see her again for many months although I heard of her from time to time. Twice the Missionary remarked that he had caught her skulking down a side-street to avoid meeting him.

One sultry afternoon I sat at the sewing-machine, trying frantically to finish some garment. The room where I sewed was also used as a closet and store-room. Along the four sides it was lined with trunks and boxes each set high upon an empty box to keep the contents as far as possible from the floor, with its molding dampness and cockroaches. Through the center of the large room, so that it touched neither wall, extended an enormous rack filled with dozens of hooks from which was suspended all the clothing possessed by the family. In this climate it is impossible to keep from destruction any garment hung against a wall or in the dark.

In spite of its size and the open door into the court, the room was stuffy, dark and hot. I had opened the heavy inner blinds of the one window and placed the two babies in the deep window-seat where they were amusing themselves playing with the bowed-out iron bars of the window, and in watching the constant string of donkeys that filed past.

I saw Elvira approaching, long before she caught sight of us. When she attempted to pass without greeting us, I called to her.

"How do you do, Elvira? How are you?"

She could do no less than pause to return the

greeting. How had the mighty fallen! This girl, who a year ago was so punctilious in the care and adornment of her person as to call out Luis' wrath, wore a flimsy skirt frayed at the edges, in tatters over the hips, soiled throughout its extent. Her worn-out basque was unable to withstand her protruding figure, which had burst the cloth and hung out in several places. Her skin was grimy and her hair unkempt. Upon her head she carried a small wad of dirty clothes.

It was with a very subdued air that she responded to my inquiries about her little daughter, some three weeks old.

"How does it seem to my Señora Mauda, she is very ill. Soon she leaves me."

"Leaves you? Why, Elvira, what ails her? You are a well, strong woman. Your daughter ought to be healthy."

"It is that milk; but certainly it causes a terrible diarrhoea."

"What milk? You surely have not given her milk from the plaza?"

"It certainly is the truth. I put that little girl of mine on the bottle."

"Oh, Elvira, you know it will kill her! Why did you do it?"

"Señora Mauda gives the bottle to her babies; of course I do it also."

"Oh, you women drive me to desperation! Why can't you use common sense? You know that I give the bottle to our babies because there is absolutely nothing else to be done. Repeatedly have you heard my objections to the diseased, guzzling wet-nurses that so beset me with offers to care for my children. You also know what a cross it is to us to have to raise

these youngsters on a bottle. We had to buy a cow, then rent one when ours was dry; we had to hire an extra servant, chiefly on account of the cow; the Doctor and I wash bottles, sterilize and boil and pasteurize milk by the hour. You remember we never let anyone, we never let even you, touch the baby's milk or bottles. Do you think that we would put ourselves to all this extra trouble and expense if it could be avoided? But you, you are a strong plump woman, young, too. You could raise up your daughter to be a fine big girl and healthy if you would not let her eat everything that she could lay her hands on, and if you would keep her clean. But of course you will lose her if you give her that stuff from the plaza. I am ashamed of you, Elvira."

"Perhaps it may be God's will that she dies."

"If she dies it will be nobody's will but yours. You will be responsible."

"Perhaps it may be the better if she dies. There is not to me any way that I can raise her as you tell me a girl ought to be. I myself have not gone in that way that you desired of me. You have reason to put yourself angry with me; yet it is not possible that she should be better than I. Had she been a boy, it would have been different. A man in Colombia does not suffer so much as we women have to. For him always there is some way, but for us what is there? Never have I in my life known what it is to have someone love me as you love your children, never do I have a home anywhere. Why do I bring up another girl to the life we women have in our country? And how do I raise her at all when there is to me no money, no home, no work? With her it is not possible for me to locate myself in any house. What do I?"

God pity us, what can I answer to that? There is no answer, and I remain silent while Elvira, ever before stoical, wipes the tears from her flushed face with her frayed sleeve.

"However, Elvira," I resume after a little, "nothing gives you the right to kill your child, as you know that you are doing. Perhaps it is not yet too late to save the baby's life. If you will take it to Dr. Blanco I will pay for the consultation and the medicines he tells you to get. You know the arrangement that we always have with him for cases like yours."

"Yes, Señora Mauda, that thing I know, but it is not possible for me that I go tonight. I have to wash these things for the little one, and without doubt she cries now. There I leave her alone on the ground in that hut."

"Then go back to her at once," I commanded as I handed her some things. "Take these clean garments, bathe her quickly in warm water, wrap her immediately in this towel, then fasten this woolen band about her abdomen and take her directly to the doctor. When he says that she may have food, you nurse her; under no condition give her anything from a bottle again."

She hurried off, but I felt almost certain that she would not carry out my instructions as it was evident that she did not wish her child to live.

This is probably the most common method employed by these mothers for the putting away of their little ones—just to give the child polluted milk from a bottle that is never washed, through a nipple filthy and poisonous from decayed milk.

A week later as I sat on the edge of the bed working button-holes, while from time to time I rescued

one of my rollicking babies from rolling off the bed where they were playing, Elvira stopped at the open barred window. One glance at her revealed that she was neatly dressed in a black lawn, her glossy hair tied back with a black ribbon. The baby, then, was dead. I was so deeply annoyed at the woman that I would not mention her child nor inquire after her own health.

"How are the all of you?" she inquired in the subdued voice of a mourner. Then followed solicitous questions as to each of us individually. "La Señora Mauda? The illustrious Doctor? The Señorito? The Little White Angel? The dear little Baby?"

"The baby is not so little now," I replied, laughing, for I was very happy. Were not all three of the children well at once? A good fortune that never before had befallen us. "Yesterday," I continued, "I had the children weighed and Baby Boy lacks but five pounds of having caught up with his little sister who, as you know, is two years his senior. He is already an inch broader across the shoulders than she is. They look more like twins every day."

Suddenly my heart smote me to be so displaying pride in my children before this woman. To be sure she had not wished her child to live, but could she have had the slightest chance of bringing it up decently she would have taken as much joy in it as any normal mother takes. I realized that the poor woman's tears were not hypocritical when she dropped her head upon the window bars and sobbed, the two children on the bed staring solemnly at her. She was grieving, as I understood, not alone at the loss of her baby but at the lack of all that God

intended woman to have. With all my heart I pitied her and all the women of her class.

Yet my pity did not move me to accede to her request when she ended the interview by remarking in a tone whose studied indifference showed how much she desired it, "Would the Señora Mauda take me back in service now?"

"Oh, Elvira, I am afraid not," I sighed. After all, the woman was a murderess—she had deliberately and intelligently killed her own child. How could I put her in charge of my precious youngsters in a city where any little carelessness or indifference might cost them their lives?

However I kept in touch with Elvira and did what I could for her. At my advice she went about and did fine ironing; occasionally she was in our house for a few days' work. Of course the Missionary wears white suits; but no ordinary dining-room girl can iron white suits so that any gentleman would be willing to appear in them. The ironing of the suits and of many other things was too often my work, but there were times when in spite of all effort my duties piled up until they were as insurmountable for me as Mount Aconcagua. On such occasions outside help had to be called in.

XXIII

MARÍA JESÚS

A FEW weeks after the death of Elvira's child our Baby Boy was stricken down and the doctors gave us little hope. We fled in haste from the infected city to a little house on a hill two miles above the city. The house was a villa belonging to a druggist who was kind enough to rent it to us in our extremity.

One evening I allowed Jova and Benigna, accompanied by María Jesús, to go down town to see the fireworks sent off in celebration of some saint's birthday. A few days later two policemen appeared at the door and produced warrants for the arrest of both Jova and Benigna. The girls departed, wailing loudly and declaring theirs the innocence of newborn babes.

The long hours of the day crawled by but the young women did not return. As before her departure Jova had commenced the Saturday sweeping, removed the rugs and carried all bedding out into the sun, as soon as I had dismissed the classes which came to me each morning, I had everything in the house to put in order, since it was impossible to pass a night in such an upheaval. At dark, just as the dinner was ready to be served had there been anyone to serve it, a third policeman walked up and demanded María Jesús. Very sober was she as she followed him down the hill, but her dismay could not have surpassed

mine, alone with three sick children, one of them lying on what proved to be his death-bed.

A few minutes later the Missionary, white and tired, arrived from his long day's work down in the reeking city.

"Where are all the servants?" he asked.

"Three policemen in succession carried off the women. The two girls have been gone since morning, but María Jesús just left; you must have met her. Benito and the donkey are nobody knows where, and nobody cares; one would be of quite as much use to me in the house as the other. What do you think is the meaning of the women's arrest? Is it some conspiracy against us? Who is doing it?"

"I cannot guess. I will go after María Jesús and find out."

"Oh, I thought that you would help me give the children their medicines and get them to bed."

"Oh, tuck them into bed as they are! Don't fuss over it." And with this man's advice, he, too, departed.

An hour later Benigna and Jova returned. They reported that on the night of the celebration when they had all gone down to the city, María had demanded some money from a woman who owed her and it had resulted in high words between them. The woman had this day brought my cook to trial, —or to be exact had had her tried and then arrested after she was proven guilty. The girls had been called as witnesses, the trial held, and María Jesús condemned and sentenced to a month in prison for using violent and insulting laguage.

"But I cannot understand," I objected. "How could María Jesús be tried and condemned and all

the time she know nothing of it? She has been here with me all day."

"Always is it done that way. How is it that anyone could be arrested before it is proved that she is certainly guilty? Now, of course, they take María Jesús. She it was that we met in the city behind that police and with the Doctor following on behind."

"Then why were you two arrested if you were only witnesses? This whole story sounds strange to me."

"So it is always done, but always. Certainly it is not that the Señora is not believing that which we tell her?" in a most indifferent voice.

"Oh, no, certainly it is not that," I hasten to reply. Although everyone knows that these women cannot be relied upon to speak the truth, yet it will never do to insinuate that you are doubting them—they will depart from your service immediately. "Jova, you may serve the dinner which María Jesús has left prepared for the boys. Benigna, get to your duties at once."

They hurried off, giggling and whispering. Apparently the affair had turned out to be a gala-day occasion for them. They had enjoyed a holiday, had been highly entertained by the trial, and the atmosphere had changed considerably since their sobbing departure of the morning. However I wondered at their hilarity when I learned that they had not had a mouthful to eat since the morning coffee, that they had been shut all day in the close little, hot little, court of the jail, not allowed to go out until the judge was through with their testimony.

The tale appeared incredible to me, yet it was evident from their good spirits that the girls were in no trouble. I realized that it was María Jesús, the only reliable servant we had!

Two hours later the Missionary again toiled up the hill, too exhausted to care for his delayed dinner. His report confirmed the story that the girls had told.

"I left María Jesús in jail, but I made her as comfortable as possible and I gave her money to buy her food until we can get her out. I also went to the home of the judge and was granted an interview. He says that I may take her out provided that I pay her fine, five dollars, and sign a bond that she will not use abusive language to anyone for a year."

"The whole thing seems so ridiculous," I said, wearily. "I never before heard of trying a person, condemning her and sentencing her without her presence, or even her knowledge of the trial."

"It is the custom. María Jesús saw nothing strange in it; she accepted it as a matter of course."

"How did she take it?"

"Calmly, as you might expect. She did their bidding at the jail without saying a word."

"Did she try to exonerate herself? Of course you talked with her?"

"Naturally; before I saw the judge. She admitted that she had said all that she was accused of saying. She could not well deny it in any case when Benigna, Jova and a half-dozen others had all sworn to it. But she also said that, had she been given a chance, she could have proved that everything she said about that woman is true and so no insult. No doubt she could have done so as the woman who claims to have been insulted is a worthless creature forever hanging around the plaza. What concerns us now is what we are to do for a cook out here away from the city. I am willing to pay María Jesús' fine; she could repay that in service, so it would be merely lending

her the money. But if I should sign a bond for twenty-five dollars I would probably have that to pay with little hope of ever getting any of it back."

"Doubtless you would have it to pay, yet what are we to do? Luis used to help out in the kitchen, but he is gone. Benigna and Jova are both too frivolous to be trusted with anything, certainly not with the sick children so that I could do the cooking. I just cannot lose María Jesús at this time. I feel as though I must have her back and that at once."

"Very well, I will sign the bond tomorrow, and you shall have her here to prepare the breakfast. I will talk to the woman and try to impress upon her the necessity of guarding her tongue in future. Perhaps she has learned a lesson; we shall hope for the best."

Before ten the next morning María Jesús walked into the kitchen where I was struggling wildly with kettles that would not balance on the fagots, and as she quietly took things from my hands, she inquired about the baby. I called Benito and together we packed the baskets and kettles with the hot food that the man carried to the city each midday for the boys and the Missionary. Never once did she mention her imprisonment to me, which showed me what a depth of humiliation she suffered from it. A few weeks later when I offered her the wages of the month, she shook her head and with face averted asked me to hand the money to the Doctor. I understood that she was paying back the five dollars of her fine, exactly two months of her wages.

We were never called upon to pay the bond, although I learned that the woman who had brought on the trial often followed María Jesús in the plaza calling after her, directing attention to her, teasing

her, in an effort to provoke my cook to repeat her offense.

Our door is bolted and barred at nine each evening. The servants and boarding boys are locked inside the house with us and it is almost as impossible for them to get out as it would be to escape from penitentiary. There is but one door; the few windows are encased by iron bars an inch thick. In the little house on the hill where we were for that month of August, there was a tiny solar, enclosed by a mud wall three feet thick, six feet high, roofed with brick tiles.

One evening, a night or two before Baby Boy's death, Benigna asked permission to go down to the city.

"At this time of night and alone?" I asked in astonishment.

"Of course," with an insolent toss of her head.

"I could not allow it even if I did not need you here, and I should think that you could see that I do need you here."

She said nothing but a half hour later little Benito reported that Benigna had scaled the wall, scrambled down on the other side and was running down the hill towards the city.

The next morning she appeared and went silently and doggedly about her work, as though she challenged me to call her to account. I knew that she would have some plausible excuse invented, but in the stress of the hour I scarcely gave a thought to her desertion. She did her work well, was as kind and thoughtful with the children as usual, as methodical and careful with their belongings.

A few days later I had no further need of a nurse girl and I dismissed Benigna, an event which she was probably anticipating when she disobeyed me.

XXIV

JOVA

TWO children, María Jesús, Jova, Benito and the boarding boys, together with the cow and the donkey, went back with us to the city.

Jova was quick and strong; she could get through with more work than any other girl I ever had in her position. She was a high-spirited creature, who should have had some amusement, some play, such as all healthy young things demand. There was nothing of the sort for her.

I had made several attempts to teach my women to read, or to sew, but always there had been interruptions and lack of time for the lessons. We have had two or three servants in the house who could read creditably and who took delight in reading to the others, as they enjoyed the adulation of an admiring group hanging breathlessly upon their words.

After our return to the city, Jova made a practice of bringing the stocking basket, of an evening, and of sitting on a stool at my feet to receive instruction in darning and sewing, in morals and religion, while I wrote letters or balanced accounts. She was always quiet in my presence, uncommunicative.

One evening she minced into the room, her fat round feet squeezed into a pair of high-heeled shoes. I gazed at her in astonishment as she laughingly grabbed at the chairs and table in an effort to keep her balance and to walk a few steps. High-heeled

kid shoes on feet that had never known confinement of any sort!

"Child, where did you get those?" I cried.

"A friend presents these to me," she replied with a giggle.

My sad heart was heavier than usual as I looked at her in silence. These girls are too good to throw away their lives in this fashion. I tried to explain to the eager girl, disappointed at my lack of admiration for her beautiful shoes, just why I could not approve of them.

It is as difficult to show these girls how we look at these things as it is to make my reader understand their viewpoint. Marriage to them means a luxury that belongs only to the rich. They know it is no more possible for them than the possession of an aeroplane. Entering into these connections, as concubine wives, holds all the charm and expectant happiness that a legitimate marriage does with our young people. With no sentiment in the community against this sort of thing, with life empty of all that life should hold for them, is it any wonder that they break the seventh commandment? Yet if anyone thinks that these girls are not sinning in breaking the commandment he is deceiving himself. Surely the whip and lash of suffering that falls so sharply upon these young shoulders can be but the punishment that follows the blister of sin. God knows they sin, they know they sin. Who is responsible that these millions of fresh young souls are lost to bitterness and death before they are fairly born?

Several years had passed since the Missionary had been able to leave his work to attend any of the annual meetings held in the older mission stations. We are alone in our station, ten days from the near-

A wood-cart.

A saw-mill.

est missionaries, and with no one to whom to turn over the work during any absence.

A month after Baby Boy left us, the Colombia mission held its conference at our coast city, and I insisted upon the Missionary going down to attend the meeting.

"How can I go now and leave you at this time with the school and everything else to look after alone?" he asked.

"It will be better for me to be obliged to hurry from one thing to another," I replied.

He finally consented to go. A short cheery telegram nearly every day of the twelve spent on the downward trip allayed our fears as to his safety. A week spent in conference with the other missionaries, and he sent the message, "Just embarking, return trip. Home in two weeks."

As I read the telegram to Small Son I remarked, "The next point from which he will send is Magangué. He will be there in three days."

The third day, I began to look for the telegram. The fourth day, I sent Benito to the telegraph office to ask if a message had come and they had forgotten to send it to me. The fifth day, Benito was despatched twice upon the same errand. The sixth day, I myself went to the office. No, there had been no message for the honorable Señora since the last one sent from Barranquilla.

"Are the wires down again? Has it stormed in the jungle and destroyed the lines so that no messages get through?"

"No, Señora, we have messages from the coast constantly. Look you, here is one that has come for the Señora Victoria from her son. See what it says."

"Thank you, I do not care to see what it says. If a message comes for me will you send it over immediately? If it arrives in the night, I will pay the extra for night delivery."

"Yes, Señora, be sure that it will be done."

I turned to leave the office.

"Oh, by the way," I began, as I again turned to the window, "has there been any news of a wreck on the Magdalena? No boat has suffered disaster lately?"

"No, Señora. The river is low, but no boat has been wrecked these six months."

Of course the wireless telephone communicated to everyone that the Missionary had started up the river, had not been heard from since, and that the Señora Mauda was too worried to eat or sleep. Friends flocked in; came before dark and stayed until eleven o'clock at night, until twelve o'clock, until one o'clock. Before daylight the ponderous door-bell rent the air with its murderous tones and when Benito scudded through the corridors on a run to receive the expected telegram, he was confronted by some servant sent by a solicitous friend to inquire, "Has the Señora Mauda yet heard from the Doctor? This night did she sleep?"

Seven, eight, nine days, dragged by their blighting length, followed by their endless nights. Market lists were prepared, purchases inspected, laundry counted, recounted, ironed and counted again, two ailing children, with their hourly demands attended to, a sick boarder waited upon, classes taught from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon, money paid out, money received in, five account books carefully watched, peace preserved between boarders, —and under and over and around it all the constant

listening for the telegraph boy and the frequent despatching of Benito to the office.

It came at last—the telegram—signed by a strange name. Missionary sick, malignant fever, little hope, no doctor on ship, none nearer than Honda, too ill to be put off at Puerto Wilches, would be taken up to Honda.

"In three days the Señora hears from Honda. Be glad that he lives today," thus my friends encouraged me.

Three days, four days, five days, six days; it grew unbearable. The ship must have reached Honda long since; why did we not hear? It is so easy to die on the river in the heat and be buried on the low sandy bank. That soil is already hallowed by the bones of one missionary. We had begged for Baby Boy's life, but the Father in His wisdom had not granted our prayer. How could I know whether or not He considered the Missionary's work on earth done? How was I, a lone woman, to get two small children out of that city, get them anywhere, in a country where no woman travels without a protector?

My three servants were wonderful. I cannot convey to anyone an understanding of how kind they were; a mother could not have watched over a child with greater solicitude or with more constant attention than they gave me. Did I sit at my desk to work on accounts after all visitors had at last gone, Jova brought her stool and sat comfortingly near me, "In order that my Señora may know that I am here at the side of her should she want anything."

"But what could I need at this late hour, Jova? You should be taking your rest after so hard a day's work."

"It is here that I stay until my Señora is surely in bed."

Both María Jesús and Jova followed me around with hot chocolate, their panacea, beseeching that I take a "little, little sip." Each Sabbath afternoon when I took the children to the cemetery to visit the little new grave, María Jesús insisted upon accompanying me. At night when I restlessly walked the corridors, she left her bed and, coming to me, put her arms about me, and weepingly begged me to at least stay in bed. In those hours we ceased to be mistress and servant; we were anxious women together, our hearts dead within us from fear.

A telegram from Honda signed by the Missionary himself caused a joyous commotion in the Colegio. The day following, another message informed us that the Missionary, who had been taken up the river to Honda, was returning down the river to Puerto Wilches to take the mules for the overland part of the trip. "Shall send word every day," the telegram promised.

"He has started back before he is able to travel," I remarked to the congressman who had been sending telegrams in every direction to determine whether or not the Missionary were alive.

"Yes, undoubtedly that is true, and no doctor is to be reached until he gets here. You cannot expect him under nine or ten days."

"But I shall expect a telegram nearly every day."

"God grant they come, then!"

They did not come; not a word more came. The suspense grew intolerable. I knew that the friends who, by their experience in fevers and the use of their medicine chests, had saved the Missionary's life on the trip up the Magdalena had gone on to

Bogotá. He was alone on the down trip, on the dangerous jungle journey. There was no one to care for him, no one even to inform me if a relapse proved fatal.

Nine days more were we tortured by this agony of suspense while the ceaseless demands of each hour had to be met. Then one night as we were seated at table and I was dishing up the dinner to the boys, we were startled by the click of a mule's feet on the bricks of the threshold, the zaguan, the corridor, the dining-room itself, and the Missionary appeared in our midst. A gaunt spectre, lashed to his mule to keep him from falling off from weakness; three days had he ridden so! Benito and several of the boys sprang to untie the straps and to help him down, María Jesús rushed for hot chocolate, and we put him to bed while Jova sped for a physician.

"The telegrams, oh, where were the telegrams?" I asked.

"Didn't you receive them? I sent one every day that I could reach an office."

"What took you so long to reach Honda?"

"Our boat was disabled and we just crawled along. At last we were put on another boat, a freight steamer, and finally arrived on that."

"But why did you attempt to come so soon? You should have waited in Honda until you were stronger."

"Tomorrow will be Baby Boy's first birthday, and I kept thinking how terrible it will be for you to pass it without him. I could not let you meet that alone, so I made a strenuous effort to get here tonight. God has answered our prayers; He has returned me to my family once more."

XXV

COLOMBIAN SERVANTS

DRUNKEN, yes, sometimes; thieving, prevaricating, unmoral,—I have found them all this. These are the sins of the flesh which do so easily beset us and against which this people have no weapons. They are untaught, without standards of excellence, without ideals. Shall we therefore condemn them? If a child be undisciplined, we blame the parent, we pity the child. If a whole social class be kept in ignorant childhood, whom shall we blame, condemn?

Drunkenness, lying, stealing: these are the results of neglect of the physical conditions in which this class exists and of the lack of the spiritual and mental development of their souls.

I have found the servant class hardworking, cheerful under intolerable conditions, brave and loyal, possessed of a beautiful humility of spirit, unselfish, ready to give away the half and more than the half of the little that they possess, loving and sympathetic one toward another, and even toward the foreigner of hated race and religion. These are graces of character which neglect and false training have not been able to stamp out. I have found little blossoms of beauty springing up in the mire of the lives of this people; they are fond of bright colors, of flowers, of the twang of tiple and guitar, they love children. Do not these show of what the real soil of their nature is

capable were it cultivated and enriched by right teachings?

Given a loving heart, a cheerful spirit, and a willingness to spend one's self for others to the last ounce of strength,—here we have valuable assets. Add to these a living, saving knowledge of the life and the resurrection of Christ, which shall supply ideals, and education, which shall furnish the means of attaining unto better things, and we may expect much from the Latin American mestizo. His heart is not at fault; it is his ignorance and his neglected condition which we deplore.

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