

that held two of her sleeping children, I was not long in making friends, through my honest admiration of the babies, for I am unwilling to ascribe too much influence to the five franc piece that I slipped into one little hand closing upon it in infantile dream. It was she who explained my wants and wishes to her husband, entering presently, and it was upon her representations, rather than my own, that he consented to provide me with a horse, and himself act as my guide across the unknown and dangerous country. Catarina was a strikingly beautiful woman of scarcely three and twenty, and her manner had impressed me from its frank fearless grace and vivacity, as denoting gentler blood than seemed compatible with its surroundings. Her husband was a handsome muscular man of middle age, of quick and emphatic speech and action, a Hercules in breadth of shoulder, and a gladiator in perfection of training. His first tender was for a safe-conduct only to the railway bridge, but, upon my renewed request, he consented to take me as far as the little Plaza, beyond which no temptation could urge him. Of this little record of adventure, the writer is not the hero, and will not therefore dwell upon the accidents and dangers of the path across the Savannah at the close of the rainy season. The acquaintance of any reader of the CRAFTSMAN with the topography of low latitudes will supply these for himself, and where such acquaintance has no existence, 'tis folly to be wise. It is only necessary to say that my friend did his duty, and earned his money faithfully and well, and like a man as he was, every inch of him.

Next day, over our after-dinner pyramids, Captain Bermudez de Castro let me into the secret of his previous night's expedition. It was quite true, as he had said, that the affairs of the Isthmus were disturbed. The disaffection that pervaded the whole Republic centered most formidably in the Darien district, where the presence of several of the most formidable insurgent chiefs was known or suspected. Of these, one of the most daring was reported to have been actually seen at church on the feast of the Ascension, and to have been hiding since in the vicinity of the town. This man, who had originally been a matador of repute at the Havannah, had, in the course of a professional visit to Quito, succeeded in winning the love of the daughter of a wealthy *haciendero* of Ecuador, who, to the inexpressible wrath and dismay of her family, had been imprudent enough to fly with him to Costa Rica. The influence of her family had been sufficient to exile her husband from the great cities, and, in his enforced abandonment of the excitement of the ring, he had found pleasurable employment for his restless energies in the dangerous game of political intrigue. His presence upon the Isthmus at the present juncture had been construed by the authorities as an indication of impending insurrection, and De Castro's patrol had not been the only one despatched in search of him. "And," added the little commandante laughingly, "it is well for you, *amigo*, that you were not more lucky than myself. If you had fallen in with El Toro, or any of his gang, your purse would have been lighter this morning."

It was nearly two years later when I next set foot on Columbian soil. That day will not be readily forgotten upon the Isthmus. Far down the bay the wildest, the most contradictory, and the most

appalling rumors had reached us. Riot, rapine, sacrilege, and murder, were the burthen of every tale. At Toboga the excitement was intense. We were told, with more or less coherency, that there had been a general outbreak on the previous night, that the city had been fired, the citadel stormed, the foreign consulates plundered, and the United States corvette *Paupukeewis* seized by the rebels, who had turned her guns against the town. That the Aspinwall railroad had been torn up and escape rendered impossible, and that, even at that moment, a general and indiscriminate massacre was going on. I need hardly say that these were enormous falsehoods. As we steamed slowly up within the island, we were greeted with no echo of cannonading, and the Stars and Stripes that dipped in answer to our salute floated as unconcernedly as usual above Uncle Sam's batteries. But when we landed on the pier, it was palpable that *something* extraordinary was in progress. There was no crowd to watch our arrival, and more wonderful still, the Aspinwall House was unrepresented by its otherwise invariable omnibus. Working my way up the street, in light marching order, I was not long in finding that the interest of the population centred about the familiar piazza. The narrow road way was choked with an eager gesticulating swarm of people, of all classes and color, questioning and explaining, with all the emphasis of Southern vivacity, and absorbed utterly in the all-pervading topic of the day. None of them seemed capable of replying intelligibly to a stranger's queries, and I had pushed through into the deserted saloon, and twice helped myself to claret-sangaree that never made appearance on my bill, without the chance of information upon the position of affairs. I was beginning to consider the advisability of going across to Colon, with a view to ascertaining what was occurring under my eyes in Panama, when I caught sight of a familiar uniform outside, and in another moment was greeting my little military friend once more.

"Though I should have been better pleased to meet you at any other time," said he almost gravely. "We have had serious work on hand, and last night has not seen the last of it. You remember how you used to laugh at our soldiering long ago. Well, we are having a real campaign this time, with blood enough to satisfy even a mad Englishman. Come up with me, and have your *cerveza blanco* in my rooms, and I will tell you all about it, *Caramba!* it was a great stroke, and worthy of the *Cid*."

And, as we walked up the hill to the barracks, he told me the whole story, of which his Castilian chivalry was so proud. Such a sickening tale of foul, cold-blooded treachery has, happily, been seldom recounted since the world has begun to call itself Christian. It would scarcely bear accurate reproduction here; but the substance of it is history, and may be repeated briefly. It went to tell how the General commanding-in-chief within the province, harrassed beyond endurance by reiterated alarms of insurrection, had conceived a magnificent scheme for effectually extirpating disaffection. How, in pursuance thereof, he had skilfully opened negotiations with the leaders of the sedition, and represented himself and a majority of his officers as prepared to betray the city into their hands. How it had been agreed that a chosen column of tried men were to concentrate on a given night—that previous—upon the citadel, where they would find the gate