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THE LAND OF THE SUN.

AT THE HACIENDA.

(Continued.)

"It is a home for a poet or a saint, or for one who should be both." Dorothea declared as she stood in an open window, glancing from the book-cases filled with Latin and Spanish volumes within to the wide, wonderful, sun-bathed picture without. "A cell on a mountain top could not be more secluded. Not a sound reached us from the house so full of life nearby. Nothing is before one's eyes but nature and heaven."

"I must beg our good capellan, when he returns from the sick cell which has taken him out on the hacienda, to resign his quarters for a time to the seniors," said Don Armando, smiling. He found the enthusiastic admiration of this pretty American very attractive. "I am sure he will be delighted to do so."

"Ah, but I am neither a poet nor a saint," said Dorothea, "so what should I do here? No, señor, I think we will not disturb the good capellan, but whenever I dream of the most attractive place I have ever seen it will be this. Now, shall we follow the others? Your sister said something of the garden."

Into a garden that might have been that of Armida they followed the advance guard that preceded them across the wide paved atrio and down a long flight of steps. At the foot of this natural terrace, which was enclosed by a stone wall with an iron gate, was a beautiful and extensive huerta. Broad alleys lined with orange trees led in every direction through a wilderness of tropical foliage—for in this vast pleasure was every variety of fruit-tree known to the country, every product, it appeared, both of the temperate and tropical zones. Streams of water affording the necessary irrigation ran through enchanting bits of landscape, where great clumps of bananas unruffled their broad, green satin leaves to the sunshine, tall mango trees, guavas, palms, and a multitude of others of which the strangers knew not the names, formed masses of luxuriant green varied here and there by the golden or purple flowers of some climbing vine. In this paradise of verdure birds were singing on every side, forming a chorus of happy notes, the air was filled with fresh fragrance, in the long green alleys there was no heat, and presently, when they reached an open space around a fountain, which had taken the soft tinge of age, were placed under trellised grapevines, Dorothea was not the only person who uttered an exclamation of delight. "One might fancy one's self in Italy," she said. "It is like a Roman garden."

"There is something classic in the suggestion of the fountain and these stone benches," said Travers; "but all this tropical foliage is unlike Italy, and one cannot fancy a Roman garden without the ilex and the box."

"People without imagination cannot fancy anything," said Dorothea, who felt herself and her enthusiasm as usual slightly snubbed by Mr. Travers.

"I don't see the least need for imagining anything better than the reality," observed Miss Gresham with the common sense which distinguished her. "It seems to me a perfect paradise—quite the prettiest place we have seen."

"I am delighted that you find it so," said Don Rodolfo, who was carrying her parasol and generally devoting himself to this beautiful stranger; "but when you go to Mexico you will find huertas much more beautiful than this—for we do not keep it so much for a pleasure-ground as for the fruits which it yields. In summer every imaginable variety can be gathered here."

"There seems to be a great deal to be gathered at present," said the young lady, seating herself on one of the classic-looking benches. "If some one would kindly bring me an orange—and perhaps a banana or two—I think I could enjoy it."

Don Rodolfo clapped his hands, and as if by magic there appeared in one of the green vistas radiating from this central spot the ubiquitous white-clad, sandalled figure with which they were by this time familiar.

"There are always two or three men at work in here somewhere," he said, smiling in answer to Dorothea's look of surprise. And, addressing the man who approached, he directed him to bring some of the best varieties of oranges and bananas.

"Si, señor," was the response, and the speaker disappeared—but returned quickly, bearing a basket filled with the beautiful fruits; and in this charming spot, with stray sunbeams filtering down through a canopy of green vine-leaves, beside the gray old stone basin filled with sparkling water, and lovely depths of foliage wherever the eye rested, they all enjoyed their fragrant al fresco lunch.

"I feel as if I had dreamed myself into a Paul and Virginia pastoral," said Dorothea presently. "Our surroundings are so idyllic that we ought to be somewhat romantic ourselves and not indulge in such very tame and prosaic conversation." (They had been discussing the facilities for marketing the orange crop of the country.)

"I am sure I am ready to be romantic at the least encouragement," said Travers. "But nobody encourages me." "It is rather difficult to be romantic in public," said Travers. "Solitude, or solitude, is absolutely necessary—things of that kind."

surroundings suggest to me Boccaccio's story-tellers in their Florentine villa. Let us have some stories with a flavor of the romanticism of this wonderful country."

"But who shall be the story-teller?" asked Dorothea. "Don Rodolfo?" "Don Armando?"—which?

The two young men looked at each other, laughing and shrugging their shoulders. Each protested that ability for story-telling he had none. "But here comes one who can oblige you," said Don Armando, glancing down the broad avenue leading to the gate, along which two figures were advancing. They were Gen. Meynell and Don Rafael. "My father can tell, and will enjoy telling, you stories by the hour. He has lived through the old and the new times of Mexico, and his memory is stored with what you would call very romantic episodes. Three times during the revolutions he was taken out to be shot."

"I should call that more exciting than romantic," observed Dorothea. "And how did he escape?"

"Oh, replied the son, shrugging his shoulders, "it was only a question of money. They wanted to extort more than he was willing to pay. It was necessary to pay all the time in those days. There was no such thing as peace, especially for a rich man. First one armed band and then another would ride up to his door and, at the point of the pistol, demanded money, horses, mules, provisions—and whatever their requirements, it was necessary to satisfy them, to some extent at least."

"It is very astonishing," said Travers, "that there remained any rich men after a certain number of these visitations."

"There did not remain a great many," said the other. "The rule in this country is that those who were rich before the revolutions are poor now, and that many rich influential men, especially those belonging to the dominant party, have fortunes founded on open robbery. Only some of the great proprietors, like my father, whose landed estates were vast unless they happened to have those estates confiscated, came out of that period without being reduced to poverty."

"Were there many cases of confiscated estates?" Travers asked.

"Very many. Here is my father. Ask him to tell you the story of the Burro de Oro."

"The Golden Donkey," said Dorothea. "What a singular name. Was it applied to a man?"

"Yes, to a man, one of the richest in all this part of the country. Will you tell them the story of the Burro de Oro?" he asked, turning to his father who at this moment entered the circle.

Don Rafael looked around with a smile as he sat down. His bold, clear-cut face, with the dark, eagle eyes—one could fancy how unflinchingly they had faced the muskets levelled to shoot him those three several times—came out with fine effect against the deep background rising above the soft gray stone of the bench on which he sat. "What a fine, powerful head!" whispered Dorothea to Travers. "How I should like to have an oil-sketch of it!"

"I have told you all along that the absence of an artist was a great mistake in the composition of our party," he replied in the same tone. "What a scene for a picture this is altogether!"

"And so my son has been telling you something of the Burro de Oro," said Don Rafael, regarding the strangers with his bright steady glance. "It is a sad story to one who knew the man as I did. How came he to bear such a name? Well, you must know that our people are almost as much addicted to the use of nicknames, characterizing the individual, as the Italians; and this name was given to one whose immense wealth and childish love of display, together with the fact that he was considered to be mentally deficient, made him a famous character in his day. Innumerable stories were told, and are still preserved in popular tradition, of his caprices and extravagances. Many of them are true, and in this respect he was not an isolated example. One must go to the Oriental countries to find anything analogous to the boundless wealth, and profuse, picturesque, almost barbarous expenditure of many of our great proprietors of a generation or two ago. And of this class Burro de Oro was a supreme type. Fortune absolutely showered favors on him. By direct and indirect inheritance he was possessed of almost fabulous wealth, and the love of display dominated his life. Not far from here there is a hacienda—one of the largest and richest in the State of Jalisco—which he owned, and where he erected a palace the splendor and luxury of which still bear testimony to his mode of life. Built in the most costly manner, everything about this house was of the most expensive description and the number of his retainers was remarkable even in Mexico, where the house of every rich man is filled with servants. The attire of these servants was of a splendor to correspond with that of their master. The saddles of his moccas had trappings of silk and velvet, while his own saddle was of silver and gold. To the magnificence of his personal attire there were no bounds. He had hundreds of costumes loaded with the richest adornments, and the heels of his boots were made of gold."

"There is a truly Oriental touch for you," said Travers.

"I don't wonder," said the general, "that his popular name was the Golden

FAMED HILL OF TARA.

IT WAS HELD SACRED BY IRELAND'S ANCIENT NATIONS.

Here Assembled the Kings, Druids and Bards of Erin—To Draw a Weapon in Anger Was Punished by Death—How the King of Tara Came to Be High King.

Standish O'Grady contributes the following interesting article on the famous hill of Tara to the Dublin express:

In the dim twilight of the beginning of Irish history one of the first things that we see clearly is the green hill of Tara, crowned with many buildings of wicker-work or jointed timber, with brightly painted, gleaming walls under their thatch of straw or rushes, and one of the first things that we understand is the peculiar and great meaning of that classic hill beside the darkly flowing waters of the Boyne. From of old it was a sacred hill endeared to the wild and warlike nations of Ireland by very ancient and sacred associations, the key to which it is now difficult to find. Famous kings and warriors, bards and druids were buried there, although it was not one of the great cemeteries; famous women, too—among them Tea, wife of great Heremon, son of Melesius.

Here, no doubt, were temples of the gods. Here on May day was kindled the sacred fire from which all hearts were lit. Here were great halls, as splendid with colored drapery, bright bronze and pillars of carved red yew as men could make them—hall in which the kings of Tara feasted their subings. Thronged assemblies of all the nobles were held here, rude parliaments of the kings and their free born kinsmen, and of bards, historians, harpers and druids. Every autumn as Halloween came round a vast fair was held here for many diverse purposes—for the making of new laws and the correction of old, the recitation of poems, for barter and exchange, too, and also for games, horse races, chariot races, foot races and many forms of contest, while the atmosphere of religion hallowed all the place. To draw a weapon in anger here was death. No fine or eric was accepted for that wrong.

By degrees the king of Tara came to be regarded as the high king of Ireland, the king over all others, and then the notion began to prevail that all other kings should not only respect but obey the lord of the sacred hill. No one was regarded as high king who was not king of Tara, and whoever was king of Tara was regarded as high king of Ireland. The little wars became great wars, and the great wars revolved round Tara. In the reign of Conn of the Hundred Battles, of his son, Art the Solitary, and of his grandson, Cormac the Magnificent, these notions grew and prevailed in the minds of the people.

Tara made another great step forward when, in the reign of Cormac's son, the powerful and warlike fraternity of the Fians were challenged, conquered and exterminated by the king of Tara. In the great battle of Gabra, Cormac's son, Cairbre of the Liffey, overthrew the Fians utterly. Not long after Tara gained again by the overthrow of the Red Branch and the consequent burning and desolation of its northern rival, Emain Macha. Finally, when Nial and Dathi and other kings of Tara were leading forth the warlike youth of Ireland for the conquest and plunder of the Roman empire, the fact that they held such high military commands, often for a long time, caused the kings of the sacred mount to become more and more powerful at home.

Finally, when the Christian revolution broke the power of the druids, the immediate effect was to release the kings of Ireland—that is to say, the kings of Tara—from a rival authority, which must have greatly shackled and hampered them as rulers of men. In Tara the Ard Ri ruled now without the Ard druid. So, not long after the Christian revolution, we perceive in Ireland a certain condition of things which proves that the high king had become very powerful indeed, and that Ireland was fast growing to be a nation.

In primitive countries, divided among many small nations and their kings, in which there was much war, all wrongs and crimes could be atoned for by payments. The injured secured pardon and peace by paying to the injured person gold or slaves or rich garments, cattle or weapons, or, as in the days of Homer and his heroes, even brazen pots—tripods, as Homer poetically calls them. During the stormy time of the heptarchy, when the wise and valiant Saxons, little suspecting that that would be the issue of their fightings, were engaged in the creation of their own monarchy, but had not yet succeeded, the same laws or customs prevailed in Saxon land. It was not a foolish usage at all, but a very wise one. It prevented blood feuds, prevented families and tribes from exterminating each other by pursuing private vengeance to the bitter end. Now, a real king governing a whole people would not suffer such atonement to be made for crime. He would not consider a murder justly atoned for by the payment of cows or swords. As supreme king he would regard all crimes as an insult and wrong to himself and to the majesty of his office.

All over Europe, when the kings of the nations came up, ascending grandly in their strength and glory and power, out of the storms and tempests of the fratricidal wars, they put down the system of the eric, or wergeld, as the Saxons called it, and themselves at-

tempted transgressors. But kings had to be very strong indeed before they could do this. Now, in Ireland, after the Christian revolution and before the Comarbs of the monasteries became powerful, while they were yet true solitaries, we find crime, no matter where committed, punished by the king of Ireland, and those private atonements of crime by the payment of cattle and precious things put down. Crime, as an offense against the king's peace and against the king's majesty, was punished by him and could not be atoned for otherwise without his distinct permission.

CONSULTING HOLY BOOKS.

A Curious Case Decided by the Ecclesiastical Courts.

A curious case was recently examined at Rome by the ecclesiastical courts which gave rise to a curious question, "How far is it permitted to consult sacred books at hazard, and to draw conclusions by means of the texts which meet the eyes in the opened volume?" A person had made a practice of consulting holy books in this manner without at the same time doing so for gain, or for any but a good motive and in good faith. It happened that she had on several occasions hit upon the most strange and striking truths, and that her predictions were more than once realized.

The decision of the ecclesiastical court is that such practices were an abuse, and the would be prophet was forbidden to continue them. If, however, any person desires to consult sacred writings at hazard and for the good of their souls, the best method is that followed by St. Ignatius, who used to read extracts from the "Imitation of Christ" twice a day. In the morning he read it by order of the chapters, and in the evening was in the habit of opening it at hazard. The great saint was wont to declare that he had always drawn great comfort from these improvised counsels and admonitions.

One of the most learned editors of the "Imitation" (Genice) once stopped near the town of Viterbo, and charmed with the beauty of the spot decided to reside there for the remainder of his days. Almost immediately after his resolution was taken he opened his favorite books, and the verse that met his eyes was, "Why dost thou stand looking about thee here, since this is not thy resting place?" Struck by this warning, our traveler at the same instant heard the slow and solemn tolling of a church bell. He rose from the place where he was resting, and walking toward the town met a funeral procession bearing a dead body to its last earthly habitation. The Christian wayfarer accompanied his unknown brother to his parrow home and then continued his opened chapter in the "Imitation," which, with marvelous applicability, continued: "Thy dwelling must be in heaven, and all things of the earth are only to be looked upon as passing by. All things pass away and thou along with them."

Not Afraid of Science.

Those people who entertain the opinion that the priests of the Roman Catholic church live only in the past, deal only in traditions, know nothing outside of dogmatic theology and the old school men, are afraid to speak their own minds, cannot get beyond church Latin and stand in terror of modern science, criticism, speculation and progress, ought to pay a visit to the Catholic summer school up at Plattsburg. The lectures of Father Zahm on science and of Father Doonan on logic this week would have been instructive to Darwin and to Chancellor McCosh if they had heard them. Doctor Zahm's scientific discourses were as free in their rationality as Dr. Doonan's were rigorous in their ratiocination. These priests do not seem to be afraid of any truth that may be discovered here or of any of the revelations of nature or of life.

After them came Father Hewitt, Brother Azarias and about a dozen other priests and erudites, who will perhaps make it evident that they do not wear shackles any heavier than those that are worn by Fathers Doonan and Zahm.

It is possible that even Moody and Sankey or Talmage and Briggs might be edified by hearing the Plattsburg lectures.—New York Sun.

A Youthful Prelate.

At the recent ceremony in Vienna of the conferring of a cardinal's hat on the bishop of Grosswardein—a most imposing ceremony because of the number of church dignitaries present and because the emperor knelt there prostrate at the altar—the most impressive figure was that of a young papal envoy who attracted all eyes. This youthful prelate, the son of a Spanish nobleman, was easily the center of the brilliant scene on account of his youth, his manly beauty and the dignity beyond his years which lent effectiveness to his address to the emperor. He is the son of Senor del Val, was born in England and is famous in Rome for the fine sermons he preaches in the English tongue.—Exchange.

An English Opinion.

There are no more loyal subjects of the crown, no better citizens, and on the whole no body of persons more cultivated, intelligent and respectable than the English Catholics. They include many able and distinguished men in various walks of literature and science, and their social prestige is particularly high. We have got so far from the penal law, and even the papal titles agitation, that the idea of imposing any disability upon a man because he is a Roman Catholic would be received with

THE DEED OF A SAINT.

NOBLE SACRIFICE OF FATHER NONNATUS, THE TRINITARIAN.

Overcome With Pity at the Sufferings of an Aged Captive of the Tunisian Pirates, a Father of Mercy Takes His Place in the Chains of Slavery.

In the thirteenth century Tunis, like many other African cities, was a stronghold of Mohammedan pirates, who made frequent captures of Christians and reduced them to the most oppressive servitude. The captives were continually kept in irons, forced to labor in chain gangs and treated with every species of cruelty until it pleased their masters to kill them outright.

Twice a year, however, a ray of hope cheered the Christian slaves. They beheld a vessel, carrying the red cross flag, bearing down into port. It was the craft of the Trinitarians, or Fathers of Mercy, who came to negotiate for the redemption of the captives. As the vessel hove in sight, hope sprang up in the most dejected hearts, and each prisoner said to himself: "Ah, here come the ransoming fathers! Now I shall be liberated. My chains will be broken, and I shall see once more my home and family."

Very often, however, this glint of sunshine served only to intensify the subsequent darkness of their lot, for the resources of the fathers were limited and the exactions of the Moslem dey so exorbitant that only a comparatively small number of the slaves could be redeemed on each of their semiannual visits. To the unfortunate majority whom they had necessarily to leave in their cruel bondage, the Trinitarians could give nothing but hopeful words and compassionate tears.

One day a Father of Mercy, Raymond Nonnatus, then 35 years of age, led out of the Tunisian galleys such of the Christians as all of the gold which he and his brethren had been able to beg in Europe had enabled him to redeem. Suddenly an old man threw himself at his feet, and grasping the father's robe piteously exclaimed:

"O father, have mercy on me! See my condition! My hair has grown white in misfortune. For 20 years I have been in irons. Forty times have I seen your ransoming vessel come hither, but nobody has ever thought of me. Pity, father—pity!"

At these words, eloquent as only genuine sorrow can render language, the Trinitarian felt his very soul thrill with indescribable emotion. He wept as he replied: "My brother, I have nothing left. But take courage. Pray to the Blessed Virgin, our lady of mercy, for yourself and me, and await in peace my return."

As he finished speaking he continued on his way with the captives whom he had liberated. The old man followed them with his eyes for a few moments, then sank back in the most absolute dejection. Raymond, however, had not deceived him with a lying hope, for as soon as the ransomed captives had been placed on board the vessel he betook himself to the dey and asked for the liberation of the old man.

"What does this mean?" said the Mussulman. "Have you not taken the number agreed on between us?"

"That is true, but I come to beg that you will add to that number an old slave who has been in the galleys for 20 years and whose strength is worn out."

"Have you any more money?"

"No, I have given you all I had."

"Then begone and beware of my anger."

Thus rebuffed, the religious raised his eyes to heaven, asked God for the fortitude to make a great sacrifice and then rejoined, still in the tone of an entreaty: "I have no money, but I am young and strong. Accept me in exchange for the feeble old man in whose behalf I plead."

The dey at first appeared astounded. He reflected a moment, then coldly replied: "True, you are young and strong. I agree."

An hour later the generous Father of Mercy (surely none ever better deserved the name) led to the red cross vessel the old Christian, weeping tears of joy at seeing himself at last free. One tender embrace to the two fathers who had accompanied him to Tunis, and Raymond, returning to the galleys, held out his hands to receive the chains of the hardest slavery. It was the path by which God called him to the eminent degree of sanctity which he attained before his death and which merited for him the place he now occupies on our altars—Ave Maria.

The pope gave audience to Mgr. Bartlett of Baltimore, with whom his holiness conversed for a long time on the extension of the Catholic church in the United States. Mgr. Bartlett presented to the pope a list of American converts.

The exhibit of the University of Notre Dame at the World's fair has been draped in mourning out of respect to the memory of Very Reverend Father Walsh, the president of the institution.

There are more Roman Catholic churches in Brooklyn than any other. Besides its chapels this denomination has 61 places of worship.

Nearly all the heroic firemen who sacrificed their lives to duty in the cold storage conflagration at the World's fair were Catholics.

Catholic Note.

The 19th of March, the feast of St. Joseph, will henceforth be officially recognized as a holiday in Portugal.

The pope has issued a special dispensation to the Catholics of Naples from abstinence on Fridays as long as the cholera prevails in that country.

Fathers Postage and Hartman, S. J., who have had long experience among the inhabitants of Mashonaland, have completed a grammar of the Mashona language, and it is now going through the press.