

RAIN ON THE DOWN.
Might, and the down by the sea.
And the veil of rain on the down.
And she came through the mist and the rain to me.
From the safe, warm lights of the town.
The rain shone in her hair.
And her face gleamed in the rain.
And only the night and the rain were there
As she came to me out of the rain.
—Arthur Symonds.

A HAUNTED MONASTERY

After the battles of Chorrillos and Miraflores in the autumn of 1881, which ended the war between Chili and Peru, our duties as war correspondents being over, Lewis Allen and I determined to take in Ecuador and to spend the balance of the dry season in visiting the country where twenty volcanoes can be seen at a little stretch of the eye. We visited Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Imbabura and others and went to see the wonderful lava bed of Cayambí, ten miles long and five hundred feet deep.

While there I learned of an old monastery, the Gesu, which so tradition has it, was deserted at the time of the eruption of Cayambí, in 1691. I determined to see it. It lies away up the mountainside, 14,000 feet above sea level and 9,000 above the little village where we were staying.

The prospect of the tortuous mule climb, the high altitude and the other difficulties deterred Allen, who preferred the rest and the society of some dark-eyed señoritas, and I, with a guide started on the two day's ascent, which was made successfully.

My tired mule turned the last bend in the steep mountain path, and there before me were the old ruins of the convent toward which I had been climbing for two days. The sun was sinking into the Pacific, which I could just make out miles away. It seemed more like a hazy blue sky than the ocean. Never have I in all my journeyings beneath the wonderful blue dome seen such a panorama.

The tropical sun had used his finest brush with his choicest tints, and the delicate tracings seemed reflected back upon the Andes top, making a landscape which would have sent Salvador Rosa to his knees, while his artist's soul would have chanted the Te Deum of his life in grateful thanksgiving for the sight. Not to miss one moment of the glorious picture I dismounted and sent my servant forward with the beasts.

When I reached the convent gate my guide was talking to an old man. He made place for me. The old fellow must have been 100 years old. He was bent and wrinkled; the skin of his face was like an old piece of crumpled hide which had been put aside after a fruitless attempt to smooth it out.

I asked him if I could spend the night there, after telling him the object with which I made the journey. He pointed to a little adobe shanty about six by seven feet, the door of which stood open, and mumbled something which I imperfectly made out to mean that his hospitality could be but scanty. Rather than stay in that wretched hovel over night I determined to sleep under the trees.

I pointed to the ivy-covered, low-lying, long one-story building some distance beyond, and asked if I might not sleep there. He replied that no one had lived in the convent for nearly two hundred years, but that about twenty years before two travelers had visited there and had remained a few weeks sketching and hunting, and that they had occupied the room at the south end, which then was in better condition than the rest of the rooms. All the other rooms had long since become roofless except that one, which was under the bell-tower. If I would like to see it he would go with me, but he had not been in the building for sixty years.

I cannot describe the feeling which such utter indifference to surroundings produced in me. While this conversation had taken place my Indian had turned the mules out to graze, had wrapped his blanket around him, and so far as I could judge, was already enjoying his well-earned rest, with no roof save a large oleander bush. The old man went in his hut and brought out a rude wax taper and without a word led the way to the north end of the building, where I made out a massive black door, which opened inwards. Entering he lighted his primitive candle, turned to the left and led the way down a stone floor corridor. The cobwebs made it almost impassable. On the one side there was not an opening, while on the other every few feet there was a place where a door had been, and in some cases there were the remains of a door almost gone from dry rot.

In the small cell-like rooms were heaps of rubbish from the fallen roofs and walls. This corridor must have been at least 150 feet long. I passed down its length, bringing up the rear of the procession of two, until my pilot came to a halt at the last doorway, the door standing half open. As we entered a monster bat whisked by my head, then another. Doubtless they had been interrupted in their nocturnal forage.

Inside the little room there was a rude rustic cot-frame made of poles with the bark still on. The window, a small square hole, was closed with two-inch iron bars almost rusted away. Instead of panes of glass the spider had substituted a network which almost shut out the stars. I told the old man that I would spend the night in this old monk's room. He looked at me a moment and said: "Alone?" I replied, "Yes." He shook his head and muttered something which I took to be: "God keep you safe."

But I could see that he marvelled at my courage, being himself, no doubt, like the rest of his race, a coward. He gave me the candle and left me. It was not until his footsteps had died away and the big door closed with a noise like thunder

reverberating among the hills that I realized the sensation of being utterly lonely. However, I had been so much alone in my many travels that I did not at first mind it, but this was quite unlike anything ever before experienced.

I began to feel very uncomfortable and was almost sorry that I had not camped out with the Indian. However, determined to make the best of the job, which was bad enough, I spread my blanket on the cot, closed the door, which creaked on its old rusty hinges with a noise that seemed unearthly.

It would not entirely close, so I worked it back and forth until all the rust dropped off and it shut quite easily, making scarcely a sound. I shot the big bolt, taking no notice in the feeble light whether or not there was a bolt-loop. I felt much easier that the door was fast, and filled my brier, that unfailling companion that never goes back on a friend. I lay down, drew my blanket around me, and put my revolver by my side more from habit than from any notion that I should need it. I don't remember how or when but I fell asleep, for I was as tired as ever before in my life.

And then I dreamed—such a dream! To this day, eight years later, I can recall every incident of it. I saw clearly a long procession of brown-clad, cowed monks, each holding a lamp which threw out a sickly, phosphorescent light. I was lying in a dungeon-like room, and as each passed me he turned his face to me, and while he looked at me the living countenance gradually faded, leaving instead a fleshless skull in everything save the eyes, which were oscillating balls of kaleidoscopic coloring, which seemed to dance in their cavities. As the last one passed me I awoke. I sat up. There was no light save a gray streak from the window. The door stood open. My blood seemed to freeze in my veins; my heart stood still; then it started to beat so fast that I could scarcely breathe. I remembered all and where I was. I had surely closed the door, yet there it was open. I instinctively reached for my pistol. There was some satisfaction in feeling its smooth, cool barrel. I sat there motionless, eyes riveted on the open door.

I had never imagined that I was a brave man, but I did think that I had a fair amount of courage—enough, at any rate, to enable my will to work unimpeded. However, here I was, as frightened and helpless as a chicken. Finally I mustered up sufficient strength to say "Who's there?" The sound of my own voice reassured me, even though it was taken up and reported back, echoing through the dark corridor, ending, it seemed to me, in a blood-curdling laugh. Then all was quiet, and as the cooling sweat broke out at every pore I realized that I had been thoroughly scared. I jumped up and looked for the candle. It was burned out. I once more closed the door, pulled back the bolt and shot it into its place. I then wrapped myself up in my blanket.

But it was some time before I was again asleep. While waiting for happy, relieving unconsciousness I struck a match, took a pull at my flask—the first that night, but a good one—filled my pipe, and oh, how cheerful was the little red ball of fire in the old black bowl! I fell asleep in company with the last spark amidst the ashes. My dream this time was more pleasant only an Indian about to clutch my throat with one hand, while the other held a long knife. In reaching for me his foot struck me and I awoke, distinctly feeling the jar.

There was no Indian, but that door was again opened and I could hear a low rumbling sound, seeming to come from the other end of the building. This time I was at my wits' end. I was crazed with terror. I could not stand the horrible mystery a moment longer. I made up my mind to get out of the horrid place, but in doing so I must go down that corridor. I threw my blanket over my left arm, took my pistol in my right hand and braced myself for the passage.

The spirit of action and fight gave me some sort of spunk. I struck a match, stepped out of the door, when—whiff! with a current of air something passed my head. I could not think—my senses left me and I made one mad rush down the hall, stumbling over rubbish. The open cell doors seemed to fly by me. I fancied that in each of them stood one of the horrid cowed skulls, while the echo of my own footsteps seemed to sound as though from each doorway passed a skeleton which joined in the chase. I could certainly detect the following bony footsteps bringing up the stampee of which I was the foremost figure. I felt as though I were going stark, raving mad when something hit me full in front and all the way up and down from face to toe. I fell back partially stunned, but it brought me back to a realization of what I was, and that I had collided with the wall end of the corridor. I looked over my shoulder, almost hoping to see something, anything, but all was blackness. In a tremble I got up, fumbled around for the door, found it and threw my whole weight against it, but it would not open.

I felt something cold on my face, opened my eyes, saw my guide with a gourd about to throw more water in my face, and the old Spaniard standing by with a rush light in his hand. I was lying on a bed in his hut. I was told that I had screamed, which had awakened the Indian, and he found me senseless at the door of the old building.

I told them of the mysterious opening of the cell door, and that I had run up against the wall in my effort to get out, and that I could not open the door outwardly, which was all I remembered. The old man muttered: "Earthquake open ze door."—Philadelphia Times.

LOVE UNCRITICAL.

When first I can know those dear,
Thy faults I did copy
And 'Sure this is a blemish here,
And that's a vice,' said I.

But since that hour I did resign
My judgment to my fate,
Thou art no more than only mine,
To love and vindicate.

Henceforth thy champion am I vow'd,
And stuffy my sense,
Not owning what I proved, yet proud
To die in its defense.

The kerchief that thou gav'st I'll wear
Upon my eyelids bound
And every time I meet I'll dare
To find the faults I found.

—The Spectator

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

It was five o'clock of a hot August afternoon at Luc-sur-Mer. The bathers were roaming over the beach or ensconced in cozy, sheltered spots. Women, rosy pink with the heat, were leisurely crocheting and gossiping, emphasizing their remarks with the movement of the white ivory needles. Bright-eyed men, their smiling lips idly traced hieroglyphics on the sand. Happy children, watched over by white-capped nurses, made mud-pies to their hearts' content.

Over one small group of loungers presided a young woman, whose pensive, graceful, delicate featured face was one of rare sweetness. Her hair was blonde, her mouth fresh as a child's, while in her black eyes quivered lights and shadows, as on a placid lake. A crowd of young men were gathered about her, each one anxious to claim part of her attention by some trivial little speech. Now and then she would quietly drop a word and every one stopped talking to hear and applaud her.

Marguerite Helm was a Norwegian. She had married for love a countryman of hers, a painter, but he had died soon after. Gifted with a marvelous voice, she had resolved to make it her means of support. Going to Paris, she had shut herself up for a year, with her grief and her musical studies. Her stay at Luc-sur-Mer was the first dissipation of her widowhood.

Just now the conversation had turned on a foreigner's difficulty in using French idioms. All her admirers seized the opportunity to compliment her on her proficiency in the language.

"Gentlemen," she said, suddenly, "you shall each tell me which word in all your language you prefer."

After a moment's hesitation the contest began. To the men it was a pretext for new gallantries.

"Marguerite," sighed one.

"Norway," murmured another.

"Love," suddenly exclaimed a boy's undeveloped voice—a voice just undergoing a change.

The word was so impulsively uttered that everybody started. Marguerite herself bent forward to see the speaker. It was Jacques Lespar, a mere boy of almost girlish beauty. His white forehead, his straight nose, with its sensitive nostrils, his slender, refined hands—all betokened good blood. His penetrating eyes fixed themselves upon those of Mme. Helm; hers were filled with a sweet indulgent curiosity.

"Well, there really are no young children. Make way for the more!" were the remarks heard from the men.

Happily the dinner hour was near, and the group dispersed. Jacques and Mme. Helm remained together. They both felt a little embarrassed at being alone, and neither knew what to say. Finally they began to talk of the weather, of the superb days and warm evenings. Then the boy escorted Marguerite to her hotel, and went home.

Ever since the beginning of the season, he had silently admired Mme. Helm. A subtle fascination irresistibly attracted him to her. When she took her morning stroll, he instinctively walked behind her, like a dog following his master. When she sat down on the beach amid her admirers, he furtively slipped in among them, envying with all the strength of his ingenious youth, the young men who could laugh with her or the old gentleman who called her "Dear child." How often he had tried to speak to her! But the great sadness rising in his heart at his utter insignificance would choke the words in his throat.

An orphan from his cradle, he was entirely alone in the world. A distant relative had become his guardian and directed his education. He grudgingly managed Jacques' finances and bestowed only a scant affection upon his ward. The boy's generous nature was starved in this atmosphere of indifference, and he at once loved Marguerite with all the energy of long-suppressed feeling. It was his first passion, and, like a rich spendthrift, he laid at her feet all the treasures of his heart. As to being paid in return, he never dared to think of that. He would have been satisfied if, like a priest at God's altar, he might be allowed to worship Marguerite all his life.

After that August afternoon, Jacques and Mme. Helm were frequently together. They talked over their plans, and being mutually attracted, learned to know each other well. Every day after breakfast, they walked on the quay, and the boy made the young woman his confidant. Marguerite heard his grave speeches with a smile, and reciprocated by giving good advice with almost motherly tenderness.

Time passed on, and often, when returning from their walk, the day died with the setting sun. The women, coming home, would greet them with some half-audible, jesting remark; the ragamuffins would giggle at them on the road; and the men bow, with a sort of pleased, boorish politeness.

It was the first time since her departure from Norway that Mme.

Helm forgot her sorrow. She liked her role of tender mamma, and put an unconscious coquetry into her conduct. She would often prelude her remarks with: "I, M. Jacques, who am an old woman—" and she smiled to think of her three and twenty years.

She did not dream how this child adored her. Only once did a slight doubt enter her mind, but Jacques' conduct quickly dispelled it. He treated her like an elder sister, and did not mind appearing ridiculous in her eyes. To her this was sufficient proof that he was not in love. Anxious to warn him against life's snares, she continued to show him a calm motherly affection, and the thought of having for Jacques any other sentiment would have shocked her.

After spending the greater part of an exceedingly hot day indoors, they went one evening for their accustomed after-dinner stroll in the fields. The setting sun poured its purple rays over the country, tingeing sky and meadows, houses and trees with fire. The ocean was mottled with red spots, forming bloody streaks.

Hard by, a haystack's irregular cone stood out in melancholy profile against the sky.

"Let's climb it!" said Jacques. Marguerite gleefully clasped her hands. Jacques went on to reconnoiter. The road was deserted; no one was to be seen in the neighborhood.

She began the ascent with great difficulty. Her feet would slip, her fingers lose their hold, while the bits of dry hay scratched her face. Her more sturdy companion followed and helped her along. Reaching the top, they sat down and looked at each other, then burst out laughing, like school boys stealing fruit or serious persons caught in a foolish act.

The descent was more easily accomplished. Their gaiety had passed, and both opened books they had brought. Jacques lay flat on the ground, resting upon his elbows. Marguerite was stretched on a pile of hay which formed a sort of chaise-longue. Her tiny feet just peeped from under the hem of her gown. The thin cloth shoes perfectly outlined her arched instep and delicate ankles.

The country around was resting after the day's heat. In the far-off fields, kneeling women were gathering potatoes, and near them little boys threw clouds of earth at each other. From time to time, the cows lying on the grass would low and turn their heads toward the setting sun, as toward a departing friend.

Suddenly through the silent fields rang the cries of an angry voice.

"The field-guard!" exclaimed Marguerite.

In the distance a man was gesticulating threateningly at this couple, who had pulled down his carefully stacked hay.

Like two guilty children, their first thought was to fly from the ruined haystack. The boy was up with one bound. But in her haste, Marguerite lost her balance and fell. He caught her in his arms and righted her.

They ran across the field; for an instant they hid behind a large mound of earth, then made straight for the beach. Here they sought shelter in a hut used only by the customs officers, and kept very still, fearing to give their pursuer the alarm.

Seated on the narrow bench, Mme. Helm leaned against Jacques. She had never seemed so beautiful. Out of breath from the run, her cheeks were red, her nostrils quivered. With bended neck and wide-open eyes, she listened, in laughing anxiety, for the steps outside.

His ecstasy was complete. Putting his arm around her waist, he drew closer to her. Turning to him in childish glee, she said: "Jacques, we are saved!"

It was the first time she had called him simply Jacques, and the boy lost his head. With a brusque movement he seized Marguerite's hand and imprinted on her wrist a passionate kiss.

Very pale, she rose, not knowing what to say or think. A great remorse struck her like a knife. Had she shown too much affection for Jacques? Had she been guilty of coquetry toward him? The days of their intercourse flashed through her memory—and she found herself guilty.

Instantly she resolved, by some cruelty which Jacques could not forgive, to kill the love she had inspired. She cast upon the boy one last look of infinite tenderness, then, gathering all her strength for the death-blow, she said, in her cold, beautiful voice:

"You little fool!"—Argonaut.

The Sea Horse.

The sea horse is built upon a peculiar plan. It has the head of a horse, the wings of a bird and the tail of a snake. In swimming it assumes a vertical position and when wishing to rest it attaches itself to a convenient stalk of seaweed by means of its tail.

A Couch Shell on the Mountain Top.
A couch shell was picked up recently by a herder on one of the highest buttes in the John Day mountains, Ore., some 5,000 feet above the level of the sea and far from human habitation.

While an Andover student was sketching the Phelps homestead not long ago, a lady who was walking near him passed and pleasantly referred to his task. He replied with enthusiasm and explained that with his mother at home he had read all of Miss Phelps' writings and was anxious to get a picture of that author's place of residence. The lady smiled and made him a little bow. "I am much obliged to your mother," she said anxiously. "Will you tell her so from Elizabeth Phelps Ward?"

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