

From New York Weekly: One of the oldest, and in many respects most remarkable towns on the western slope of the Mexican Cordilleras, is the town of Acapulco. Centuries ago it was the great port from which departed the British and Spanish galleons, laden with the gold and silver treasures for which the buccaners were wont to lie in wait, and when some few years since I trod for the last time the old familiar strand, the place wore an aspect differing but little from that which it is described as having presented in the days of Drake and Daupier, when its population was possibly in excess of what it is now.

It was on a warm afternoon of Summer, at the period when Acapulco was at the zenith of her pride and power, that a large concourse of persons had assembled upon the walls and roofs of the most conspicuous edifices of the city, for the purpose of surveying the unwonted sight of a fleet of vessels of war, apparently English in build, which had just made their appearance in the offing. The cross of St George was recognizable, even at that distance, and many were the pale and anxious faces as the reverberations of the first gun, fired to give notice of their arrival by the foremost vessel of the fleet, came floating upon the breeze toward the town.

In a window of one of the most elegant and sumptuously furnished mansions, at the hour just described, were stationed a young couple whom, from the close likeness that existed between them, although the lady was seemingly some months the senior, the most indifferent observer would have pronounced brother and sister. The lady had not yet passed the boundary of her teens, and was a finished specimen of the Spanish beauty. To those who have never been gratified by so rare a sight, it were almost useless to attempt describing it. There were the same eyes—large, dark, and lustrous; the same full and graceful rounded figure; the same glowing complexion and speaking features; the same glossy and redundant tresses.

All these recommendations of her sex the Donna Duez, daughter of Don Santiago Novales, governor of the province, and one of the most opulent and powerful men upon the coast, possessed in profusion, with the addition of a cultivated mind which rendered her the peer of any regal lady in Europe or the Americas. Her brother, Juan, as has been hinted, was somewhat younger; he was of the same description of comeliness, only that his manners were more haughty, his tones more austere, and the general expression of his countenance at once stern and commanding. There was an impetuosity, too, in his delivery which, partaking somewhat of his father's fierceness when excited by passion, declared unmistakably the hot-blooded and passionate race from which he had descended. He was clad in the uniform of a captain—in those times a splendid and costly attire—and the presence of a scar upon his yet smooth brow, denoted that, despite his youth, he had been concerned in at least one desperate engagement.

At the moment of their introduction to the reader both were occupied in the contemplation of the scene, plainly visible from the station which they occupied, and which had already attracted the attention of a majority of the citizens, whose numbers were increasing with every passing moment. The brow of the youth was clouded and lowering, and his lip curled in proud defiance as he gazed; but upon the countenance of the girl there was an air of melancholy depression which defined the gentle nature of her meditations. Below, on the ramparts of the castle, were heard the clank of arms as men hurried to and fro in the streets. And to this, the bells of the cathedral were ringing noisily, a procession of priests and worshipers was entering the church, and the confusion which prevailed, in a place that had so long been at peace, with all the world, may be imagined.

"Of what thinks my lovely sister?" asked the young Novales, for the first time breaking the deep pause which had preceded the question. The maiden started at the words and a shade of delicate crimson overspread her downcast countenance as she replied, confusedly: "Of many things, Juan, but most of all of the peril with which fate has seen fit to threaten our house, so late the emblem of stability to half the continent; perhaps hardly less of the calamities to our common country of which this unlooked-for occurrence may be the precursor. Perchance even the loss of home and kindred—of yourself, dear Juan, and our father, who always presents his face to the foe, may be included in the list. The youth smiled contemptuously as he answered: "Indeed, fair sister! But we need entertain no such fears. Are we not here, in Acapulco? Does not the nation's flag yet wave over our battlements, and are there not thousands of young and eager hearts like mine to save it from dishonor? Cheer thee, my sister, for I tell thee many hours shall not pass before these proud invaders shall be driven from before our walls as chaff! They have yet to learn, these marauding rovers of the seas, that Acapulco is impregnable."

As he pronounced this sentence, he gazed fiercely in the direction of the approaching fleet, and his eyes absolutely flashed with hatred. "You are a brave lad, my brother, but notwithstanding all you have said, I cannot dispel my fears. Should this siege indeed be attempted—oh, should it, Juan—I tremble as I reflect upon the consequences."

"Such words are unworthy the descendants of ancestors like ours, whose great progenitor was a cid. If your apprehensions, however, have reference to one in particular, know that that pang will at least be spared you."

"I understand you," she rejoined, as a scarce perceptible tremor came over her, and she pressed her hand to her heart. "The young Virginian upon whom you have centered your affections—"

"Yes—what, what of him?" "He is ere this beyond harm's reach."

"Then he has escaped—has deserted us—is it so?" with some what of her brother's fierceness kindling in her eyes. "Deny it—oh, Juan, brother, deny it, for my sake!" And she burst into tears as she clung to him.

"Hear me, sister," said Juan Novales, soothingly, and half-sorrowing at the broken news. "Matters are not quite so bad as you imagine. Waltham, the transplanted Englishman, whose life, they say, is already forfeited to his sovereign for acts of treason in another clime, has disappeared but by an ordinance of the Supreme Directory, which requires that all foreigners who would not share in the perils of the fight must remove themselves beyond the city walls. All not of Spaniards born who may be found within the limits remain as prisoners only, and having been apprised of this by me, your lover took my advice and found conveyance, with some others, to the ships; where he will be obliged to remain until the conflict shall have ended."

"Alas! and has it come to this?" she replied, dejectedly. "I can foresee the rest. He will participate in the fight, and by that act we shall be forever parted."

"But he may survive," said Juan, with a strange smile, which implied the reverse to be his desire. "What! Think you, my brother, that I could give myself to one whose hands had been dyed in the blood of my countrymen? Not though he were my wedded lord, that thought alone would turn my love to hate. Let him go, like the ingrate and the coward that he is!"

"Well said, my girl! I like your resolution!" exclaimed a voice at their side. And, looking up, they encountered the gaze of their father.

During this interval, unchecked by two caravels armed with swivels, and a dozen of smaller boats propelled by oars, the English fleet, which had passed the rocky headland, from which, on both sides of the

narrow strait, a trail of iron and fire rained down upon them, and, anchoring before the devoted town, poured in a desolating storm of iron missiles, under cover of which the boats were launched, and a heavy force, disdaining all impediments, swarmed up the beach and into the well defended tower—strewn their courses with the dying and dead. Others turned to the right across the causeway, and boldly attacked the castle.

But a brief interval elapsed before a change had taken place in the aspect of Acapulco, as wonderful as it was revolting. Confident in the strength of their world-renowned castle, hitherto considered impregnable, the great body of the inhabitants had remained within the town, where they fondly imagined themselves secure from harm. The bloody and disordered condition of their streets, immediately after the siege, awakened them to the fatal error into which they had fallen, when it was too late to repair. The death-dealing messengers, carrying all before them, spread, desolation and ruin in every direction. Hundreds of inoffensive victims who had taken no part in the fray fell victims to its fury.

(To be continued.)

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