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THE CRADLE SONG OF THE POOR.

Hush! I cannot bear to see thee
Stretch thy hand in vain;
I have got no bread to give thee,
Nothing, child, to ease thy pain.
When God sent thee first to bless me,
Proud, and thankful, too, was I;
Now, my darling, I, thy mother,
Almost long to see thee die.

Sleep, my darling, thou art weary;
God is good, but life is dreary.

I have watched thy beauty fading,
And thy strength sink day by day;
Soon, I know, will want and fever
Take thy little life away.
Famine makes thy father reckless,
Hope has left both him and me;
We could suffer all, my baby,
Had we but a crust for thee.

Sleep, my darling, thou art weary;
God is good, but life is dreary.

Better thou shouldst perish early,
Starve so soon, my darling one,
Than live to want, to sin, to struggle
Vainly, still, as I have done.

Better that thy angel spirit
With my joy, my peace, were flown,
Than thy heart grow cold and careless,
Reckless, hopeless, like my own.

Sleep, my darling, thou art weary;
God is good, but life is dreary.

I am wasted, dear, with hunger,
And my brain is all oppress,
I have scarcely strength to press thee,
Wan and feeble to my breast.

Patience baby, God will help us,
Death will come to thee and me,
He will take us to his heaven,
Where no want or pain can be.

Sleep, my darling, thou art weary;
God is good, but life is dreary.

Such the plant, that late and early,
Did we listen, we might hear
Close beside us—but the thunder
Of a city dells our ear.

Every heart, like God's bright angel,
Cau bid one such sorrow cease;
God has glory when his children
Bring his poor ones joy and peace!

Listen, nearer while she sings,
Sounds the fluttering of wings.

From an Unpublished Chronicle of a Traveler.

THE BEAUTIFUL DECOY.

It is well known to all in any degree familiar with the history of Mexico, that a regular system of highway robbery exists in every section of that miserably governed country; and that through a want of interference of the want of the authorities, this has grown up into such a regular and formidable shape, that every traveler must be prepared to put his life at hazard at every stage, or be provided with a suitable contribution for the *baballeros del camino* (the knights of the road) who, in the event of finding you prepared and willing, will make their levy with a politeness only equaled by the smiling landlord, when he receives your overcharged fare for your last night's entertainment. Why such systematic boldness of robbery is allowed—if not with the connivance, at least with rarely any interference of the government or state authorities—is one of those mystical matters which, among many others, so puzzle and perplexes the intelligent foreigners, but that such is the disagreeable truth every traveler through that wretched country can bear ample testimony.

Some years ago, having business which first called me to the Capital of Mexico, and thence through the interior of the country to the northward, I met with several thrilling adventures, which I have recorded for the benefit of whomsoever may take an interest therein, omitting only the dates, they being only non-essential to the interest of the narrations themselves.

The first of the series occurred on the route between Vera Cruz and the city of Mexico. In the regular diligencia running between the places just mentioned, I had taken passage, and had passed through the beautiful city of Jalapa, and entered the gloomy town of Perote, without meeting with any unusual accident, though being continually warned to be on my guard against the danger of the road. At Perote, where we halted for a relay and refreshments, all my fellow passengers took leave of me, very solemnly assuring me that, if assailed by the *ladrones*, or robbers, it would be much better for me to take matters quietly, and suffer myself to be gently plundered, than to run the risk of having my throat cut for resistance, as I had somewhat boldly proclaimed it was my intention of doing. I thanked them for their advice, and replied that I would take the matter into serious consideration.

At Perote, I repeat, all who had been my companions from Vera Cruz took leave of me, this being the end of their journey in that direction, but there was one new passenger here to go forward, whom to my agreeable surprise, I found to be a beautiful young lady, some twenty years of age.

Senorita Paula, as I subsequently ascertained her name to be, was indeed one of those rare beauties seldom met with except in works of fiction—tall, graceful, with a profusion of long black hair—soft, clear, melting dark eyes—features as perfect as ever came from the hands of the sculptor, and with an animation the most fascinating, varying in expression with every changing mood of the intellectual possessor. A glance at her bewitching dark eyes showed me that she was one who was naturally of social disposition; and as we rattled away from the gloomy town, I took the liberty of opening a conversation.

"They tell me," said I, "that the route between here and Mexico is a very dangerous one to travel."

"There is little to fear," she replied with a sweet smile and in a melodious tone, "except from the professional robbers, and they seldom harm any but those who make resistance."

"It seems strange to me," I rejoined, "that you Mexicans should take such things as a matter of course, and deem resistance a very impolite way of treating the knights of the road, instead of boldly asserting your rights, and abating the evil by a manly spirit of resistance. For myself, I must consider it the most cowardly of proceedings, for any respectable party to set out prepared to quietly gratify the cupidities of the *ladrones*, and unprepared to treat them to their just deserts."

"Every traveler, Senor," she replied, "should, before setting out, count the cost of his journey, and of course it is natural he should value his life highly, it seems to me natural that he should pay a certain sum for positive safety rather than put that life in jeopardy. For instance, in traveling from Vera Cruz to Mexico, if he will first reckon that so much is the fare by the diligencia, and that so much will be required for entertainment on the way; and so much for the contingency you speak of, he will then have the exact cost between two points; and if he will look at the whole as the sum total of his journey, he will not seem to be robbed by any one party more than another."

"That," I replied, "may be, I believe is, the Mexican mode of doing business, but does not tally with the preconceived ideas of our foreigners."

"But every one," replied the fair speaker, "should conform to the customs of the country he visits."

"And do you then go prepared for this highway robbery! and have you no fear in thus journeying by yourself?"

"Well, Senor, what can I do? I am as you perceive, an unprotected lady; who, for certain reasons, am required to make the journey to Perote and the Capital some twice or three a year, and you certainly could not expect me to go prepared to resist an armed band! As to fear, I will not deny—I have my share of that; but, so far, I have never met with any rough treatment, and of course I trust to the saints that my fortune will ever be as propitious."

"And have you really been robbed on your journey back and forth?" I inquired.

"I think I have paid my share to the *ladrones* for my transit through their country!" she laughed.

"And you expect to continue a repetition of the same for the rest of your life?"

"Who knows?" she replied. "At least I hope to be always prepared."

"And your fellow-travelers?" said I; "have you never seen any disposed to resist these unlawful acts?"

"Once, Senor, an American and an Englishman, who were in the same diligencia with me, fired upon the robbers, killing one and wounding two."

"And did the robbers fire back?"

"Yes, but fled immediately, and fortunately injured none of our party."

"A. I should have expected," returned I. "You were not robbed on that occasion, I suppose?"

"We were not, Senor; but the two foreigners subsequently paid dearly for their resistance; for in journeying back and forth, both were killed, separate and at different times, near the same spot. You see those crosses by the side of the road, Senor?"

"I have observed them frequently, but here they seem to be much more numerous," I replied, looking forth from the vehicle.

"Each stands on the spot where some one has met a violent death," she rejoined; "and as we go along, I will call your attention to those which mark the places where the foreigners met theirs."

"Do you know," said I, "that I am resolved to emulate their example, let the consequences be what they may?"

"Holy saints defend us!" she exclaimed; "you are not in earnest, Senor?"

"Seriously so, I assure you."

"You would only bring certain death upon us both."

"Say rather, I should lighten the expenses of the journey—for your knights

of the road understand retreat as well as advance—and you yourself have acknowledged that firm resistance put them to flight for once."

"But there were numbers opposed to them, Senor and you are only one."

"But fortunately I have a couple of revolvers, which, in two good hands, amount to some ten or a dozen shots, and my friends have repeatedly told me I am not a bad marksman."

"Ah! Santa Maria! you will think better of this, Senor—the very idea of resistance terrifies me!"

"But not the idea of robbery?"

"Because I have never met with violence."

We continued to converse in a similar strain for some time longer—my fair companion gradually changing the subject, and seeming much interested in myself. I learned that her family name was Valerde, that she was unmarried, and that her father and brother were officers in the army, and so forth, and so on: and in return I gave her my own name, stated something of my history, business and prospects and altogether became more communicative than I would advise any friend to be with any stranger of either sex in a strange country.

As we continued our journey, the conversation gradually changing from one thing to another, Senorita Paula suddenly brought it back to the point where it first opened.

"We are coming upon a dangerous part of the road," she said; "are you still resolved to defend yourself if assailed?"

"With your permission, Senorita?"

"I don't think it advisable," she replied, "but still if such is your intention, I think it no more than right that you should give me a chance to take a part in my defense, since my risk of danger will be as great as yours."

"And have you really the nerves, after all to defend yourself?" I inquired.

"If I had the means, Senor!"

"I have two pistols," said I; "if you will accept of one of them, it is at your service!"

"You are very kind Senor—but can I fire it?"

"With ease, Senorita; and producing one of my revolvers, I explained to her the manner in which it was to be used."

"And this, you say, will shoot some half a dozen times?"

"I think it safe to calculate that five charges out of six will explode, Senorita."

"A very formidable weapon, indeed!" she replied; "and with such I can almost fancy we are safe. You have another, you say like this?"

"I produced it."

"What a beautiful invention!" she observed reaching over and taking it from my hand. Then extending her hands, one of the revolvers in each, she continued, "Armed like this, one might almost count himself safe against a host! You say this is fired in this manner?" she proceeded cocking one of the weapons as she spoke, and pointing it towards the road.

"Have a care, Senorita; or you will discharge it!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when her finger pressed the trigger, and one of the barrels was exploded with a sharp report. A minute after and while I was only chiding her, we heard a loud, quick tramp of horses, and several sharp, rapid exclamations. The next moment our conveyance was stopped suddenly, and we saw ourselves surrounded by some eight or ten mounted men, of whom in a loud voice exclaimed:

"Yield you prisoners or die!"

"Quick, Senorita!" said I, extending my hand; "quick! in Heaven's name give me one of those weapons! for now is our time for decisive action!"

"Nay," she replied, putting the weapons behind her, "you will be too hasty! Let them suppose we yield—let them open the door!"

"Oh, no! it will then be too late!"

As I spoke, the door was suddenly thrown open, and three or four swarty, heavily-bearded men presented themselves to my view.

"Quick, Senorita, for the love of God!" I cried, grasping at her arm.

"Hold!" she exclaimed, instantly pressing one of my own revolvers to my head. "Resistance is useless—you are our prisoner!"

"Good God!" I exclaimed I perfectly astounded; "Our prisoner did you say? It is not possible that one so fair and lovely as yourself, is in any manner connected with these banditti!"

"It is even so, Senor," she replied with one of the most bewitching smiles still keeping one of my weapons turned against myself, and significantly pointing the other to the door. "You will oblige us by stepping forth and giving yourself into the care of these good gentlemen, who will see that you are treated as a brave man should be, but who will trouble you meantime for any little change and valuables you might have to spare!"

There seemed no help for it—the beautiful Senorita Paula Valerde was a spy and accomplice of the *ladrones*. She had entered the diligencia at Perote for no other purpose than to ascertain the exact condition of things inside, and be able to signalize her associates as she passed along, so that they might know exactly in what manner to conduct themselves and make their work without a risk. By simple stratagem she had obtained my arms just at the point where she knew the attack would be made; and her discharge of the

pistol, as by accident, was the sign to show them that all was secure.

"I acknowledge myself conquered by being outwitted!" said I, bowing to the Senorita.

Then turning to the *ladrones*, who had now collected in a body, in front of the door of the diligencia, I continued:

"Gentlemen will you permit me to alight and make you some valuable presents? In the language of your country, all I have is yours."

The leader of the party bowed politely in return, and said with a grim smile:

"Si Senor," we shall be most happy to receive anything which so distinguished a traveler may have to bestow."

With this I quietly stepped from the vehicle; and one quick searching glance put me in possession of the whole state of affairs. The diligencia had been stopped in a wild, gloomy place, and the driver was sitting carelessly on his box, taking everything as a matter of course. He might also be an accomplice of the robbers, or he might not, but in either case, there was little hope of assistance from him—any attempt of the kind would certainly bring upon him a severe punishment, sooner or later. I glanced up and down the road, where it wound between dark, overshadowing trees, but discovered nothing to give me any hope. The robbers some eight or ten in number, and all well armed were collected around me, part of them mounted and others standing on their feet, holding their pistols by the bridle. Looking upon my case a desperate one, so far as being plundered was concerned, I still retained my presence of mind, and not wholly despaired. True, I had been outwitted, and disarmed, and now stood singly between numbers; but the idea of yielding tamely to this outrage was repugnant to my very nature, and I resolved to put the least favorable opportunity for defence and retaliation to the strongest test.

"Will you accept this purse?" said I, producing one that held several gold coins, and handing to the chief of the *ladrones*.

"Thank you, Senor! you are very kind!" he said, as he took it in his hand, with a polite bow, and chuckled the money.

"This diamond pin may prove acceptable to your friend!" I added, as I quietly removed it from the bosom of my shirt, and handed it to the gentleman on his left, who received it in the same polite manner. "This diamond ring I trust you will retain as a keepsake!" I continued, drawing the jewel from my finger, and presenting it to a third. "I beg your pardon, Senorita," I pursued, glancing at the Senorita Paula, who, with my pistols still in her possession, was quietly standing within the diligencia, regarding the whole proceedings with one of her sweetest smiles. "I must not forget this beautiful lady, I have here," I went on, at the same time producing the article, "a very beautiful gold snuff-box—set as you perceive with diamonds—will your ladyship honor me by accepting this slight token of my regard for the pleasure afforded me by your company and conversation?"

"You are a very gallant gentleman, Senor," she laughed, taking the two revolvers in one fair hand, and presenting the other.

I reached the box toward her—but my hand trembled a little—and just as the present was about to touch her fingers, it slipped and fell between us.

"A thousand pardons, Senorita, for awkwardness!" I said, as I bent down to pick it up.

Now was the all important moment—the moment of life and death. All were in a measure off their guard; and one quick furtive glance showed me that the girl still held my weapons carelessly in one hand, with the other remaining extended for the prize. I lifted the box carefully; but as I raised myself, I gave a wild, starting yell; and as the Senorita started back, I with the quickness of lightning, seized both weapons, and wrenched them from her.

To wheel and commence firing upon the party, was now only the work of a moment. The first shot fortunately, stretched out the chief; the second took effect on the one nearest to him; when the third had been sent on its mission there arose one simultaneous yell of dismay, and the astounded robbers began to scatter in every direction. I had no disposition to follow them, however, another minute they might rally and turn upon me; and springing forward, I grasped the reins of a freed mustang, and vaulting into the saddle. One more glance around me showed me the Senorita Paula upon the body of the chief, her laughter had been changed to grief, and some of the scattered cowards bringing their weapons to bear upon me.

"Adios Senorita, and Senorita!" said I bitterly; "he laughs best who laughs last!"

The next moment I was dashing away, down the road, the half rallied robbers pouring after me a volley, but fortunately not touching their mark. They would doubtless have followed me in hot pursuit, but for the wholesome dread they had of my still undischarged weapon. As it was I escaped, and entered the town of Puebla in triumph; where it is almost needless to add, a narrative of my exploit made me a hero and a lion for the time. Here I sold my captured mustang for what I had disposed of in the way of presents, and the next day saw me inside passenger of the same diligencia en route for Mexico, where I arrived in safety without any farther event worthy of note.

What become of the robbers and their beautiful accomplice I never learned; but the lesson taught me on that journey I have never forgotten; during the remainder of my stay in that country, no pretty woman ever had the honor of being my business confidante, or getting possession of my trusty and unfailing revolvers.

A Lesson for Suicidal Lovers.

Richard Gould, a journeyman harness-maker of Cincinnati, has himself been harassed by Cupid and driven to the very gates of desperation. His enslaver is a young lady named Charlotte Matthews, whose mother keeps a boarding house on Elm street, and who appears to have made up her mind to some more brilliant alliance than that offered by Mr. Gould. But as Richard had a very good opinion of his own merits and qualifications, he judged that Charlotte's coolness was mere coquetry, believing that when it came to the scratch, she would cave in at a moment's warning.

He resolved to melt at once the soul of the playful nymph, and to surprise her into an avowal of her real feelings. For this purpose he proceeded, about 20 minutes past 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, to the dwelling of Mrs. Matthews, and stretched himself out upon the front door steps, holding in his hand an empty phial upon which he had pasted a label of "strychnine."

"Now there will be an affecting scene when my captivating Charlotte comes out," soliloquized Mr. Gould, as he closed his eyes and composed his features to a corpse like immobility. Presently Miss Matthews appeared at the door with a broom in her hand for the purpose of sweeping the steps. On seeing the incontinent Richard, she uttered an exclamation of surprise, and then tried to stir him up with the broom-stick; but finding that he did not move, she called out—"Mother, mother, here's Dick Gould coiled up on our steps, and I don't know what ails him."

"Dead drunk I guess," said Mrs. Matthews, as she also came to the front door.

"Now, I'll declare if he hasn't kicked the bucket in reality," said Charlotte, spying the bottle, and taking it out of Gould's hand. "See the fool has been taking strychnine." "Poor soul!" sighed the benevolent old lady; "how natural he looks!" "He looks about as well as he did when he was alive," observed Charlotte, "and that's not saying much for his beauty. He never could hold a candle to Jimmy Hickman at any time."

"This Mr. Hickman is a spruce young clerk who boards with Mrs. Matthews, and who happened to come home at that very juncture."

When he saw the supposed corpse, James offered to go for the coroner to hold an inquest over "the poor devil," as he called Mr. Gould. "Well I don't like the notion of having the coroner and jury fellows poking about here," said Mrs. Matthews. "No," added Charlotte, "just drag the nasty creature on the cellar door of the next house, Jimmy, and then wash your hands and come into supper."

Mr. Hickman took the corpse by the feet, to do as he was directed when Gould dealt him a kick which doubled him up like a jack-nife. The ladies shrieked, and Mr. Gould, starting up, was beginning to upbraid Charlotte for her hardness of heart, but the arrival of a policeman interrupted his oratory, and he walked away a "sadder and a wiser man."

—Cincinnati Gazette.

The Wrong Foot Foremost.

"Why didn't you awaken me at seven o'clock, Mrs. Sweet? Here it is fifteen minutes past, and I desired particularly to be early this morning. I've more business to-day than I can attend to. You thought you wouldn't disturb me, because I said in the night that I had a headache! Well, I don't know that headaches are expected to prevent paper from maturing nor banks from closing at three o'clock. There goes that button! Are my buttons never to be sewed on so that they will last through more than one washing? This shirt is horribly ironed. Tell Bridget if she doesn't do my bosoms better, you must look out for another girl. Anything but such linen as this on a gentleman! I do not want that black suit this morning. Cannot you see that it's going to rain! You don't think it will! There never was a woman yet with clear enough reasoning faculties to be a good judge of the weather. Give me my gray clothes, and be quick about it. John hasn't half blacked these boots. I'll ring him up and make him do them over. What's that? If it's going to rain, you don't see what difference it will make. I do not know that it is any reason why a gentleman should not have his boots polished because there is a possibility of its raining. Supposing it should clear off, how do you think I would look then?"

"Isn't breakfast on the table yet?"—

Waiting for me twenty minutes, has it?—Haumph! a palatable meal it will be, I am sure. What's that I smell? If you do not wish to spoil every morsel of appetite that I have left, don't tell me that it's hot buckwheat cakes!—A dish only fit for a well man, and my stomach is horribly out of order. No, you needn't order any toast; I'll eat these, seeing they're here, and of course I'll have the headache all day to pay for it. Jamie, be quiet, sir! you can't have any more butter—it's not good for little boys. Here, Kitty, take this little tiger from the table. I'll have no screaming here. Mrs. Sweet, if you strowe as you ought to, to make his home pleasant to your husband, he would not be disturbed in this manner, at what ought to be one of the pleasantest periods of the day.

"What's that my little dear? Bring you the big wax doll I promised you.—No, not to-day. Little girls mustn't be so extravagant. Your old doll is plenty good enough, and pappa doesn't feel rich this morning. Be thankful you've got bread and butter, and do not think about new dolls."

"What would I like for dinner? I do not know that I can so long beforehand. If I feel no more appetite than I do now, I shall not want much. I've forced down eleven of these cakes, because there was nothing more suitable upon the table. If I've a return of my dyspeptic attack, I shall know who to blame for it. I might send round one of those little roast-pigs we saw last evening, if I was sure it would come to the table well stuffed with plenty of current-jelly and maccaroni, with cheese."

"You thought of going down town to-day, but will put it off if I am not prepared! A round about way of asking for money, I suppose. There's my purse; just take what there is—only, pray, leave me a sixpence to pay the omnibus. I'm just as well prepared now as I shall be for a month—and as for asking a woman to wait a month, when she's made up her mind to go shopping, a man had better ask the earth to stand still. The mania for shopping is the curse of domestic life. A woman must buy every pretty thing she sees, whether she needs it or not. And with all their extravagance, I never yet saw one of the sex who looked really comfortable and genteel. Their skirts are too long or too short; their sleeves are too wide or too narrow; their bonnets poke out like a charcoal wagon, or hang on their backs like a lost flower basket; they are as lank as a fence-rail, or as puffy as a balloon; their waists are squeezed into their hips, or bunched under the arm pits; they are bedizened, befrilled, befruffled, bebuffed, until men are ashamed of them in the saloon, laugh at them in the streets, and dread them in the cars and stages; they try to see which can be silliest, which can attract the most eyes. Mrs. Sweet, do you see that child? Fairly crawling on to the table, and the cream-cup upset on the carpet!—they cannot even give due attention to their own off—You thought I was in a hurry this morning! Well, supposing I am, am I to be driven off without breakfast half eaten? Don't be in such a hurry to get rid of your beloved—don't! I suppose it's unpleasant to hear too much truth."

"There's that bran new silk umbrella gone, that I bought only the last storm, and nothing to be found of it! And now, of course, it will rain—it always does when a person has no umbrella! Say, wife, if Jones should call here to-day for that subscription I promised him, tell him I've made up my mind not to give anything. I don't believe in societies—they're humbugs from beginning to end! And do try and look a little more amiable upon my return. You look as if you was going to say something sharp; and of all things, preserve me from a fretful wife! This fretting—fretting—fretting, all the time, is enough to drive a man mad. Well, good morning, my love.—Of course it won't rain, now I've got my old clothes on!"