

The Watchman and Southron.

THE SUMTER WATCHMAN, Established April, 1850.

"Be Just and Fear not—Let all the Ends thou Aims't at, be thy Country's, thy God's and Truth's."

THE TRUE SOUTHRON, Established June, 1866

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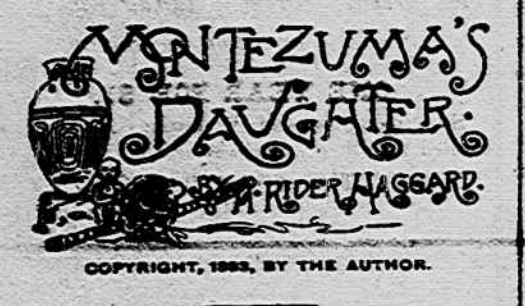
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CHAPTER XXIX.
THE END OF GUATEMOC.

Now for awhile I dwell in quiet at the City of Pines, and by slow degrees and with much suffering I recovered from the wounds that the cruel hand of De Garcia had inflicted upon me. But we knew that this peace could not last, and the people of the Otomie knew it also, for had they not scourged the envoys of Malinche out of the gates of their city? Many of them were now sorry that this had been done, but it was done, and they must reap as they had sown.

So they made ready for war, and Otomie was the president of their councils, in which I shared. At length came news that a force of 50 Spaniards, with 5,000 Tlascalan allies, were advancing on the city to destroy us. Then I took command of the tribesmen of the Otomie—there were 10,000 or more of them, all well-armed after their own fashion—and advanced out of the city till I was two-thirds of the way down the gorge which leads to it. But I did not bring my army down to the gorge, since there was no room for them to fight there, and I had another plan. I sent some 7,000 men round the mountains, of which the secret paths were well known to them, bidding them climb to the crest of the precipices that bordered either side of the gorge, and there, at certain places where the cliff is sheer and more than 1,000 feet in height, to make a great provision of stones.

The rest of my army, excepting 500 whom I kept with me, I armed with bows and throwing spears and stationed them in ambush in convenient places where the sides of the cliff were broken and in such fashion that rocks from above could be rolled on them. Then I sent trusty men as spies to warn me of the approach of the Spaniards and others whose mission it was to offer themselves to them as guides.

Now, I thought my plan good, and everything looked well, and yet it missed failure but by a very little, for Maxtia, our enemy and the friend of the Spaniards, was in my camp—indeed I had brought him with me that I might watch him—and he had not been idle.

For when the Spaniards were half a day's march from the mouth of the defile one of those men whom I had told off to watch their advance came to me and made it known that Maxtia had bribed him to go to the leader of the Spaniards and disclose to him the plan of the ambushade. This man had taken the bribe and started on his errand of treachery, but his heart failed him, and returning he told me all. Then I caused Maxtia to be seized, and before nightfall he had paid the price of his wickedness.

On the morning after his death the Spanish army entered the pass. Half way down it I met them with my 500 men and engaged them, but suffered them to drive us back with some loss. As they followed they grew bolder, and we fled faster till at length we flew down the defile, followed by the Spanish horse. Now, some three furlongs from its mouth that leads to the City of Pines this pass turns and narrows, and here the cliffs are so sheer and high that a twilight reigns at the foot of them.

with these dear children of mine any more than I have had with that which Lily bore me. Two of them died—one from a fever that all my skill would not avail to cure, and another by a fall from a lofty cedar tree, which he climbed searching for a kite's nest. Thus of the three of them—since I do not speak now of that infant, my firstborn, who perished in the siege—there remained to me only the eldest and best beloved, of whom I must tell hereafter.

For the rest, jointly with Otomie I was named cazique of the City of Pines at a great council that was held after I had destroyed the Spaniards and their allies, and as such we had wide though not absolute power. By the exercise of this power in the end I succeeded in abolishing the horrible rites of human sacrifice, though, because of this, a large number of the outlying tribes fell away from our rule, and the enmity of the priests was excited against me. The last sacrifice, except one only, the most terrible of them all, of which I will tell hereafter, that was ever celebrated on the teocallis in front of the palace took place after the defeat of the Spaniards in the pass.

When I had dwelt three years in the City of Pines and two sons had been born to me there, secret messengers arrived that were to be sent by the friends of Guatemoc, who had survived the torture and was still a prisoner in the hands of Cortes. From these messengers we learned that Cortes was about to start upon an expedition to the gulf of Honduras, across the country that is now known as Yucatan, taking Guatemoc and other Aztec nobles with him, for his desire to leave them behind. We heard also that there was much murmuring among the conquered tribes of Anahuac because of the cruelties and extortions of the Spaniards, and many thought that the hour had come when a rising against them might be carried to a successful issue.

This was the prayer of those who sent the envoys—first, I should raise a force of Otomies and travel with it across the country to Yucatan, and there with others who would be gathered wait a favorable opportunity to throw myself upon the Spaniards when they were entangled in the forests and swamps, putting them to the sword and releasing Guatemoc. Such was the first purpose of the plot, though it had many others of which it is useless to speak, seeing that they came to nothing.

When the message had been delivered, I shook my head sadly, for I could see no hope in such a scheme, but the chief of the messengers rose and led me aside, saying that he had a word for my ear.

"Guatemoc sends these words," he said. "I hear that you, my brother, are free and safe with my cousin Otomie in the mountains of the Otomie. I, alas, linger in the prisons of the Teules like a crippled eagle in a cage. My brother, if it is in your power to help me, do so, I conjure you, by the memory of our ancient friendship and of all that we have suffered together. Then a time may still come when I shall rule again in Anahuac, and you shall sit at my side."

I heard, and my heart was stirred, for then, as to this hour, I loved Guatemoc as a brother.

"Go back," I said, "and find means to tell Guatemoc that if I can save him I will,



"Go back," I said.

though I have small hopes that way. Still let him look for me in the forests of Yucatan."

Now, when Otomie heard of this promise of mine she was vexed, for she said that it was foolish and would only end in my losing my life. Still, having given it, she held with me that it must be carried out, and the end of it was that I raised 500 men, and with them set out upon my long and toilsome march, which I timed so as to meet Cortes in the passes of Yucatan. At the last moment Otomie wished to accompany me, but I forbade it, pointing out that she could leave neither of her children, and we parted with bitter grief for the first time.

Of all the hardships that I underwent I will not write. For 2½ months we struggled along across mountains and rivers and through swamps and forests till at last we reached a mighty deserted city that was called Palenque by the Indians of those parts, which has been uninhabited for many generations. This city is the most marvelous place that I have seen in all my travels, though much of it is hidden in bush, for wherever the traveler wanders there he finds vast palaces of marble, carved within and without, and sculptured teocallis and the huge images of grinning gods. Often I have wondered what nation was strong enough to build such a capital, and who were the kings that dwelt in it. But these are secrets belonging to the past, and they cannot be answered till some learned man has found the key to the stone symbols and writings with which the walls of the buildings are covered over.

It was to find a wide, roaring flood that no man could pass in anything less frail than a Yarmouth herring boat. So there on the bank we must stay in misery, suffering many ills from fever, lack of food and plenty of water, till at length the stream ran down.

Three days and nights we waited there, and on the fourth morning I made shift to cross, losing four men by drowning in the passage. Once over, I hid my force in the bush and reeds and crept forward with six men only to see if I could discover anything of the whereabouts of the Spaniards. Within an hour I struck the trail that they had cut through the forest and followed it cautiously. Presently we came to a spot where the forest was thin, and here Cortes had camped, for there was heat left in the ashes of his fires, and among them lay the body of an Indian who had died from sickness. Not 50 yards from this camp stood a huge ceiba, a tree that has a habit of growth not unlike that of our English oak, though it is soft wood and white barked and will increase more in bulk in 20 years than any oak may in 100.

Indeed I never yet saw an oak tree so large as this ceiba of which I write, either in girth or in its spread of top, unless it be the Kirby oak or the tree that is called the King of Scots, which grows at Broomfield, in the next parish to this of Ditchingham, in Norfolk. On this ceiba tree many zaphilotes or vultures were perched, and as we crept toward it I saw what it was they came to seek, for from the lowest branches of the ceiba three corpses swung in the breeze. "Here are the Spaniards' footprints," I said. "Let us look at them," and we passed beneath the shadow of the tree.

As I came, a zaphilote alighted on the head of the body that hung nearest to me, and its weight or the wafting of the fowl's wing caused the dead man to turn round so that he came face to face with me. I looked, started back, then looked again and sank to the earth groaning, for here was he whom I had come to seek and save, my brother, Guatemoc, the last emperor of Anahuac. Here he hung in the dim and desolate forest, dead by the death of a thief, while the vulture shrieked upon his head. I sat bewildered and horror-stricken, and as I sat I remembered the proud sign of Aztec royalty, a bird of prey clasping an adder in its claw. There before me was the last of the stock, and, behold, a bird of prey gripped his hair in its talons, a fitting emblem indeed of the fall of Anahuac and the kings of Anahuac!

I sprang to my feet, with an oath, and lifting the bow I held I sent an arrow through the vulture, and it fell to the earth fluttering and screaming. Then I bade those with me to cut down the corpses of Guatemoc and of the prince of Tacuba and another noble who hung with him and hollow a deep grave beneath the tree. There I laid them, and there I left them to sleep forever in its melancholy shadow, and thus for the last time I saw Guatemoc, my brother, whom I came far to save and found ready for burial by the Spaniard.

Then I turned my face homeward, for now Anahuac had no king to rescue, but it chanced that before I went I caught a Tlascalan who could speak Spanish, and who had deserted from the army of Cortes because of the hardships that he suffered in their toilsome march. This man was present at the murder of Guatemoc and his companions, and heard the emperor's last words. It seems that some knave had betrayed to Cortes that an attempt would be made to rescue the prince, and that thereon Cortes commanded that he should be hung. It seems also that Guatemoc met his death as he had met the misfortunes of his life—proudly and without fear. These were his last words: "I did ill, Malinche, when I held my hand from taking my own life before I surrendered myself to you. Then my heart told me that all your promises were false, and it has not lied to me. I welcome my death, for I have lived to know shame and defeat and torture and to see my people the slaves of the Teule, but still I say that God will reward you for this deed."

Then they murdered him in the midst of a great silence.

And so farewell to Guatemoc, the most brave, the best and the noblest Indian that ever breathed, and may the shadow of his tormentings and sad shameful end lie deep upon the fame of Cortes so long as the names of both of them are remembered among men!

For two more months I journeyed homeward, and at length I reached the City of Pines well, though wearied, and having lost only 40 men by various misadventures, to find Otomie in good health and overjoyed to know me safe whom she thought never to see again. But when I told her what was the end of her cousin Guatemoc she grieved bitterly, both for his sake and because the last hope of the Aztecs was gone, and she would not be comforted for many days.

CHAPTER XXX.
ISABELLA DE SIGUENZA IS AVENGED.

For many years after the death of Guatemoc I lived with Otomie at peace in the City of Pines. Our country was poor and rugged, and though we defied the Spaniards and paid them no tribute, now that Cortes had gone back to Spain they had no heart to attempt our conquest. Save some few tribes that lived in difficult places like ourselves, all Anahuac was in their power, and there was little to gain except hard blows in the bringing of a remnant of the people of the Otomie beneath their yoke, so they let us be till a more convenient season. I say of a remnant of the Otomie, for as time went on many clans submitted to the Spaniards till at length we ruled over the City of Pines alone and some leagues of territory about it. Indeed it was only love for Otomie and respect for the shadow of her ancient race and name, together with some reverence for me as one of the unconquerable white men and for my skill as a general, that kept our following together.

And so the years rolled on, bringing little change with them, till I grew sure that here in this far place I should live and die. But that was not to be my fate.

wrought cruelties enough when, tearing out the victim's heart, they offered it like incense to Huitzel or to Quetzal, but they at least dismissed his soul to the mansions of the sun. With the Christian priests the thumbscrew and the stake took the place of the stone of sacrifice, but the soul which they delivered from its earthly bondage they consigned to the house of hell.

Of these priests a certain Father Pedro was the boldest and the most cruel. To and fro he passed, marking his path with the corpses of idolaters, until he earned the name of the "Christian devil." At length he ventured too far in his holy fervor and was seized by a clan of the Otomie that had broken from our rule upon this very question of human sacrifice, but which was not yet subjugated by the Spaniards. One day—it was when we had ruled for some 14 years in the City of Pines—it came to my knowledge that the pabas of this clan had captured a Christian priest and designed to offer him to the god Tezcat.

Attended by a small guard only, I passed rapidly across the mountains, purposing to visit the cazique of this clan, with whom, although he had cast off his allegiance to us, I still kept up a show of friendship, and, if I could, to persuade him to release the priest. But swiftly as I traveled the vengeance of the pabas was more swift, and I arrived at the village only to find the "Christian devil" in the act of being led to sacrifice before the image of a hideous idol that was set upon a stake and surrounded with piles of skulls. Naked to the waist, his hands bound behind him, his grizzled locks hanging about his breast, his keen eyes fixed upon the faces of his heathen foes in menace rather than in supplication, his thin lips muttering prayers, Father Pedro passed on to the place of his doom, now



and again shaking his head fiercely to free himself from the torment of the insects which buzzed about it.

I looked upon him and wondered. I looked again and knew. Suddenly there rose before my mind a vision of that gloomy vault in Seville of a woman, young and lovely, draped in ceremonies, and of a thin faced, black robed friar who smote her upon the lips with his ivory crucifix and cursed her for a blaspheming heretic. There before me was the man. Isabella de Siguenza had prayed that a fate like to her own should befall him, and it was upon him now. Nor indeed, remembering all that had been in my power to avert it, even if it had been in my power to do so. I stood by and let the victim pass, but as he passed I spoke to him in Spanish, saying:

"Remember that which it may well be you have forgotten, holy father. Remember now the dying prayer of Isabella de Siguenza, whom many years ago you did to death in Seville."

The man heard me. He turned livid beneath his bronzed skin and staggered until I thought that he would have fallen. He stared upon me with terror in his eye to see, as he believed, a common sight enough, that of an Indian chief rejoicing at the death of one of his oppressors.

"What devil are you," he said hoarsely, "sent from hell to torment me at the last?"

"Remember the dying prayer of Isabella de Siguenza, whom you struck and cursed," I answered, mocking. "Seek not to know whether I am, but remember this only, now and forever."

For a moment he stood still, heedless of the urgings of his tormentors. Then his courage came to him again, and he cried with a great voice: "Get thee behind me, satan. What have I to fear from thee? I remember that dead sinner well—may her soul have peace—and her curse has fallen upon thee. I rejoice that it should be so, for on the farther side of yonder stone the gates of heaven open to my sight. Get thee behind me, satan. What have I to fear from thee?"

Crying thus, he staggered forward, saying: "O God, into thy hand I commend my spirit!" May his soul have peace also, for if he was shrunk at least he was brave and did not crumk beneath those torments which he had inflicted on many others.

Now this was a little matter, but its results were large. Had I saved Father Pedro from the hands of the pabas of the Otomie it is likely enough that I should not today be writing this history here in the valley of the Wavenny. I do not know if I could have saved him. I only know that I did not try, and that because of his death I was right or wrong, who can say? Those who judge my story may think that in this as in other matters I was wrong. Had they seen Isabella de Siguenza die within her living tomb certainly they would hold that I was right. But for good or ill, matters came about as I have written.

ago we held sway over a great district of mountains, whose crude clans would send up their warriors in hundreds at our call. Now these clans had broken from our yoke, which was acknowledged by the people of the City of Pines alone and those of some adjacent villages. When the Spaniards came down on me the first time, I was able to muster an army of 10,000 soldiers to oppose them; now, with much toil, I could collect no more than between 2,000 and 3,000 men, and of these some slipped away as the hour of danger drew nigh.

Still I must put a bold face on my necessities and make what play I might with such forces as lay at my command, although in my heart I feared much for the issue. But of my fears I said nothing to Otomie, and if she felt any she, on her part, buried them in her breast. In truth, I do believe her faith in me was so great that she thought my single wit enough to overmatch all the armies of the Spaniards.

Now at length the enemy drew near, and I set my battle as I had done 14 years before, advancing down the pass by which alone they could approach us with a small portion of my force and stationing the remainder in two equal companies upon either brow of the beetling cliffs that overhung the road, having command to overwhelm the Spaniards with rocks, hurled upon them from above, so soon as I should give the signal by flying before them down the pass. Other measures I took also, for seeing that, do what I would, it might happen that we should be driven back upon the city, I caused its walls and gates to be set in order and garrisoned them. As a last resource, too, I stored the lofty summit of the teocallis, which, now that sacrifices were no longer offered there, was used as an arsenal for the material of war, with water and provisions and fortified its sides by walls studded with volcanic glass and by other devices till it seemed well nigh impossible that any should be able to force them while a score of men still lived to offer a defense.

It was on one night in the early summer, having bid farewell to Otomie and taking my son with me, for he was now of an age when, according to the Indian customs, lads are brought face to face with the dangers of battle, that I dispatched the appointed companies to their stations on the brow of the precipice and sallied into the darkness mouth of the pass with the few hundred men who were left to me. I knew by my spies that the Spaniards who were encamped on the farther side would attempt its passage an hour before the daylight, trusting to finding me asleep. And, sure enough, on the following morning, so early that the first rays of the sun had not yet stained the lofty snows of the volcan Xaca that towered behind us, a distant murmuring which echoed through the silence of the night told me that the enemy had begun his march. I moved down the pass to meet him easily enough. There was no stone in it that was not known to me and my men. But with the Spaniards it was otherwise, for many of them were mounted, and, moreover, they dragged with them two caronades. Time upon time these heavy guns remained fast in the boulder strewn roadway, for in the darkness the slaves who drew them could find no places for the wheels to run on, till in the end the captains of the army, unwilling to risk a fight at so great a disadvantage, ordered them to halt until the day broke.

At length the dawn came, and the light fell dimly down the depths of the vast gulf, revealing the long ranks of the Spaniards clad in their bright armor and the yet more brilliant thousands of their native allies, gorgeous in their painted helms and their glittering coats of feathers. They saw us also, and mocking at our poor array their column twisted forward like some huge snake in the crack of a rock till they came to within a hundred paces of us. Then the Spaniards raised their battleries of St. Peter, and lance at rest they charged us with their horse. We met them with a rain of arrows that checked them a little, but not for long. Soon they were among us, driving us back at the point of their lances and slaying many, for our Indian weapons could work little harm to men and horses clad in armor. Therefore we must fly, and indeed flight was my plan, for by it I hoped to lead the foe to that part of the defile where the road was narrow and the cliffs sheer, and they might be crushed by the stones which should hail on them from above. All went well. We fled. The Spaniards followed, flushed with victory, till they were fairly in the trap. Now a single boulder came rushing from on high, and falling on a horse killed him, then, rebounding, carried dismay and wounds to those behind. Another followed, and yet another, and I grew glad at heart, for it seemed to me that the danger was over, and that for the second time my strategy had succeeded.

But suddenly from above there came a sound other than that of the rushing rocks, the sound of men joining in battle, that grew till the air was full of its tumult; then something whirled down from on high. I looked. It was no stone, but a man, one of my own men. Indeed he was but as the first raindrop of a shower.

Alas, I saw the truth! I had been outwitted. The Spaniards, old in war, could not be caught twice by such a trick. They advanced down the pass with the caronades indeed, because they must, but first they sent great bodies of men to climb the mountain under shelter of the night by secret paths which had been discovered to them, and there on its summit to deal with those who would stay their passage by hurling rocks upon them.

And in truth they dealt with them but too well, for my men of the Otomie, lying on the verge of the cliff among the scrub of aloes and other prickly plants that grew there, watching the advance of the foe beneath and never for one moment dreaming that foes might be upon their flank, were utterly surprised. Scarcely had they laid to their sides that they might have the greater freedom in the rolling of heavy masses of rock, when the enemy, who outnumbered them by far, were upon them with a yell. Then came a fight, short, but decisive.

Too late I saw it all and cursed the folly that had not provided against such chances, for indeed I never thought it possible that the forces of the Spaniards could find the secret trails upon the farther side of the mountain, forgetting that treason makes most things possible.

CHAPTER XXXI.
THE SIEGE OF THE CITY OF PINES.
The battle was already lost. From a thousand feet above us swelled the shouts of victory. The battle was lost, and yet I must fight on. As swiftly as I could I withdrew those who were left to me to a certain angle in the path, where a score of desperate men might for awhile hold back the advance of an army. Here I called for some to stand at my side, and many answered to my call. Out of them I chose 50 men or more, bidding the rest run hard for the City of Pines, there to warn those who were left in garrison that the hour of danger was upon them, and should I fall, to conjure Guatemoc, my wife, to make the best resistance in her power till, if it were possible, she could bring from the Spaniards a promise of safety for herself, her child and her people. Meanwhile I could hold the pass so that time might be given to shut the gates and man the walls. With the main body of those who were left to me I sent back my son, though he prayed hard to be allowed to stay with me. But, seeing nothing before me except death, I refused him.

Presently all were gone, and fearing a snare the Spaniards came slowly and cautiously round the angle of the rock, and seeing so few men mustered to meet them, halted, for now they were certain that we had set a trap for them, since they did not think it possible that such a little band would venture to oppose their army. Here the ground lay so that only a few of them could come against us at one time, nor could they bring their heavy pieces to bear upon us, and even their arquebuses helped but little; also the roughness of the road forced them to dismount from their horses, so that if they would attack at all it must be on foot. This in the end they chose to do. Many fell upon either side, though I myself received no wound, but in the end they drove us back; inch by inch they drove us back, at the points of their long lances, till at length they forced us into the mouth of the pass that is some five furlongs distant from what was once the wall of the City of Pines.

To fight further was of no avail. Here we must choose between death and flight, and, as may be guessed, for wives' and children's sake, if not for our own, we chose to fly. Across the plain we fled like deer, and after us came the Spaniards and their allies like hounds. Happily the ground was rough with stones, so that their horses could not gallop freely, and thus it happened that some of us, perhaps 80, gained the gates in safety. Of my army not more than 500 in all lived to enter them again, and perchance there were as many left within the city.

The heavy gates swung to, and scarcely were they barred with the massive beams of oak when the foremost of the Spaniards rode up to them. My bow was still in my hand, and there was one arrow left in my quiver. I set it on the string, and drawing the bow with my full strength I loosed the shaft through the bars of the gate at a young and gallant looking cavalier who rode the first of all.

It struck him truly between the joint of his helm and neckpiece, and stretching his arms out wide he fell over the crupper of his horse to move no more. Then they withdrew, but presently one of their number came forward bearing a flag of truce. He was a knightly looking man, clad in rich armor, and watching him it seemed to me that there was something in his bearing and in the careless grace with which he sat his horse that was familiar to me. Reining up in front of the gates, he raised his visor and began to speak.

I knew him at once. Before me was De Garcia, my enemy, of whom I had neither seen nor heard anything for hard upon 12 years. Time had touched him indeed, which was scarcely to be wondered at, for now he was a man of 60 or more. His peaked chestnut colored beard was streaked with gray, his cheeks were hollow, and at that distance his lips seemed like two thin red lines, but the eyes were as they had always been, bright and piercing, and the same old smile played about his mouth. Without a doubt it was De Garcia, who now, as at every crisis of my life, appeared to shape my fortunes to some evil end, and I felt as I looked upon him that the last and greatest struggle between us was at hand, and that before many days were sped the ancient and accumulated hate of one or both of us would be buried forever in the silence of death. How ill had fate dealt with me now, as always! But a few minutes before, when I set that arrow on the string, I had wavered for a moment, doubting whether to loose it at the young cavalier who lay dead or at the knight who rode next to him, and see. I had slain one with whom I had no quarrel and left my enemy unharmed!

"Ho, there!" cried De Garcia in Spanish. "I desire to speak with the leader of the rebel Otomie on behalf of the Captain Bernal Diaz, who commands this army."

Now I mounted on the wall by means of a ladder which was at hand and answered, "Speak on; I am the man you seek."

"You know Spanish well, friend," said De Garcia, starting and looking at me keenly beneath his bent brows. "Say now, where did you learn it? And what is your name and lineage?"

"I learned it, Juan de Garcia, from a certain Donna Luisa, whom you knew in your days of youth. And my name is Thomas Wingfield."

Now De Garcia reeled in his saddle and swore a great oath.

"Mother of God!" he said. "Years ago I was told that you had taken up your abode among some savage tribe, but since then I have been far, to Spain and back indeed, and I deemed that you were dead, Thomas Wingfield. My luck is good, in truth, for it has been one of the great sorrows of my life that you have so often escaped me, renegade. Be sure that this time there

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