

CAPTAIN MACKLIN

HIS MEMOIRS

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II

S. S. PANAMA,
OFF COAST OF HONDURAS.

To one who never before had travelled farther than is Dobbs Ferry from Philadelphia, my journey south to New Orleans was something in the way of an expedition, and I found it rich in incident and adventure. Everything was new and strange, but nothing was so strange as my own freedom. After three years of discipline, of going to bed by drum-call, of waking by drum-call, and obeying the orders of others, this new independence added a supreme flavor to all my pleasures. I took my journey very seriously, and I determined to make every little incident contribute to my better knowledge of the world. I rated the chance acquaintances of the smoking-car as aids to a clear understanding of mankind, and when at Washington I saw above the house-tops the marble dome of the Capitol I was thrilled to think that I was already so much richer in experience.

To me the States through which we passed spoke with but one meaning. I saw the country on either side of the train as the chess-board of the War of the Rebellion. I imagined the towns fortified and besieged, the hills topped with artillery, the forests alive with troops in ambush, and in my mind, on account of their strategic value to the enemy, I destroyed the bridges over which we passed. The passengers were only too willing to instruct a stranger in the historical values of their country. They pointed out to me where certain regiments had camped, where homesteads had been burned, and where real battles, not of my own imagining, but which had cost the lives of many men, had been lost and won. I found that to these chance acquaintances the events of which they spoke were as fresh after twenty years as though they

had occurred but yesterday, and they accepted my curiosity as only a natural interest in a still vital subject. I judged it advisable not to mention that General Hamilton was my grandfather. Instead I told them that I was the son of an officer who had died for the cause of secession. This was the first time I had ever missed an opportunity of boasting of my relationship to my distinguished grandparent, and I felt meanly conscious that I was in a way disloyal. But they were so genuinely pleased when they learned that my father had fought for the South, that I lacked the courage to tell them that while he was so engaged another relative of mine had driven one of their best generals through three States.

I am one who makes the most of what he sees, and even the simplest things filled me with delight; my first sight of cotton-fields, of tobacco growing in the leaf, were great moments to me; and that the men who guarded the negro convicts at work in the fields still clung to the uniform of gray, struck me as a fact of pathetic interest.

I was delayed in New Orleans for only one day. At the end of that time I secured passage on the steamer Panama. She was listed to sail for Aspinwall at nine o'clock the next morning, and to touch at ports along the Central American coast. While waiting for my steamer I mobilized my transport and supplies, and purchased such articles as I considered necessary for a rough campaign in a tropical climate. My purchases were extremely modest in number, but well selected. They consisted of a revolver, a money-belt, in which to carry my small fortune, which I had exchanged into gold double-eagles, a pair of field-glasses, a rubber blanket, a canteen, riding boots, and saddle-bags. I decided

that my uniform and saddle would be furnished me from the quartermaster's department of Garcia's army, for in my ignorance I supposed I was entering on a campaign conducted after the methods of European armies.

We left the levees of New Orleans early in the morning, and for the remainder of the day steamed slowly down the Mississippi River. I sat alone upon the deck watching the low, swampy banks slipping past us on either side, the gloomy cypress-trees heavy with gray moss, the abandoned cotton-gins and disused negro quarters. As I did so a feeling of homesickness and depression came upon me, and my disgraceful failure at the Point, the loss of my grandfather, and my desertion of Beatrice, for so it began to seem to me, filled me with a bitter melancholy.

The sun set the first day over great wastes of swamp, swamp-land, and pools of inky black, which stretched as far as the eye could reach; gloomy, silent, and barren of any form of life. It was a picture which held neither the freedom of the open sea nor the human element of the solid earth. It seemed to me as though the world must have looked so when darkness brooded over the face of the waters, and as I went to my berth that night I felt as though I were saying good-by forever to all that was dear to me—my country, my home, and the girl I loved.

I was awakened in the morning by a motion which I had never before experienced. I was being gently lifted and lowered and rolled to and fro as a hammock is rocked by the breeze. For some minutes I lay between sleep and waking, struggling back to consciousness, until with a sudden gasp of delight it came to me that at last I was at sea. I scrambled from my berth and pulled back the curtains of the air port. It was as though over night the ocean had crept up to my window. It stretched below me in great distances of a deep, beautiful blue. Tumbling waves were chasing each other over it, and millions of white caps glanced and flashed as they raced by me in the sun. It was my first real view of the ocean, and the restlessness of it and the freedom of it stirred me with a great happi-

ness. I drank in its beauty as eagerly as I filled my lungs with the keen salt air, and thanked God for both.

The three short days which followed were full of new and delightful surprises, some because it was all so strange and others because it was so exactly what I had hoped it would be. I had read many tales of the sea, but ships I knew only as they moved along the Hudson at the end of the towing-line. I had never felt one rise and fall beneath me, nor from the deck of one watched the sun sink into the water. I had never at night looked up at the great masts, and seen them swing, like a pendulum reversed, between me and the stars. The ship in itself fascinated and captivated me. When she dove forward, tossing the water back, I felt the same human sympathy for her as I would have felt for a swimmer driving through the waves. I wanted to shout out my encouragement.

There was so much to learn that was new and so many things to see on the waters, and in the skies, that it seemed wicked to sleep. So, during nearly the whole of every night, I stood with Captain Leeds on his bridge, or asked ignorant questions of the man at the wheel. The steward of the Panama was purser, supercargo, and barkeeper in one, and a most interesting man. He apparently never slept, but at any hour was willing to sit and chat with me. It was he who first introduced me to the wonderful mysteries of the alligator pear as a salad, and taught me to prefer, in a hot country, Jamaica rum with half a lime squeezed into the glass to all other spirits. It was a most educational trip. I saw the gorgeous gold and pink-and-pearl skies of the tropics for the first time, and flying fish, in which I had never really believed, and Portuguese men-of-war steering themselves over the highest waves as lightly as bubbles, and flashing with all the primary colors. One day we passed for hours through a school of great turtles as large as wash-tubs. They were so close to the ship's sides that I could see their blinking, hooded eyes.

I had much entertainment on board the Panama by pretending that I was her captain, and that she was sailing under my orders. Sometimes I pretended that

she was an American man-of-war, and sometimes a filibuster escaping from an American man-of-war. This may seem an absurd and childish game, but I had always wanted to hold authority, and as I had never done so, except as a drill sergeant at the Academy, it was my habit to imagine myself in whatever position of responsibility my surroundings suggested. For this purpose the Panama served me excellently, and in scanning the horizon for hostile fleets or a pirate flag I was as conscientious as was the lookout in the bow. At the Academy I had often sat in my room with maps spread out before me planning attacks on the enemy, considering my lines of communication, telegraphing wildly for reinforcements, and despatching my aides with a clearly written, comprehensive order to where my advance column was engaged. I believe this "play acting," as my roommate used to call it, helped me to think quickly, to give an intelligent command intelligently, and made me rich in resources.

For the first few days I was so enchanted with my new surroundings that the sinister purpose of my journey South lost its full value. And when, as we approached Honduras, it was recalled to me, I was surprised to find that I had heard no one on board discuss the war, nor refer to it in any way. When I considered this, I was the more surprised because Porto Cortez was one of the chief ports at which we touched, and I was annoyed to find that I had travelled so far for the sake of a cause in which those directly interested felt so little concern. I set about with great caution to discover the reason for this lack of interest. The passengers of the Panama came from widely different parts of Central America. They were coffee planters and mining engineers, concession hunters, and promoters of mining companies. I sounded each of them separately as to the condition of affairs in Honduras, and gave as my reason for inquiring the fact that I had thoughts of investing my money there. I talked rather largely of my money. But this information, instead of inducing them to speak of Honduras, only made each of them more eloquent in praising the particular republic in which his own money was invested, and each

begged me to place mine with his. In the course of one day I was offered a part ownership in four coffee plantations, a rubber forest, a machine for turning the sea-turtles into fat and shell, and the good-will and fixtures of a dentist's office.

Except that I obtained some reputation on board as a young man of property, which reputation I endeavored to maintain by treating everyone to drinks in the social hall, my inquiries led to no result. No one apparently knew, nor cared to know, of the revolution in Honduras, and passed it over as a joke. This hurt me, but lest they should grow suspicious, I did not continue my inquiries.

THE CAFÉ SANTOS,
SAGUA LA GRANDE, HONDURAS.

WE sighted land at seven in the morning, and as the ship made in toward the shore I ran to the bow and stood alone peering over the rail. Before me lay the scene set for my coming adventures, and as the ship threaded the coral reefs, my excitement ran so high that my throat choked, and my eyes suddenly dimmed with tears. It seemed too good to be real. It seemed impossible that it could be true; that at last I should be about to act the life I had so long only rehearsed and pretended. But the pretence had changed to something living and actual. In front of me, under a flashing sun, I saw the palm-fringed harbor of my dreams, a white village of thatched mud houses, a row of ugly huts above which drooped limply the flags of foreign consuls, and, far beyond, a deep blue range of mountains, forbidding and mysterious, rising out of a steaming swamp into a burning sky, and on the harbor's only pier, in blue drill uniforms and gay red caps, a group of dark-skinned, swaggering soldiers. This hot, volcano-looking land was the one I had come to free from its fetters. These swarthy barefooted brigands were the men with whom I was to fight.

My trunk had been packed and strapped since sunrise, and before the ship reached the pier, I had said "good-by" to everyone on board and was waiting impatiently at the gang-way. I was the only passenger to leave, and no cargo was unloaded nor taken on. She was waiting

only for the agent of the company to confer with Captain Leeds, and while these men were conversing on the bridge, and the hawser was being drawn on board, the custom-house officers, much to my disquiet, began to search my trunk. I had nothing with me which was dutiable, but my grandfather's presentation sword was hidden in the trunk and its presence there and prospective use would be difficult to explain. It was accordingly with a feeling of satisfaction that I noticed on a building on the end of the pier the sign of our consulate and the American flag, and that a young man, evidently an American, was hurrying from it toward the ship. But as it turned out I had no need of his services, for I had concealed the sword so cleverly by burying each end of it in one of my long cavalry boots, that the official failed to find it.

I had locked my trunk again and was waving final farewells to those on the Panama, when the young man from the consulate began suddenly to race down the pier, shouting as he came.

The gang-way had been drawn up, and the steamer was under way, churning the water as she swung slowly seaward, but she was still within easy speaking distance of the pierhead.

The young man rushed through the crowd, jostling the native Indians and negro soldiers, and shrieked at the departing vessel.

"Stop!" he screamed, "stop! stop her!"

He recognized Captain Leeds on the bridge, and, running along the pierhead until he was just below it, waved wildly at him.

"Where's my freight?" he cried. "My freight! You haven't put off my freight."

Captain Leeds folded his arms comfortably upon the rail, and regarded the young man calmly and with an expression of amusement.

"Where are my sewing-machines?" the young man demanded. "Where are the sewing-machines invoiced me by this steamer?"

"Sewing machines, Mr. Aiken?" the Captain answered. "I left your sewing-machines in New Orleans."

"You what?" shrieked the young man. "You left them?"

"I left them sitting on the company's levee," the Captain continued, calmly. "The revenue officers have 'em by now, Mr. Aiken. Some parties said they weren't sewing-machines at all. They said you were acting for La Guerre."

The ship was slowly drawing away. The young man stretched out one arm as though to detain her, and danced frantically along the stringhead.

"How dare you!" he cried. "I'm a commission merchant. I deal in whatever I please—and I'm the American Consul!"

The Captain laughed, and with a wave of his hand in farewell backed away from the rail.

"That may be," he shouted, "but this line isn't carrying freight for General La Guerre, nor for you, neither." He returned and made a speaking trumpet of his hands. "Tell him from me," he shouted, mockingly, "that if he wants his sewing-machines he'd better go North and steal 'em. Same as he stole our Nancy Miller."

The young man shook both his fists in helpless anger.

"You damned banana trader," he shrieked, "you'll lose your license for this. I'll fix you for this. I'll dirty your card for you, you pirate!"

The Captain flung himself far over the rail. He did not need a speaking trumpet now—his voice would have carried above the tumult of a hurricane.

"You'll what?" he roared. "You'll dirty my card, you thieving filibuster? Do you know what I'll do to you? I'll have your tin sign taken away from you, before I touch this port again. You'll see—you—you—" he ended impotently for lack of epithets, but continued in eloquent pantomime to wave his arms.

With an oath the young man recognized defeat, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, you go to the devil," he shouted, and turned away. He saw me observing him, and as I was the only person present who looked as though he understood English, he grinned at me sheepishly, and nodded.

"I don't care for him," he said. "He can't frighten me."

I considered this as equivalent to an introduction.

"You are the United States Consul?" I asked. The young man nodded briskly.

"Yes; I am. Where do you come from?"

"Dobbs Ferry, near New York," I answered. "I'd—I'd like to have a talk with you, when you are not busy."

"That's all right," he said. "I'm not busy now. That bumboat pirate queered the only business I had. Where are you going to stop? There is only one place," he explained; "that's Pulido's. He'll knife you if he thinks you have five dollars in your belt, and the bar-room is half under water anyway. Or you can take a cot in my shack, if you like, and I'll board and lodge you for two pesos a day—that's one dollar in our money. And if you are going up country," he went on, "I can fit you out with mules and mozos and everything you want, from canned meats to an escort of soldiers. You're sure to be robbed anyway," he urged, pleasantly, "and you might as well give the job to a fellow-countryman. I'd hate to have one of these greasers get it."

"You're welcome to try," I said, laughing.

In spite of his manner, which was much too familiar and patronizing, the young man amused me, and I must confess moreover that at that moment I felt very far from home and was glad to meet an American, and one not so much older than myself. The fact that he was our consul struck me as a most fortunate circumstance.

He clapped his hands and directed one of the negroes to carry my trunk to the consulate, and I walked with him up the pier, the native soldiers saluting him awkwardly as he passed. He returned their salute with a flourish, and more to impress me I guessed than from any regard for them.

"That's because I'm Consul," he said, with satisfaction. "There's only eight white men in Porto Cortez," he explained, "and we're all consular agents. The Italian consular agent is a Frenchman, and an Italian, Guessippi—the Banana King, they call him—is consular agent for both Germany and England, and the only German here is consular agent for France and Holland. You see, each of 'em has to represent some other country

than his own, because his country knows why he left it." He threw back his head and laughed at this with great delight. Apparently he had already forgotten the rebuff from Captain Leeds. But it had made a deep impression upon me. I had heard Leeds virtually accuse the consul of being an agent of General La Guerre, and I suspected that the articles he had refused to deliver were more likely to be machine guns than sewing-machines. If this were true, Mr. Aiken was a person in whom I could confide with safety.

The consulate was a one-story building of corrugated iron, hot, unpainted, and unlovely. It was set on wooden logs to lift it from the reach of "sand jiggers" and the surf, which at high tide ran up the beach, under and beyond it. Inside it was rude and bare, and the heat and the smell of the harbor, and of the swamp on which the town was built, passed freely through the open doors.

Aiken proceeded to play the host in a most cordial manner. He placed my trunk in the room I was to occupy, and set out some very strong Hondurian cigars and a bottle of Jamaica rum. While he did this he began to grumble over the loss of his sewing-machines, and to swear picturesquely at Captain Leeds, bragging of the awful things he meant to do to him. But when he had tasted his drink and lighted a cigar, his good-humor returned, and he gave his attention to me.

"Now then, young one," he asked, in a tone of the utmost familiarity, "what's your trouble?"

I explained that I could not help but hear what the Captain shouted at him from the Panama, and I asked if it was contrary to the law of Honduras for one to communicate with the officer Captain Leeds had mentioned—General La Guerre.

"The old man, hey?" Aiken exclaimed and stared at me apparently with increased interest. "Well, there are some people who might prevent your getting to him," he answered, diplomatically. For a moment he sipped his rum and water, while he examined me from over the top of the cup. Then he winked and smiled.

"Come now," he said, encouragingly. "Speak up. What's the game? You can trust me. You're an agent for Col-

lins, or the Winchester Arms people, aren't you?"

"On the contrary," I said, with some haughtiness, "I am serving no one's interest but my own. I read in the papers of General La Guerre and his foreign legion, and I came here to join him and to fight with him. That's all. I am a soldier of fortune, I said." I repeated this with some emphasis, for I liked the sound of it. "I am a soldier of fortune, and my name is Macklin. I hope in time to make it better known."

"A soldier of fortune, hey?" exclaimed Aiken, observing me with a grin. "What soldiering have you done?"

I replied, with a little embarrassment, that as yet I had seen no active service, but that for three years I had been trained for it at West Point.

"At West Point, the deuce you have!" said Aiken. His tone was now one of respect, and he regarded me with marked interest. He was not a gentleman, but he was sharp-witted enough to recognize one in me, and my words and bearing had impressed him. Still his next remark was disconcerting.

"But if you're a West Point soldier," he asked, "why the devil do you want to mix up in a shooting-match like this?"

I was annoyed, but I answered, civilly: "It's in a good cause," I said. "As I understand the situation, this President Alvarez is a tyrant. He's opposed to all progress. It's a fight for liberty."

Aiken interrupted me with a laugh, and placed his feet on the table.

"Oh, come," he said, in a most offensive tone. "Play fair, play fair."

"Play fair? What do you mean?" I demanded.

"You don't expect me to believe," he said, jeeringly, "that you came all the way down here, just to fight for the sacred cause of liberty."

I may occasionally exaggerate a bit in representing myself to be a more important person than I really am, but if I were taught nothing else at the Point, I was taught to tell the truth, and when Aiken questioned my word I felt the honor of the whole army rising within me and stiffening my back-bone.

"You had better believe what I tell you, sir," I answered him, sharply. "You

may not know it, but you are impertinent!"

I have seldom seen a man so surprised as was Aiken when I made this speech. His mouth opened and remained open while he slowly removed his feet from the table and allowed the legs of his chair to touch the floor.

"Great Scott," he said at last, "but you have got a nasty temper. I'd forgotten that folks are so particular."

"Particular—because I object to having my word doubted," I asked. "I must request you to send my trunk to Pulido's. I fancy you and I won't hit it off together." I rose and started to leave the room, but he held out his hands to prevent me, and exclaimed, in consternation:

"Oh, that's no way to treat me," he protested. "I didn't say anything for you to get on your ear about. If I did, I'm sorry." He stepped forward, offering to shake my hand, and as I took his doubtfully, he pushed me back into my chair.

"You mustn't mind me," he went on. "It's been so long since I've seen a man from God's country that I've forgotten how to do the polite. Here, have another drink and start even." He was so eager and so suddenly humble that I felt ashamed of my display of offended honor, and we began again with a better understanding.

I told him once more why I had come, and this time he accepted my story as though he considered my wishing to join La Guerre the most natural thing in the world, nodding his head and muttering approvingly. When I had finished he said, "You may not think so now, but I guess you've come to the only person who can help you. If you'd gone to anyone else you'd probably have landed in jail." He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, and then, after a mysterious wink at me, tiptoed out upon the veranda, and ran rapidly around and through the house. This precaution on his part gave me a thrill of satisfaction. I felt that at last I was a real conspirator that I was concerned in something dangerous and weighty. I sipped at my glass with an air of indifference, but as a matter of fact I was rather nervous.

"You can't be too careful," Aiken said as he reseated himself. "Of course, the whole thing is a comic opera, but if they suspect you are working against them, they're just as likely as not to make it a tragedy, with you in the star part. Now I'll explain how I got into this, and I can assure you it wasn't through any love of liberty with me. The consular agent here is a man named Quay, and he and I have been in the commission business together. About three months ago, when La Guerre was organizing his command at Bluefields, Garcia, who is the leader of the revolutionary party, sent word down here to Quay to go North for him and buy two machine guns and invoice 'em to me at the consulate. Quay left on the next steamer and appointed me acting consul, but except for his saying so I've no more real authority to act as consul than you have. The plan was that when La Guerre captured this port he would pick up the guns and carry them on to Garcia. La Guerre was at Bluefields, but couldn't get into the game for lack of a boat. So when the Nancy Miller touched there he and his crowd boarded her just like a lot of old-fashioned pirates and turned the passengers out on the wharf. Then they put a gun at the head of the engineer and ordered him to take them back to Porto Cortez. But when they reached here the guns hadn't arrived from New Orleans. And so, after a bit of a fight on landing, La Guerre pushed on without them to join Garcia. He left instructions with me to bring him word when they arrived. He's in hiding up there in the mountains, waiting to hear from me now. They ought to have come this steamer day on the Panama along with you, but, as you know, they didn't. I never thought they would. I knew the Isthmian Line people wouldn't carry 'em. They've got to beat Garcia, and until this row is over they won't even carry a mail-bag for fear he might capture it."

"Is that because General La Guerre seized one of their steamers?" I asked.

"No, it's an old fight," said Aiken, "and La Guerre's stealing the Nancy Miller was only a part of it. The fight began between Garcia and the Isthmian Line when Garcia became president. He tried to collect some money from the

Isthmian Line, and old man Fiske threw him out of the palace and made Alvarez president."

I was beginning to find the politics of the revolution into which I had precipitated myself somewhat involved, and I suppose I looked puzzled, for Aiken laughed.

"You can laugh," I said, "but it is rather confusing. Who is Fiske? Is he another revolutionist?"

"Fiske!" exclaimed Aiken. "Don't tell me you don't know who Fiske is? I mean old man Fiske, the Wall Street banker—Joseph Fiske, the one who owns the steam yacht and all the railroads."

I had of course heard of that Joseph Fiske, but his name to me was only a word meaning money. I had never thought of Joseph Fiske as a human being. At school and at the Point when we wanted to give the idea of wealth that could not be counted we used to say, "As rich as Joe Fiske." But I answered, in a tone that suggested that I knew him intimately:

"Oh, that Fiske," I said. "But what has he to do with Honduras?"

"He owns it," Aiken answered. "It's like this," he began. "You must understand that almost every republic in Central America is under the thumb of a big trading firm or a banking house or a railroad. For instance, all these revolutions you read about in the papers—it's seldom they start with the people. The *pueblo* don't often elect a president or turn one out. That's generally the work of a New York business firm that wants a concession. If the president in office won't give it a concession the company starts out to find one who will. It hunts up a rival politician or a general of the army who wants to be president, and all of them do, and makes a deal with him. It promises him if he'll start a revolution it will back him with the money and the guns. Of course, the understanding is that if the leader of the fake revolution gets in he'll give his New York backers whatever they're after. Sometimes they want a concession for a railroad, and sometimes it's a nitrate bed or a rubber forest, but you can take my word for it that there's very few revolutions down here that haven't got a money-making scheme at the bottom of them.

"Now this present revolution was started by the Isthmian Steamship Line, of which Joe Fiske is president. It runs its steamers from New Orleans to the Isthmus of Panama. In its original charter this republic gave it the monopoly of the fruit-carrying trade from all Hondurian ports. In return for this the company agreed to pay the government \$10,000 a year and ten per cent. on its annual receipts, if the receipts ever exceeded a certain amount. Well, curiously enough, although the line has been able to build seven new steamers, its receipts have never exceeded that fixed amount. And if you know these people the reason for that is very simple. The company has always given each succeeding president a lump sum for himself, on the condition that he won't ask any impertinent questions about the company's earnings. Its people tell him that it is running at a loss, and he always takes their word for it. But Garcia, when he came in, either was too honest, or they didn't pay him enough to keep quiet. I don't know which it was, but, anyway, he sent an agent to New Orleans to examine the company's books. The agent discovered the earnings have been so enormous that by rights the Isthmian Line owed the government of Honduras \$500,000. This was a great chance for Garcia, and he told them to put up the back pay or lose their charter. They refused and he got back at them by preventing their ships from taking on any cargo in Honduras, and by seizing their plant here and at Truxillo. Well, the company didn't dare to go to law about it, nor appeal to the State Department, so it started a revolution. It picked out a thief named Alvarez as a figure-head and helped him to bribe the army and capture the capital. Then he bought a decision from the local courts in favor of the company. After that there was no more talk about collecting back pay. Garcia was an exile in Nicaragua. There he met La Guerre, who is a professional soldier of fortune, and together they cooked up this present revolution. They hope to put Garcia back into power again. How he'll act if he gets in I don't know. The common people believe he's a patriot, that he'll keep all the promises he makes them—and he makes a good many—and some white

people believe in him, too. La Guerre believes in him, for instance. La Guerre told me that Garcia was a second Bolivar and Washington. But he might be both of them, and he couldn't beat the Isthmian Line. You see, while he has prevented the Isthmian Line from carrying bananas, he's cut off his own nose by shutting off his only source of supply. For these big corporations hang together at times, and on the Pacific side the Pacific Mail Company has got the word from Fiske, and they won't carry supplies, either. That's what I meant by saying that Joe Fiske owns Honduras. He's cut it off from the world, and only *his* arms and *his* friends can get into it. And the joke of it is he can't get out."

"Can't get out?" I exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

"Why, he's up there at Tegucigalpa himself," said Aiken. "Didn't you know that? He's up at the capital, visiting Alvarez. He came in through this port about two weeks ago."

"Joseph Fiske is fighting in a Hondurian revolution?" I exclaimed.

"Certainly not!" cried Aiken. "He's here on a pleasure trip; partly pleasure, partly business. He came here on his yacht. You can see her from the window, lying to the left of the buoy. Fiske has nothing to do with this row. I don't suppose he knows there's a revolution going on."

I resented this pretended lack of interest on the part of the Wall Street banker. I condemned it as a piece of absurd affectation.

"Don't you believe it!" I said. "No matter how many millions a man has, he doesn't stand to lose \$500,000 without taking an interest in it."

"Oh, but he doesn't know about *that*," said Aiken. "He doesn't know the ins and outs of the story—what I've been telling you. That's on the inside—that's café scandal. That side of it would never reach him. I suppose Joe Fiske is president of a *dozen* steamship lines, and all he does is to lend his name to this one, and preside at board meetings. The company's lawyers tell him whatever they think he ought to know. They probably say they're having trouble down here owing to one of the local revolutions,

and that Garcia is trying to blackmail them."

"Then you don't think Fiske came down here about this?" I asked.

"About this?" repeated Aiken, in a tone of such contempt that I disliked him intensely. For the last half hour Aiken had been jumping unfeelingly on all my ideals and illusions.

"No," he went on. "He came here on his yacht on a pleasure trip around the West India Islands, and he rode in from here to look over the Copan Silver Mines. Alvarez is terribly keen to get rid of him. He's afraid the revolutionists will catch him and hold him for ransom. He'd bring a good price," Aiken added, reflectively. "It's enough to make a man turn brigand. And his daughter, too. She'd bring a good price."

"His daughter!" I exclaimed.

Aiken squeezed the tips of his fingers together, and kissed them, tossing the imaginary kiss up toward the roof. Then he drank what was left of his rum and water at a gulp and lifted the empty glass high in the air. "To the daughter," he said.

It was no concern of mine, but I resented his actions exceedingly. I think I was annoyed that he should have seen the young lady while I had not. I also resented his toasting her before a stranger. I knew he could not have met her, and his pretence of enthusiasm made him appear quite ridiculous. He looked at me mournfully, shaking his head as though it were impossible for him to give me an idea of her.

"Why they say," he exclaimed, "that when she rides along the trail, the native women kneel beside it."

"She's the best looking girl I ever saw," he declared, "and she's a thoroughbred too!" he added, "or she wouldn't have stuck it out in this country when she had a clean yacht to fall back on. She's been riding around on a mule, so they tell me, along with her father and the engineering experts, and just as though she enjoyed it. The men up at the mines say she tired them all out."

I had no desire to discuss the young lady with Aiken, so I pretended not to be interested, and he ceased speaking, and we smoked in silence. But my mind was nevertheless wide awake to what he had

told me. I could not help but see the dramatic values which had been given to the situation by the presence of this young lady. The possibilities were tremendous. Here was I, fighting against her father, and here was she, beautiful and an heiress to many millions. In the short space of a few seconds I had pictured myself rescuing her from brigands, denouncing her father for not paying his honest debts to Honduras, had been shot down by his escort, Miss Fiske had bandaged my wounds, and I was returning North as her prospective husband on my prospective father-in-law's yacht. Aiken aroused me from this by rising to his feet. "Now then," he said, briskly, "if you want to go to La Guerre you can come with me. I've got to see him to explain why his guns haven't arrived, and I'll take you with me." He made a wry face and laughed. "A nice welcome he'll give me," he said. I jumped to my feet. "There's my trunk," I said; "it's ready, and so am I. When do we start?"

"As soon as it is moonlight," Aiken answered.

The remainder of the day was spent in preparing for our journey. I was first taken to the commandante and presented to him as a commercial traveller. Aiken asked him for a passport permitting me to proceed to the capital "for purposes of trade." As consular agent Aiken needed no passport for himself, but to avoid suspicion he informed the commandante that his object in visiting Tegucigalpa was to persuade Joseph Fiske, as president of the Isthmian Line, to place buoys in the harbor of Porto Cortez and give the commission for their purchase to the commandante. Aiken then and always was the most graceful liar I have ever met. His fictions were never for his own advantage, at least not obviously so. Instead, they always held out some pleasing hope for the person to whom they were addressed. His plans and promises as to what he would do were so alluring that even when I knew he was lying I liked to pretend that he was not. This particular fiction so interested the commandante that he even offered us an escort of soldiers, which honor we naturally declined.

That night when the moon had risen we started inland, each mounted on a

stout little mule, and followed by a third, on which was swung my trunk, balanced on the other side by Aiken's saddle bags. A Carib Indian whom Aiken had selected because of his sympathies for the revolution walked beside the third mule and directed its progress by the most startling shrieks and howls. To me it was a most memorable and marvellous night, and although for the greater part of it Aiken dozed in his saddle and woke only to abuse his mule, I was never more wakeful nor more happy. At the very setting forth I was pleasantly stirred when at the limit of the town a squad of soldiers halted us and demanded our passports. This was my first encounter with the government troops. They were barefooted and most slovenly looking soldiers, mere boys in age and armed with old-fashioned Remingtons. But their officer, the captain of the guard, was more smartly dressed, and I was delighted to find that my knowledge of Spanish, in which my grandfather had so persistently drilled me, enabled me to understand all that passed between him and Aiken. The captain warned us that the revolutionists were camped along the trail, and that if challenged we had best answer quickly that we were Americanos. He also told us that General La Guerre and his legion of "gringos" were in hiding in the highlands some two days' ride from the coast. Aiken expressed the greatest concern at this, and was for at once turning back. His agitation was so convincing, he was apparently so frightened, that, until he threw a quick wink at me, I confess I was completely taken in. For some time he refused to be calmed, and it was only when the captain assured him that his official position would protect him from any personal danger that he consented to ride on. Before we crossed the town limits he had made it quite evident that the officer himself was solely responsible for his continuing on his journey, and he denounced La Guerre and all his works with a picturesqueness of language and a sincerity that filled me with confusion. I even began to doubt if after all Aiken was not playing a game for both sides, and might not end my career by leading me into a trap. After we rode on I considered the possibility of this quite seriously, and I was not reassured until I

heard the *mozo*, with many chuckles and shrugs of the shoulder, congratulate Aiken on the way he had made a fool of the captain.

"That's called diplomacy, José," Aiken told him. "That's my statescraft. It's because I have so much statescraft that I am a consul. You keep your eye on this American consul, José, and you'll learn a lot of statescraft."

José showed his teeth and grinned, and after he had dropped into a line behind us we could hear him still chuckling.

"You would be a great success in secret service work, Aiken," I said, "or on the stage."

We were riding in single file, and in order to see my face in the moonlight he had to turn in his saddle.

"And yet I didn't," he laughed.

"What do you mean," I asked, "were you ever a spy or an actor?"

"I was both," he said. "I was a failure at both, too. I got put in jail for being a spy, and I ought to have been hung for my acting." I kicked my mule forward in order to hear better.

"Tell me about it," I asked, eagerly. "About when you were a spy."

But Aiken only laughed, and rode on without turning his head.

"You wouldn't understand," he said after a pause. Then he looked at me over his shoulder. "It needs a big black background of experience and hard luck to get the perspective on that story," he explained. "It wouldn't appeal to you; you're too young. They're some things they don't teach at West Point."

"They teach us," I answered, hotly, "that if we're detailed to secret service work we are to carry out our orders. It's not dishonorable to obey orders. I'm not so young as you think. Go on, tell me, in what war were you a spy?"

"It wasn't in any war," Aiken said, again turning away from me. "It was in Haskell's Private Detective Agency."

I could not prevent an exclamation, but the instant it had escaped me I could have kicked myself for having made it. "I beg your pardon," I murmured, awkwardly.

"I said you wouldn't understand," Aiken answered. Then, to show he did not wish to speak with me further, he

spurred his mule into a trot and kept a distance between us.

Our trail ran over soft, spongy ground and was shut in on either hand by a wet jungle of tangled vines and creepers. I had never imagined that there were so many kinds of plants, or that they could grow so closely knit together. They interlaced like the strands of a hammock, choking and strangling and clinging to each other in a great web. From the jungle we came to ill-smelling pools of mud and water, over which hung a white mist which rose as high as our heads. It was so heavy with moisture that our clothing dripped with it, and we were chilled until our teeth chattered. But by five o'clock in the morning we had escaped the coast swamps, and reached higher ground and the village of Sagua la Grande, and the sun was drying our clothes and taking the stiffness out of our bones.

CANAL COMPANY'S FEVER HOSPITAL,
PANAMA.

THE nurse brought me my diary this morning. She found it in the inside pocket of my tunic. All of its back pages were scribbled over with orders of the day, countersigns, and the memoranda I made after La Guerre appointed me adjutant to the Legion. But in the first half of it was what I see I was pleased to call my "memoirs," in which I had written the last chapter the day Aiken and I halted at Sagua la Grande. When I read it over I felt that I was somehow much older than when I made that last entry. And yet it was only two months ago. It seems like two years. I don't feel much like writing about it, nor thinking of it, but I suppose, if I mean to keep my "memoirs" up to date, I shall never have more leisure in which to write them than now. For Dr. Ezequiel says it will be another two weeks before I can leave this cot. Sagua seems very unimportant now. But I must not write of it as I see it now, from this distance, but as it appealed to me then, when everything about me was new and strange and wonderful.

It was my first sight of a Honduranian town, and I thought it most charming and curious. As I learned later it was like

any other Honduranian town and indeed like every other town in Central America. They are all built around a plaza, which sometimes is a park with fountains and tessellated marble pavements and electric lights, and sometimes only an open place of dusty grass. There is always a church at one end, and the café or club, and the *alcaldé's* house, or the governor's palace, at another. In the richer plazas there must always be the statue of some Liberator, and in the poorer a great wooden cross. Sagua la Grande was bright and warm and foreign looking. It reminded me of the colored prints of Mexico which I had seen in my grandfather's library. The houses were thatched clay huts with gardens around them crowded with banana palms, and trees hung with long beans, which broke into masses of crimson flowers. The church opposite the inn was old and yellow, and at the edge of the plaza were great palms that rustled and courtesied. We led our mules straight through the one big room of the inn out into the yard behind it, and while doing it I committed the grave discourtesy of not first removing my spurs. Aiken told me about it at once, and I apologized to everyone—to the *alcaldé*, and the priest, and the village schoolmaster who had crossed the plaza to welcome us—and I asked them all to drink with me. I do not know that I ever enjoyed a breakfast more than I did the one we ate in the big cool inn with the striped awning outside, and the naked brown children watching us from the street, and the palms whispering overhead. The breakfast was good in itself, but it was my surroundings which made the meal so remarkable and the fact that I was no longer at home and responsible to someone, but that I was talking as one man to another, and in a foreign language to people who knew no other tongue. The inn-keeper was a fat little person in white drill and a red sash, in which he carried two silver-mounted pistols. He looked like a ring-master in a circus, but he cooked us a most wonderful omelette with tomatoes and onions and olives chopped up in it with oil. And an Indian woman made us tortillas, which are like our buckwheat cakes. It was fascinating to see her toss them up in the air, and slap them into shape with her

hands. Outside the sun blazed upon the white rim of huts, and the great wooden cross in the plaza threw its shadow upon the yellow façade of the church. Beside the church there was a chime of four bells swinging from a low ridge-pole. The dews and the sun had turned their copper a brilliant green, but had not hurt their music, and while we sat at breakfast a little Indian boy in crumpled vestments beat upon them with a stick, making a sweet and swinging melody. It did not seem to me a scene set for revolution, but I liked it all so much that that one breakfast alone repaid me for my long journey south. I was sure life in Sagua la Grande would always suit me, and that I would never ask for better company than the comic-opera landlord and the jolly young priest and the yellow-skinned, fever-ridden schoolmaster with his throat wrapped in a great woollen shawl. But very soon, what with having had no sleep the night before and the heat, I grew terribly drowsy and turned in on a canvas cot in the corner, where I slept until long after mid-day. For some time I could hear Aiken and the others conversing together and caught the names of La Guerre and Garcia, but I was too sleepy to try to listen, and, as I said, Sagua did not seem to me to be the place for conspiracies and revolutions. I left it with real regret, and as though I were parting with friends of long acquaintance-ship.

From the time we left Sagua the path began to ascend, and we rode in single file along the edges of deep precipices. From the depths below giant ferns sent up cool, damp odors, and we could hear the splash and ripple of running water, and at times, by looking into the valley, I could see waterfalls and broad streams filled with rocks, which churned the water into a white foam. We passed under tall trees covered with white and purple flowers, and in the branches of others were perched macaws, giant parrots of the most wonderful red and blue and yellow, and just at sunset we startled hundreds of parrots which flew screaming and chattering about our heads, like so many balls of colored worsted.

When the moon rose, we rode out upon a table-land and passed between thick forests of enormous trees, the like of which

I had never imagined. Their branches began at a great distance from the ground and were covered thick with orchids, which I mistook for large birds roosting for the night. Each tree was bound to the next by vines like tangled ropes, some drawn as taut as the halyards of a ship, and others, as thick as one's leg, they were twisted and wrapped around the branches, so that they looked like boa-constrictors hanging ready to drop upon one's shoulders. The moonlight gave to this forest of great trees a weird, fantastic look. I felt like a knight entering an enchanted wood. But nothing disturbed our silence except the sudden awakening of a great bird or the stealthy rustle of an animal in the underbrush. Near midnight we rode into a grove of manacca palms as delicate as ferns, and each as high as a three-story house, and with fronds so long that those drooping across the trail hid it completely. To push our way through these we had to use both arms as one lifts the curtains in a doorway.

Aiken himself seemed to feel the awe and beauty of the place, and called the direction to me in a whisper. Even that murmur was enough to carry above the rustling of the palms, and startled hundreds of monkeys into wakefulness. We could hear their barks and cries echoing from every part of the forest, and as they sprang from one branch to another the palms bent like trout-rods, and then swept back into place again with a strange swishing sound, like the rush of a great fish through water.

After midnight we were too stiff and sore to ride farther, and we bivouacked on the trail beside a stream. I had no desire for further sleep, and I sat at the foot of a tree smoking and thinking. I had often "camped out" as a boy, and at West Point with the battalion, but I had never before felt so far away from civilization and my own people. For company I made a little fire and sat before it, going over in my mind what I had learned since I had set forth on my travels. I concluded that so far I had gained much and lost much. What I had experienced of the ocean while on the ship and what little I had seen of this country delighted me entirely, and I would not have parted with a single one of my new impressions. But all I had

learned of the cause for which I had come to fight disappointed and disheartened me. Of course I had left home partly to seek adventure, but not only for that. I had set out on this expedition with the idea that I was serving some good cause—that old-fashioned principles were forcing these men to fight for their independence. But I had been early undeceived. At the same time that I was enjoying my first sight of new and beautiful things I was being robbed of my illusions and my ideals. And nothing could make up to me for that. By merely travelling on around the globe I would always be sure to find some new things of interest. But what would that count if I lost my faith in men! If I ceased to believe in their unselfishness and honesty. Even though I were young and credulous, and lived in a make-believe world of my own imagining, I was happier so than in thinking that everyone worked for his own advantage, and without justice to others, or private honor. It harmed no one that I believed better of others than they deserved, but it was going to hurt me terribly if I learned that their aims were even lower than my own. I knew it was Aiken who had so discouraged me. It was he who had laughed at me for believing that La Guerre and his men were fighting for liberty. If I were going to credit him, there was not one honest man in Honduras, and no one on either side of this revolution was fighting for anything but money. He had made it all seem commercial, sordid, and underhand. I blamed him for having so shaken my faith and poisoned my mind. I scowled at his unconscious figure as he lay sleeping peacefully on his blanket, and I wished heartily that I had never set eyes on him. Then I argued that his word, after all, was not final. He made no pretence of being a saint, and it was not unnatural that a man who held no high motives should fail to credit them to others. I had partially consoled myself with this reflection, when I remembered suddenly that Beatrice herself had foretold the exact condition which Aiken had described.

“That is not war,” she had said to me, “that is speculation!” She surely had said that to me, but how could she have known, or was hers only a random guess?

And if she had guessed correctly what would she wish me to do now? Would she wish me to turn back, or, if my own motives were good, would she tell me to go on? She had called me her knight-errant, and I owed it to her to do nothing of which she would disapprove. As I thought of her I felt a great loneliness and a longing to see her once again. I thought of how greatly she would have delighted in those days at sea, and how wonderful it would have been if I could have seen this hot, feverish country with her at my side. I pictured her at the inn at Sagua smiling on the priest and the fat little landlord; and their admiration of her. I imagined us riding together in the brilliant sunshine with the crimson flowers meeting overhead, and the palms bowing to her and paying her homage. I lifted the locket she had wound around my wrist, and kissed it. As I did so, my doubts and questionings seemed to fall away. I stood up confident and determined. It was not my business to worry over the motives of other men, but to look to my own. I would go ahead and fight Alvarez, whom Aiken himself declared was a thief and a tyrant. If anyone asked me my politics I would tell him I was for the side that would obtain the money the Isthmian Line had stolen, and give it to the people; that I was for Garcia and Liberty, La Guerre and the Foreign Legion. This platform of principles seemed to me so satisfactory that I stretched my feet to the fire and went to sleep.

I was awakened by the most delicious odor of coffee, and when I rolled out of my blanket I found José standing over me with a cup of it in his hand, and Aiken buckling the straps of my saddle-girth. We took a plunge in the stream, and after a breakfast of coffee and cold tortillas climbed into the saddle and again picked up the trail.

After riding for an hour Aiken warned me that at any moment we were likely to come upon either La Guerre or the soldiers of Alvarez. “So you keep your eyes and ears open,” he said, “and when they challenge throw up your hands quick. The challenge is ‘Halt, who lives,’” he explained. “If it is a government soldier you must answer, ‘The government.’ But if it’s one of La Guerre’s or Garcia’s

pickets you must say 'The revolution lives.' 'And whatever else you do, *hold up your hands.*' "

I rehearsed this at once, challenging myself several times, and giving the appropriate answers. The performance seemed to afford Aiken much amusement.

"Isn't that right?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "but the joke is that you won't be able to tell which is the government soldier and which is the revolutionist, and you'll give the wrong answer, and we'll both get shot."

"I can tell by our uniform," I answered.

"Uniform!" exclaimed Aiken, and burst into the most uproarious laughter. "Rags and tatters," he said.

I was considerably annoyed to learn by this that the revolutionary party had no distinctive uniform. The one worn by the government troops which I had seen at the coast I had thought bad enough, but it was a great disappointment to hear that we had none at all. Ever since I had started from Dobbs Ferry I had been wondering what was the Honduranian uniform. I had promised myself to have my photograph taken in it. I had anticipated the pride I should have in sending the picture back to Beatrice. So I was considerably chagrined, until I decided to invent a uniform of my own, which I would wear whether anyone else wore it or not. This was even better than having to accept one which someone else had selected. As I had thought much on the subject of uniforms, I began at once to design a becoming one.

We had reached a most difficult pass in the mountain, where the trail stumbled over broken masses of rock and through a thick tangle of laurel. The walls of the pass were high and the trees at the top shut out the sunlight. It was damp and cold and dark.

"We're sure to strike something here," Aiken whispered over his shoulder. It did not seem at all unlikely. The place was the most excellent man-trap, but as to that, the whole length of the trail had lain through what nature had obviously arranged for a succession of ambushes.

Aiken turned in his saddle and said, in an anxious tone: "Do you know, the nearer I get to the old man, the more I think I was a fool to come. As long as

I've got nothing but bad news, I'd better have stayed away. Do you remember Pharaoh and the messengers of ill tidings?"

I nodded, but I kept my eyes busy with the rocks and motionless laurel. My mule was slipping and kicking down pebbles, and making as much noise as a gun battery. I knew, if there were any pickets about, they could hear us coming for a quarter of a mile.

"Garcia may think he's Pharaoh," Aiken went on, "and take it into his head it's my fault the guns didn't come. La Guerre may say I sold the secret to the Isthmian Line."

"Oh, he couldn't think you'd do that!" I protested.

"Well, I've known it done," Aiken said. "Quay certainly sold us out at New Orleans. And La Guerre may think I went shares with him."

I began to wonder if Aiken was not probably the very worst person I could have selected to introduce me to General La Guerre. It seemed as though it certainly would have been better had I found my way to him alone. I grew so uneasy concerning my possible reception that I said, irritably: "Doesn't the General know you well enough to trust you?"

"No, he doesn't!" Aiken snapped back, quite as irritably. "And he's dead right, too. You take it from me, that the fewer people in this country you trust, the better for you. Why, the rottenness of this country is a proverb. 'It's a place where the birds have no song, where the flowers have no odor, where the women are without virtue, and the men without honor.' That's what a gringo said of Honduras many years ago, and he knew the country and the people in it."

It was not a comforting picture, but in my discouragement I remembered La Guerre.

"General La Guerre does not belong to this country," I said, hopefully.

"No," Aiken answered, with a laugh. "He's an Irish-Frenchman and belongs to a dozen countries. He's fought for every flag that floats, and he's no better off to-day than when he began."

He turned toward me and stared with an amused and tolerant grin. "He's a bit like you," he said.

I saw he did not consider what he said

as a compliment, but I was vain enough to want to know what he did think of me, so I asked: "And in what way am I like General La Guerre?"

The idea of our similarity seemed to amuse Aiken, for he continued to grin.

"Oh, you'll see when we meet him," he said. "I can't explain it. You two are just different from other people—that's all. He's old-fashioned like you, if you know what I mean, and young——"

"Why, he's an old man," I corrected.

"He's old enough to be your grandfather," Aiken laughed, "but I say he's young—like you, the way you are."

Aiken knew that it annoyed me when he pretended I was so much younger than himself, and I had started on some angry reply, when I was abruptly interrupted.

A tall, ragged man rose suddenly from behind a rock, and presented a rifle. He was so close to Aiken that the rifle almost struck him in the face. Aiken threw up his hands, and fell back with such a jerk that he lost his balance, and would have fallen had he not pitched forward and clasped the mule around the neck. I pulled my mule to a halt, and held my hands as high as I could raise them. The man moved his rifle from side to side so as to cover each of us in turn, and cried in English, "Halt! Who goes there?"

Aiken had not told me the answer to that challenge, so I kept silent. I could hear José behind me interrupting his prayers with little sobs of fright.

Aiken scrambled back into an upright position, held up his hands, and cried: "Confound you, we are travellers, going to the capital on business. Who the devil are you?"

"Qui vive?" the man demanded over the barrel of his gun.

"What does that mean?" Aiken cried, petulantly. "Talk English, can't you, and put down that gun."

The man ceased moving the rifle between us, and settled it on Aiken.

"Cry 'Long live the government,'" he commanded, sharply.

Aiken gave a sudden start of surprise, and I saw his eyelids drop and rise again. Later when I grew to know him intimately I could always tell when he was lying, or making the winning move in some bit of

knavery, by that nervous trick of the eyelids. He knew that I knew about it, and he once confided to me that, had he been able to overcome it, he would have saved himself some thousands of dollars which it had cost him at cards.

But except for this drooping of the eyelids he gave no sign.

"No, I won't cry 'Long live the government,'" he answered. "That is," he added hastily, "I won't cry long live anything. I'm the American Consul, and I'm up here on business. So's my friend."

The man did not move his gun by so much as a straw's breadth.

"You will cry 'Long live Alvarez' or I will shoot you," said the man.

I had more leisure to observe the man than had Aiken, for it is difficult to study the features of anyone when he is looking at you down a gun-barrel, and it seemed to me that the muscles of the man's mouth as he pressed it against the stock were twitching with a smile. As the side of his face toward me was the one farther from the gun, I was able to see this, but Aiken could not, and he answered, still more angrily: "I tell you, I'm the American Consul. Anyway, it's not going to do you any good to shoot me. You take me to your colonel alive, and I'll give you two hundred dollars. You shoot me and you won't get a cent."

The moment was serious enough, and I was thoroughly concerned both for Aiken and myself, but when he made this offer, my nervousness, or my sense of humor, got the upper hand of me, and I laughed.

Having laughed I made the best of it, and said:

"Offer him five hundred for the two of us. Hang the expense."

The rifle wavered in the man's hands, he steadied it, scowled at me, bit his lips, and then burst into shouts of laughter. He sank back against one of the rocks, and pointed at Aiken mockingly.

"I knew it was you all the time," he cried, "for certain I did. I knew it was you all the time."

I was greatly relieved, but naturally deeply indignant. I felt as though someone had jumped from behind a door, and shouted "Boo!" at me. I hoped in my

heart that the colonel would give the fellow eight hours' pack drill. "What a remarkable sentry," I said.

Aiken shoved his hands into his breeches pockets, and surveyed the man with an expression of the most violent disgust.

"You've got a damned queer idea of a joke," he said, finally. "I might have shot you!"

The man seemed to consider this the very acme of humor, for he fairly hooted at us. He was so much amused that it was some moments before he could control himself.

"I saw you at Porto Cortez," he said, "I knew you was the American Consul all the time. You came to our camp after the fight, and the general gave you a long talk in his tent. Don't you remember me? I was standing guard outside."

Aiken snorted indignantly.

"No, I don't remember you," he said. "But I'll remember you next time. Are you standing guard now, or just doing a little highway robbery on your own account?"

"Oh, I'm standing guard for keeps," said the sentry, earnestly. "Our camp's only two hundred yards back of me. And our captain told me to let all parties pass except the enemy, but I thought I'd have to jump you just for fun. I'm an American myself, you see, from Kansas. An' being an American I had to give the American Consul a scare. But say," he exclaimed, advancing enthusiastically on Aiken, with his hand outstretched, "you didn't scare for a cent." He shook hands violently with each of us in turn. "My name's Pete MacGraw," he added, expectantly.

"Well, now, Mr. MacGraw," said Aiken, "if you'll kindly guide us to General La Guerre we'll use our influence to have you promoted. You need more room. I imagine a soldier with your original ideas must find sentry go very dull."

MacGraw grinned appreciatively and winked.

"If I take you to my general alive, do I get that two hundred dollars," he asked. He rounded off his question with another yell of laughter.

He was such a harmless idiot that we

laughed with him. But we were silenced at once by a shout from above us, and a command to "Stop that noise." I looked up and saw a man in semi-uniform and wearing an officer's sash and sword stepping from one rock to another and breaking his way through the laurel. He greeted Aiken with a curt wave of the hand. "Glad to see you, Consul," he called. "You will dismount, please, and lead your horses this way." He looked at me suspiciously and then turned and disappeared into the undergrowth.

"The General is expecting you, Aiken," his voice called back to us. "I hope everything is all right?"

Aiken and I had started to draw the mules up the hill. Already both the officer and the trail had been completely hidden by the laurel.

"No, nothing is all right," Aiken growled.

There was the sound of an oath, the laurels parted, and the officer's face reappeared, glaring at us angrily.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"My information is for General La Guerre," Aiken answered, sulkily.

The man sprang away again muttering to himself, and we scrambled and stumbled after him, guided by the sounds of breaking branches and rolling stones.

From a glance I caught of Aiken's face I knew he was regretting now, with even more reason than before, that he had not remained at the coast, and I felt very sorry for him. Now that he was in trouble and not patronizing me and poking fun at me, I experienced a strong change of feeling toward him. He was the only friend I had in Honduras, and as between him and these strangers who had received us so oddly, I felt that, although it would be to my advantage to be friends with the greater number, my loyalty was owing to Aiken. So I scrambled up beside him and panted out with some difficulty, for the ascent was a steep one: "If there is any row, I'm with *you*, Aiken."

"Oh, there won't be any row," he growled.

"Well, if there is," I repeated, "you can count me in."

"That's all right," he said.

At that moment we reached the top of the incline, and I looked down into the hollow below. To my surprise I found that this side of the hill was quite barren of laurel or of any undergrowth, and that it sloped to a little open space carpeted with high, waving grass, and cut in half by a narrow stream. On one side of the stream a great herd of mules and horses were tethered, and on the side nearer us were many smoking camp-fires and rough shelters made from the branches of trees. Men were sleeping in the grass or sitting in the shade of the shelters, cleaning accoutrements, and some were washing clothes in the stream. At the foot of the hill was a tent, and ranged before it two Gatling guns strapped in their canvas jackets. I saw that I had at last reached my destination. This was the camp of the filibusters. These were the soldiers of La Guerre's Foreign Legion.

(To be continued.)

EARLY MAY

By John Burroughs

THE time that hints the coming leaf,
When buds are dropping chaff and scale,
And, wafted from the greening vale,
Are pungent odors, keen as grief.

Now shad bush wears a robe of white,
And orchards hint a leafy screen ;
While willows drop their veils of green
Above the limpid waters bright.

New songsters come with every morn,
And whippoorwill is overdue,
While spice-bush gold is coined anew
Before her tardy leaves are born.

The cowslip now with radiant face
Makes mimic sunshine in the shade,
Anemone is not afraid,
Although she trembles in her place.

Now adder's tongue new gilds the mould,
The ferns unroll their woolly coils,
And honey bee begins her toils
Where maple-trees their fringe unfold.

The goldfinch dons his summer coat,
The wild bee drones her mellow bass,
And butterflies of hardy race
In genial sunshine bask and float.

The Artist now is sketching in
The outlines of his broad design
So fast to deepen line on line,
Till June and summer days begin.

Soon will Shadow pitch her tent
Beneath the trees in grove and field,
And all the wounds of life be healed,
By orchard bloom and lilac scent.