

ELIZABETH LEE MATHENY

CARTAGENA, COLUMBIA, JANUARY 1931. I have been frequently urged by friends to write my many adventures in the tropic, in Mexico, Central and South America. I am like the girl who was asked if she could play the piano - "Yes, I think so," said she. "What do you mean "I think so". "I mean that I never tried but it looks easy." So as writing a book "looks easy", although or because it looks easy, I am going to try. May the Lord have mercy on my soul.

I was born Elizabeth Lee, in the village of Jovely (Tooele), Utah, 1856, eleven miles south of the Great Salt Lake. The Mormon Church (properly speaking Brigham Young, who was the Church) gave forth the order to go forth, multiply, and replenish the earth – My parents were subjects of the church, and faithfully obeyed, so I was the fifth child in a family of seven sons and seven daughters.

We had school only three months in each year, and the fee was three dollars per month. Consequently when I had attended from the age of six years until I was eleven years, my education was considered complete enough for a girl, who did not require much education.

Any how, about this I do not remember the date, but it was after the Civil War ended. There was an influx of Confederate soldiers going to California passing through, and they fascinated me. I had begun reading novels and was full of the glamour of romance, deeds of valour for their ladies. Sh!! those beautiful boys! And there were so many of them. I liked them all.

There was another drawback. Women were only allowed one husband and these Mormons could have as many wives as they could catch, which I thought was an unjust discrimination. That ended my dream, and I had to keep on with my candle making, soup boiling, knitting and all the multitude tasks that fall to the daughter of a large family who dig their living out of old Mother Earth. I was called the "runaway", as I took every chance of getting away out into the open. I was never so happy as when I could escape from the house before anyone else was awake, and go up a canyon, which had the only timber and running water within a radius of ten miles. How I loved the solitude, where there was no one to order me about, no one to find fault, and more especially I could be lazy to my heart's content. The reason I was not allowed to roam

at will -- was the bears, wolves, and hostile indians were frequently seen and were a real danger. I scouted danger, through ignorance, because I had never seen either of these dangers. To me they did not exist. The birds, flowers, many kind of berries, wild hops, the deep crystal clear water and my own wild mind, and beautiful solitude satisfied, soothed and charmed me. All the running away was instinctive, the real bent of my mind from my earliest childhood, as my after life has proven. As soon as I was without ties to bind me, I did not hesitate one moment -- like a Gretzel or a Zane - I took my gun, went to the woods, there to be free to decide for myself how to be happy and seek my fortune con el favor de Dios (with the favor of God).

My father who was Captain of local militia for defense against the Indian raids and was a notable hunter, a man cool headed, regardless of danger, tireless tracker whom the Indians feared and respected. I remember that twenty years after the event, my father paid an old Indian a horse for the blood money for having killed the brother of the Indian in battle, and so peace was declared between them.

Two apparently small and unimportant things have had a far reaching influence on my life so simple. When I was four years old an uncle had gone to Carson City, Nevada with a train of wagons loaded with farm produce for the miners, and among many beautiful things, had brought my little cousin a china doll. I have seen many beautiful things in my time, but never one so wonderful as that. I must have that for my very own - money would not buy it - I must steal it. Which I coolly proceeded to do. I put it under my apron and ran to hide it with the craft of the veteran thief. I dug a hole at the foot of an apple tree. My treasure was safe! When I went into the house there was my aunt telling my mother that I was a thief! And that all thieves were hung and went straight to Hell. I stood paralyzed and my dear mother just at me. I am sure I looked like I was dying, for my mother said very gently, "Go get that doll!" When I came back with the doll I had to wash it, get on my knees, beg my aunt's pardon. Oh how I hated that woman. And I have never forgiven her look. I have never stolen another thing in my life. Under the many temptations to take what was not mine, I see my dear mother's eyes looking at me, so sorry and ashamed.

The other event was something my Grandma said to me when I was seven years old. My dear, said she: you must be very good, for you are very ugly. What a cruel thing to say to a sensitive child. It has followed me all my life, it gave me an inferiority complex, that I can never get over. If anyone looked at me coldly, I think they do not like me because I am ugly when perhaps they have never even seen me. It had a much more injurious effect, it has made me so long for affection that you only have to pat me on the

back to get half the money I have.

My father had a large tannery. The chief tanner was an Englishman who read me like a book. His greeting would be - Ah, here comes my bonnie lass! Going to 'elp her poor old Huncle oo as a pain in 'is poor old back. and I poor "sucker" would grab that windlass and when the hides were all on the windlass he would tell what a wonderful girl I was, pat me on the head and say "There, ther - don't 'urt thyself" - But that reward never came until he had worked me to a frazel.

And so I have been told along through life with pats on the back and many a kick from the rear.

Some of our schools were poor I think. Our teachers were picked up. Any wandering man without occupation who understood "Readin', ritin, and rithmetic" was good enough. "Riting" was the worst trial a child had. You were not taught the first principal of writing. You simply copied long incomprehensible words, were never shown how to hold the pen, and at any moment when cramped and strained, over sign that had no meaning to you, Bang! would come that ruler over your fingers, splattering ink over your none too immaculate copy book. But the hour of closing school was what tried our souls. We always had a Monitor. Cursed name. To over one in school. He was seated on a high seat - watching to note the names of those who spoke - it was usually Elizabeth Lee "three hundred times." We had one teacher, a German, who was particularly savage he used a twisted rawhide rigging quirt. Your name was called, you marched up, reached out your hand and received two blows on each hand. I have had my and wrist swelled every night for a week and no parent affected. You see they believed in spare the rod and spoil the child. I think that teacher punished me more for talking back than for whispering. I called him "Hermin the Devil" and the name stuck, and was a thorn in his side. John Dunn, God bless him, finally ended our torture. He with several other young men of from eighteen to twenty years of age studying higher branches, they were never reported for whispering. So one day we prepared his "Waterloo" - we collected all the pennies we could rake and scrape and bought the monitor to put down the names of all the "big ones" as we called them - the first was Ben Clegg - he walked up to the teacher's desk with fire in his eye. Teacher smiled blandly and gave him two vicious blows. Ben never flinched but quietly picked up his books and walked out -- never to return. Next John Dunn. John was a stripping lad of twenty, very quiet and studious. He reached out his right hand and as the furious blow descended, John's left struck the teacher's right eye and knocked him down -- but Devil Herman was no fake, he was a real devil and the fight that followed was epic. I

changed school proceedings. The fight went on with John Dunn getting madder and madder. We were on the seats yelling, clapping, some saying "kill him. Finish him. Don't let him have a chance at us again." Well John did it to the Queen's taste. Teacher had to be carried home, never to return. The monitor got his but in a different way. He was Boycotted. Not one of the children who had suffered under his avariciousness (he was a grafter - you could buy immunity for a penny or two) ever would have anything to do with him and he received many trouncing from older boys. And he could not beg himself off. We called him "Judas." I do not know what became of him, but I feel sure that he still is a grafter. If t twelve he was a prize grafter, he must be a millionaire by now, for that has come to perfection sine I was a child.

I am writing all this perhaps uninteresting stuff to give an indication of what made me Iconoctus or "breaker jumper." I was taught that woman was a servant of man -- she must be meek and patient, and above all obedient. I have been none of those things, and I have proven that a woman can go out on her own and make her living and keep the respect and appreciation of her fellow men. I am blamed for my lack of reverence to the Supreme Being. To me my Father was the author of my being and I could not see as a child why I should be compelled to thank anyone else for anything. I was always asking "Why, why?" and at last they said I was to excused because I was not normal, and there was no word more damnable for a child than that. To not be of the same conventional pattern, look t life differentally, don't walk so fast, don't climb trees, don't ride astride, or in other words I was not a Lady, nor did I want to be -- I wanted to be myself. Little did I dream that I would one future day be emancipated to a glorious freedom where I could wear trousers, ride, row, swim, climb mountain, not so high as "Inna Peck" of course, but more gracefully. In fact most of my achievements have been mediocre and notable only because I am a woman and old.

So my childhood passed, laughing, crying, dancing, singing and fighting for self expression and freedom. During my years of adolescence the Government sent General Conner with a regiment of soldiers to subdue the Mormons and abolish polygamy. Fort Douglas was built on the table land above the city and Fort Stockton 7 miles south of my home. They remained several years. I do not remember how many polygamy was or at least it was so reported and the soldiers were withdrawn. Comparative peace reigned.

The Mormons moved their superfluous wives into the surrounding states, simply started afresh. Now those politically are controlled by the policy of the Mormon Church.

As I have said, I was a runaway. One day I ran away to go fishing when I was 13 years old. It was 7 miles from home and the water of the lake was supposed to be very bad but I drank it without any harm to my health. Then some one sat down beside me and went to fishing also. I kept stealing glances at him and of all beautiful men I have ever seen he was the most beautiful. Now he would be called a "Sheik." Much more like one than Valentino. Finally our lines got entangled, he looked at me and smiled. I smiled back and right there and then we were in LOVE. On beautiful word. There is nothing in this world like it. I know, because I have had the disease at least twenty five times since. So as my mother ran away at fourteen to marry my father at nineteen, I thought in another year we will be married. But fate intervened. He came to a dance, but was treated so badly that he never came again.

When there was a dance, they blew a horn at 7 o'clock. Everyone went, big little, old and young. But, if a stranger came in, no one spoke to him, he was not noticed in any way. They simply sounded the horn and everyone went home, cheated out of their night's fun, but delivered from the danger of contamination of a gentile.

I remember one prayer, it was so funny -- the dance was always opened by prayer. A "Cousin Jack" or Cornishman prayed, "Dear Lord, wee'm tired of them there Hoodlum; they broke oup our dance last week. Now Lard we want you to smit smite the devils, yet smite up hup and then pour out the vice of your wrath on um. Which we ask for Jesus sake Amen." This petition was duly granted except in one case. Sill Smeed got drunk and stole Sam Tolman's girl. So Sam used language which the Book says is not proper in these polite days is not permitted, but in those old days seemed effective, for Sill knocked two teeth out and if they had not stopped them they might have had trouble.

From the time I could read it has been a passion. I have read many hundred of books and now have them at this late day -- my solace. I have lived along; for 22 years any help that I have been able to support has always kept out. After the turmoil of the day is over and I have shut the door on them all, peace and silence descend upon me, and I begin to live my own real life. My books are my faithful friends, who never change. Dickens, Scott, Hugo, Kipling, and above all dear Bobbie Burns, the most human of them all, and his faults are forgivable when you remember one can rise above one'e errors and remain a bright and shining luminary to posterity. Those "swashbuckling" writers, I love them to "Dumas" and the rest. Not the machine made villains, that are made of 1 ravishingly beautiful blonde or brunette 1 God like handsome not too large hero who is invincible in every case 10 poor victims who must

keep on until the conventional number is finished. Then the final chapter must go with a bang. Villain defeated, either leaves the country or he's dead at the Hero's feet. Heroine falls into the arms of unruffled hero's arms and out in the final clinch. A la Edgar.

I know that they are trash, but I eat them up. They deaden thought and make you forget your troubles. Hergeshimer or Mary Johnston suit my taste. There were few books and newspapers in our little village but we had a circulating library and a wise old Scotch Brother (we were all "brothers and sisters") saw my taste turn to Blood and Thunder and when I picked out Dick Turpin or Claude Duvall, he would say "Na Na Lassie, that's no for you - your father pays a great sum for your reading (he paid \$1.00 per Year) and you must learn a lot to show for it." Notwithstanding his good advice, I managed to smuggle in lots of thrillers. If I had taken a grammar and a spelling book and a fountain pen, how different would have been this task which I have before me. We had, of course, an amateur dramatic society where to my great joy my parts were apt to be boys parts like "My Son Diana" – a father who wanted a son and a daughter resulted so he dresses her in boy's clothes and teaches her all the accomplishments of a boy (or nearly all). This part fulfilled my dream of wearing boys clothes like "Dr. Mary Walker". I loved it for a time but when I saw what a poor little insignificant man I made, there was no grand shoulders and chest, no eagle eye or hook nose, but a coat padded to make look like a very inferior man, so I resolved to go back to my old status of just a rather plain girl, as I thought it was better to be an average woman than an inferior man. The only real part before a large audience was in the Two Orphans with Maude Adams mother as the blind orphan. In the bigger Madame Frochard I won a vicarious glory in being remotely connected with our Glorious Maude. I was told that I had a chance to make good. What a storm that raised in my family. The Stage! The straight wide and flowery road to perdition. It was all right to dress in breeches and cavort around stage for the amusement of the yokels with whom I was perhaps the "Goodest" (excuse the new word) the very height of praise of Daddie Shields "She bi sa bad", and one of my schoolfellows "Go to it old Girl".

And now a shameful confession. I like it. The wish for praise has ruined my character. Just give me a pat and I am ready to make a fool of myself at any time. Perhaps I am doing it at this moment. Quien sabe?

Times has passed by slowly as it does in youth, miners gold and silver, strangers, have crowded in in spite of the Church, in spite of Brigham Young who dreamed a dread of a state or government within a government, but his dream of population is

realized, his followers cover three or four states since they have changed from Mormon style to the style which has existed since time began permitting the male all the consort he can support and conceal one from another.

I fell in love with one of these mining boys. Those were the days when a kiss was the equivalent of an engagement. So we were engaged. I was invited to tea one day to the house of an old Scotch lady. My sweetheart went to the gate with me and there said goodbye. After tea I begged my friend to read my fortune in the cup and this is what she said, "Don't think you are going to marry that bonnie golden haired laddie. I see a tall dark man who has six children. Him you'll marry." A tall dark man with six perfectly good, ready-made children, was beyond my wildest dreams. I was the fifth of fourteen and I was sure fed up when I contemplated that line of children reaching out to infinity. I laughed and laughed. But two years after that, I married the tall dark man - and he had six children so at twenty-two years of age I had my work cut out for me. Do you know what it is to be a stepmother at that age? No? Well, don't try to find out.

Then the current of life swept me out of the USA and into Mexico where Porfirio Diaz was Dictator for so many years. But that is, as Kipling says, another story. So ended the first and most uninteresting part of my long varied life.

One day in my twentieth year, the husband of a friend of mine drove up to my door and invited me to go for a drive - he had some business at Fort Stockton and Belle was not well and did not want to go. I wanted to get out in the open as it was a beautiful spring morning. Stockton was only six miles away - so off we went, I without a care in the world - and he with his plans. He took the longest way in a roundabout way and when I asked him why he took the long road he said, "Oh, now that I have got you, I am going to keep you as long as I can." "That don't worry me, no man can keep me against my will." He laughed and said, "Oh you will be willing before we get back." You'd better be careful what you say to me for I'll tell Belle everything when we get back home." "Why you silly little fool. You need not be afraid of me. You are Belle's friend and that makes you just like my sister."

We reached Stockton and stayed for lunch - then he left me in the hotel and was gone several hours. He said he was delayed by the absence of a man - but while he was gone the landlady, a fine motherly old lady, said "Do you know this man well?" No, I replied, "But he is the husband of a friend of mine. Why do you ask?" "Because he is only too well known here, and is a gambler and an all around bad character". "Don't worry about me, I can take care of myself." "How many girls have said that and finally

come to grief?" Finally he returned - and I was very anxious to start - but he said that we must have some refreshments before going. So, sandwiches and wine. I remembered how I had been taught that wine was a mocker and strong drink raging, as the old lady put the bottle on the table she stepped behind him and shook her head. I understood and smiled back at her, full of self-confidence. He offered me a glass of wine - but I refused and as Pepys has said that "make him very angry". "You act as though I am trying some game with you." "Would I harm my little sister?" "I don't think you would, and I am sure if you harm the little sister of Alfred, or Tom, or Henry or Sam Lee, my four big brothers, you would not have as much chance of escaping alive as a snowball in Hell." "So just keep on being my good big brother." I was nervous, but thought I was safe. When I said goodbye to the landlady she gave me a warning look - be careful.

By the way, he had drank the wine himself, all of it. Driving away from the Fort, we passed over a hill and was soon lost to sight. Then he began to make love to me in earnest - he tried to kiss me, I hit him in the face. He threw his arms around me - I broke away. The horses got out of control while the scuffle was going on, and while he was quieting them, I jumped out of the buggy and he tied the reigns to the dash board and soon overtook me, threw me down and putting a hand on each arm, held me fast. He could not move - neither could I. He loosed one hand - I twisted my hand in his tight collar and held fast. I choked him until he released my other hand. I fought with him - kicked him below the belt and broke away. I found I was as strong as he. I ran to the team and snatched the whip and lashed the horses into a gallop and ran off - not toward the town we had left. It was a livery team and means discovery if they got away and smashed up things. He chased after and caught them firmly.

In the meantime I was safely hid in a little gully filled with tall growing sage brush. He drove back and forth time and time again - calling my name promising to be good if I would come out of my hiding and when I would not answer, threatening the horrible things he would do when he caught me, which he was sure to do.

I walked the 6 miles home, crept up to my room, and fell exhausted on my bed and slept the sleep of the victorious. The next morning I was ashamed to go down to breakfast, but it had to be faced. But not one word was ever said, no one ever could. "Bruce P---" abandoned his wife and left at daylight, for parts unknown, and the only word ever heard by his wife was that he had fallen dead in a gambling house in "Decota." The only time in my life that I ever saw hellish passion unchained and rampant, before or since, for which "Dios, Gracias."

1878 I went to Idaho to visit a married sister. It was the time there was a serious uprising of the Indians. They were fighting somewhere near Jackson's Hole, a veritable nest of outlaws and bad men. My sister's house was only two log rooms. There were two doors but only one window. My bed was near this window and many a time when I saw a shadow darken that opening (it had no shutters) my first thought would be "Indians". But I had passed through many Indian scares and never saw one or was harmed by one in my life, so I soon got over my scare.

The Utah Northern R.R. was being built at that time and I heard that they wanted someone to teach a small school in Oneida, the terminus, so I applied and got the position. There were twelve children, the oldest ten years old, who proceeded to fall in love with me, as did his father. So there I first met my future lord and master, the tall dark man with six children that the old Scotch lady told me of - a son two years older than myself - the youngest ten years old. Oh, what a man! Uncultured like myself, but a poet at heart, and he became my dearest Pal, an acquisition to any community. He could build anything from a bridge, house, stamp mill, to boat. We went from Idaho in a covered wagon to California.

But first I must tell you about the wedding. We were married by a justice of the peace, a former cowboy, and the way of it was this. "Do you take this woman, Elizabeth Lee, to be your lawful wedded wife?" "I do." "Do you take this man, Jaspar Newton Matheny, to be your lawful wedded husband?" "I do." "Well I declare you married and anyone who says you are not is a damn liar." We had not retired yet when a most horrible noise began, bells, tin pans, whistles, a drum. When my husband opened the door, there was a big crowd of men and boys gathered and each one made some kind of noise and it was pandemonium. The great idea was not so much that they wished us happiness, as it was a custom to give free drinks to the crows present and there was not a bum in town absent. And so we were joyfully launched on a sea of whiskey. My poor blind husband introduced me to the crowd as "My beautiful young wife." Some of the wags when they met me afterward would say, "Well how is the beautiful young wife?" One husky youngster provoked me so constantly that I finally slapped his face. (I was no lady) so at last the tormenting stopped.

On our way to California we met many Indians and their depredations were so recent that we were afraid of them. There was a band of them hired to help a herder to make them cross them cross the stream. We were held up two hours while they were crossing. The Indians were very savage. They looked and handled everything they saw. The poor little girls were very much afraid and crawled into the covered wagon.

A young indian tried to follow them when I caught him by his braided hair and yanked him backward. He fell backward on the ground and I feared that they would attack us then, but they all burst out laughing at the discomfited young brave, mounted their horses and rode away.

We also hurried to move out of that creek bottom and went to the table land to make camp as far from the Indians as possible. When the team was unhitched, hobbled and turned loose, lights began to twinkle down at the foot of the precipice. Many lights - and to our horror we found ourselves right over the Indian camp. We put the five children in the wagon and slept, or tried to sleep, on the ground. Every movement, the horses moving about feeding, every unknown noise that night meant only Indians, and before dawn we were up and away, with the terror of the Indians, which at that time was bred in the blood and bone of every frontier child. But this phase of frontier life has been so brilliantly written of, that I feel that it is presumptive of me to mention it in my feeble way. So we plodded on, up hill and down, through sand and sagebrush, at times all pushing on the wheel to help the horses over a pitch of hill or a patch of deep sand, until evening brought the blessed rest - to horses and humans, many times making a dry camp when we only had enough water to wash our dry mouths. Then - what JOY - when we discovered a water hole or a trickle of running water.

We would stay an hour or two resting our horses, and washing and cooling ourselves. Then the plodding along of our weary team, until the blessed dark and coolness brought back our courage and we could laugh at the past trials of the long road and the blistering heat. We reached Bridgeport, Nevada, where at last we recuperated, rested our horses and lived the life of civilized people - not the life of luxury and comfort, with good roads, rest camps, water and food to be had at convenient stations - oh no, but the toil and discomfort of the seventies.

One more incident I must relate of that trip. I do not remember in what State this happened but I think it was in Idaho. About four o'clock we reached an army post perched on a barren hill. We were dirty, tired, thirsty and altogether disreputable, no doubt, hungry as young things get. We hurried to be able to relax and rest. Just as we had spread our canvas on the ground, here came a bunch of well dressed officers and several beautiful ladies. They came quite near and looked superciliously and made remarks, not seeming to care that we heard. I never in my life - up to then - had felt such a perfect fury. My husband said - what are you doing? Don't speak. Let them look all they want. "Oh, no, I am going to ask them to dine with us." "For heaven's sake don't make a scene." "Oh no, nothing like that, watch me." I approached the group

very politely said, "Good evening ladies and gentlemen. We are about to dine. Would you care to join us? We have no chairs but old Mother Earth makes a seat that you noble defenders of our frontier must be familiar with." "Thanks", said the one who seemed in command. "Our dinner is awaiting." "Then please do not let me detain you. So pleased to have seen the friendly interest you have shown in we poor roamers. Good night, I wish you a pleasant trip." "What did you say to them? "I only invited them to have dinner with us." "How dare you do such a thing, you imp." "You had better ask how they dared to insult us by staring at us like we were a traveling zoo." "Well", drawled he, "when I come to look at this outfit - well, I don't blame them much. They don;t see people like us very often." "Well you had better put your animals to bed - they are yours you know. I am not responsible if you and your herd look like animals." "Shame, they did not look at the children, and they only had interest in your unladylike antics." "Do you expect me to act like a lady with an empty belly and my eyes full of sand? If you had only one inch of forehead you would understand that no woman could do it." You are free from my antics from now on. Move your menagerie, you big chimpanzee.

And for fear I would cry, I walked off into the sage brush. He was so wise he did not follow me. He gave me plenty of time to cool off. Everyone was in bed when I was starved out and shivery with cold. But my supper was kept warm by the fire, and so with infinite pain and toil, we finally reached the land of sunshine and flowers. But not even there were all of the days of sunshine and flowers, either at home or abroad. The climate I will not try to describe, Californians in other countries boasting of the climate until they now have the name of "boosters." We are going to build a new house if it rains or a new carriage or a new piano all depended (in those far off days) on the problematical rain. With irrigation all that is changed.

There I studied Spanish for a few months and found it a great help when we went to Mexico in 1884. I have only been back there three times since so at last I arrive into the land of tortillas, beans and bandits.

End of the first phase and as Pepys said so many times in his diary, "and so to bed."

MEXICO 1884

I do not know if I can remember or rather describe my first impressions it is so long ago. The whole world has changed so much I think I was astounded to find that the earth looked just like the earth in California. At that time there were many stores and even the court house was called the "Jusgado." But the air of the people were different. There seemed to be no hurry anywhere. People strolled about as though they had nothing to do and all time to do it in. So many dark eyed black haired people delighted me as I have always loved dark flashing eyes. Mazatlan, the first town we stopped at was all an enchantment to me.

"Compran naranjas" (oranges) a long drawn out wail. "Chicarones" (cracklins) pan caliente".

I recognized so many words that I knew. There was a great difference in the impression the men made to that the women made. The men looked like bandits muffled up to the chin in their "Serrapis" (blankets) with their elegant hats, heavily laced and braided with gold and silver, or gold lace. The hat sometimes cost more than all their other clothes. The women on the contrary wore delicate silks with many ribbons and laces, were of delicate figure and were always attended by a Duena or some gentleman of her family. I speak of the higher classes.

The servant class were mostly of the Indian or Mixto class and are called "Nestizos." I thought everything interesting because it was new, I suppose. Then as our time on shore was so short we went away not satisfied at seeing so little.

Little I thought how tired I would be of the whole blooming show before I got away, which was to be nine long years later. Mazanilla was the next port but we did not go ashore - as Acapulco, the next port was so near and as we were leaving the Pacific Mail boat at that port, we took a coaster which would take us to the port of San Benito, our final destination.

We had to stay in Acapulco for several days before our ship arrived but the days were filled with gossip. The landlady had been there many years and could tell us about most of the foreign people who lived in the colony of Americans, where we were going to buy land to plant coffee. There was some little peccadillo to tell about each

and every one. Why do women do things on a steamer that they would never think of doing at home. Like an ostrich burying their heads, think that no one sees them. There is no place on earth that is so closely watched as on a passenger steamer. Sometimes for duty again for revenge. San Benito is a very bad port. It is an open roadstead and passengers have to be lowered from the ship to a big bongo who has a rig cable connected with the shore with a wheel as stem and stern which the cable runs in; a dangerous and uncomfortable way of landing - the children were the first to leave and shouted with joy. The peons on shore waded into the water and carried the passengers a shore. When it came my time a little carrier stepped up and then backed away, saying, "No. Ella es muy grande". When a big strapping young man said, "Para me no." (Not too big for me.) So there we were; where we had dreams of being for so many months. A miserable outlook - low palm huts, the only half decent looking in the place and it was not half as good as our stable at home.

We ploughed through the sand to the Hotel - God save the mark! - a long uncovered table where some men sat drink Mescal - the whiskey or it's equivalent and the common drink of the country. When our dinner was finally ready, the waitress had nothing on but a chemise and a skirt. The girls looked at me and blushed and I felt the same, "You shameless Hussie". Oh the changes that time brings - that garment would today be thought silly and prudish. Then the next day the enchantment begun and I feel again the pleasure I felt forty five years ago on first entering a tropical jungle.

The road wound about between bamboo and other trees unknown to me and all interwoven with creepers. There were great trees covered with bell flowers which grew in great bunches, with lilac orchids. I do not know the names of orchids but there are many varieties, not on the coast out in the higher lands. Butterflies, strange brilliant birds. The coast sandy and this strip of woods cool and moist, muddy in places, so that the ox carts, two wheeled and cumbersome, would sink half way to the hubs and have to be helped back onto the road. There were two men to each cart between them, but they waited for another cart to come up when they combined forces and pulled it out. They were all black eyed and black haired - hair coarse and straight.

I never say a blue eyed person in Mexico who was not of the higher class. We overtook a very old woman with an immense bundle on her back and my husband who was a most humane man offered to carry it for her, but the agent who was riding with us said, "No, no. Don't do that! If you are seen doing that you will lose caste. We must keep ourselves above them or they will not respect us." "So we have to deny our human impulses to be respected?" said I. "Yes, absolutely! We have to maintain our superiority

or they would swamp us."

And we found that to be true - you could not show the least human consideration, or laughing at you behind your back saying you're "un tonto pobre" (poor fool) and "Muy igualado" (equal to our servants). The agent (wise old German) ordered wine at every meal, and as we none of us drank wine, he consumed it all himself, one of his perquisites I suppose. We were very much surprised when we were shown into an empty room with the exception of two bare cots and two chairs, and when we asked for more cots and wash basins and towels and bedding we were informed it was not customary to furnish anything except what was there. That meant our unpacking everything and repacking the next morning. So I said, "We will not leave next morning but the day afterward". The agent made us pay dearly for our stubbornness by the exorbitant bill he presented and we paid; half the bill was for wine which he alone had consumed. When I objected to this, he said the water was very bad and to avoid sickness he always drank wine. At other's expense, we found out afterward.

Tapachula was a great disappointment to us. The land company who sold us our line described a flourishing city "built in the Moorish style". He must have been "Primitive Moorish" because it had not one single modern comfort. No water system, no electric light, no sewers, with a river flowing at the back door, with a big head of water straight from the mountain on whose volcanic slope we made our coffee plantation - "Mount Tacarra". We reached our final destination at five o'clock, saddle sore, tired, hungry, and generally demoralized.

We must have been a sorry sight, for our charming landlady seemed us the "Tag, rag and bobtail bunch" and she kept the same attitude toward all the nine painful years that we worked next door neighbor to her meek hen pecked husband, dominated by this virago - whose tongue was a destructive fire; for a lie that is a lie may be met and fought with outright, but a lie that is half a lie is a harder matter to fight. The reason was this - I was twenty-four years old. She was ten years older. She could sing but I could sing better. I had a husband who adored me, hers only endured her, but last but not least she had a tame that sang hymns and he like to sing with me better than with her, and that was the deciding factor. She was my mortal for nine years. All for a man with whom I would not be seen at a dogfight with. And J- sat back and chuckled as he said "Watching the cat fight." A few months we lived in this turmoil while J-- was cutting a road straight toward Mount Tacarra to reach an elevation suitable for

growing coffee. The road through the thickest jungle I have seen in all the tropics. It took three weeks with one peon to reach a place where two roads intersected, one going South to Guatemala, the other burning at a right angle toward Tapachula, our future head-quarters. There he cleared a space at the head of a trickling stream, ran up a plain shelter, and we hired a mule to pack in enough things to camp with. Those were happy days, all too short for the work we crowded into them. We could not get away from the pioneer idea of a house. With the idea of wild beasts and savage Indians we built a log house but roofed it with palms and the roof not having enough pitch leaked like a riddle, but at last it was finished and we moved the rest of our things with the children and were at home.

Then began the colossal work of clearing a dense jungle which closed us in like a solid wall, felling huge trees and as soon as the leaves and brush was dry, burning it, and then came near running a cropper, for we came near burning the house down. Another mistake we made was planting the small coffee trees we found on an adjacent finca pulling them up, taking them without soil. Every single one died so we lost all that year's work. Our kind neighbors never said a word to warn us to "Not burn the fallen timber, to not plant deadlings cut in the sun", in fact innumerable things that would have saved us toil and money. My husband was the most unconquerable soul I have ever known. He rose triumphant after every blow and that year bad luck seemed to follow us and the blows were many and soul crushing. By the beginning of the next year we were down to our last dollar. We had found a grove of seedling orange trees at the trail crossing and we made an avenue from the edge of the clearing up through the flat and up to the top of a small hill where we afterward built a bird cage of a house. Those orange trees sold the place later on. We had more money to buy a small plantation fifteen hundred feet high up, where we made our final stand and a nice little piece of money.

Rafael Ortega, a rich Mexican, was building a very large place adjoining us lower down the mountain. His water supply had its source on the high part of our land; so J- - ran a level and found that he could put the water in Ortega's house at a nominal cost. It kept women and children climbing from a deep barranca to supply the needs of the plantation with water.

"Mr. Ortega, why don't you have the water brought into your house?" Because I am not God, to make water run uphill." "I will put that water in your plaza for one thousand dollars!" "You are crazy! You may know a lot but you cannot do that."

"Let us make a bet - my finca against one thousand dollars that I can." "Muy bien - esta hecho" (very well - done). "Well we must have a written contract on stamped paper, and signed before witnesses." "Muy bien."

The Mexican was delighted. He told his friends that La Joya was his. "Ese Americano esta loco" (that American is crazy) "Quien sabe?" (Who knows) said another. Well, the contract was signed and each one had a witness. J-- picked the brother of the Jefe Politico (Chief Judge) of Tapuhula. J-- put on ten men and in ten days the water was in the patio of Don Rafael. What a roar he put up. Refused to pay, said it was a trick, that no man could possibly earn one thousand dollars in ten days. So when we sued him, our friend went to town and brought the money back with him. Ortega was our enemy for a time, but finally became friendly on the surface, but he had the idea of getting our place away from us. Would intimidate our peons to make them leave us just as the crop was ready to pick. While this feud was going on we got in a sawmill and planing machine. We milled every board and so utilized our timber. That helped us to build and expand.

Brazil had freed the slaves and so lost two coffee crops - and Mexico was planting at top speed. Porfirio Dias was still dictator and money was rolling in. About the time we were turning our lumber, the banana king of Costa Rica bought land and started planting coffee. He sent to New Zealand for a manager and two hundred and eighty "Solomon Islanders" for labor was very scarce. Of course, the manager must have a nice house for his wife and little son. Which was "all to the custard" for us. At that we built a new house, only four rooms, but what those Mexicans had never seen - had sliding panels for to conceal the clothes, books, dishes, a sink with running ice - cold water, that Ortega said we stole from him. I had made a beautiful flower garden, beautiful roses and many others too numerous to mention, it was a "show place." Ortega would bring his visitors to look the place over. He would go through the house opening every wall cupboard - into the kitchen then up to the saw mill and show everything off as though he owned it all - as he hoped to do some day. Always brought a big basket to take back a load of vegetables and flowers, and on his own place, not one blade of grass or any other growing thing except coffee. So one day a fire broke out on the lower part of the finca near the creek, where the oldest and best bearing trees were. J-- who seemed to have eyes everywhere saw it, and sent all our men with wet sacks to beat it out, and I sent a runner with a note to our neighbor whose plantation joined ours - telling him of our mutual danger. He immediately sent 25 men to help us to prevent the fire spreading to his own plantation. Within three hours the fire was under control (a significant fact). Ortega never sent a single man to protect his place where a big

group of houses and wooden stamp mill which J-- had built for him to beat the outer husk off of the coffee - which by hand was a slow and costly process.

The following day, he called to condole with our losses, smiling (oily) insulting you. "This is the only beginning" J-- said to me." You are too suspicious. He is a brother mason and would not think of harming me." J-- thought well of the whole world. He was suffering tortures from a burn. A coal of fire had fallen into his shoe and before he could get his shoe unlaced to get it out he had a deep burn which was not healed when he died. I pitied him. But pity was swamped in the hate I felt for the rich man who was devilishly persecuting us. I swore to myself, to have revenge on him, sooner or later (It proved later) too late to help my darling valiant husband who always gave everyone the benefit of a doubt. He believed in the lake of fire and brimstone; a future punishment. I believed that here was our hell with Rafael Ortega a chief devil.

The next move was to try to steal the seedlings from our seed bed. The man who sold us the place had planted it. Ortega claimed that the man owed him money and that he was entitled to the trees in payment. "Why did you not put in your claim when the man was here to defend it?" "I forgot it in my pleasure of getting rid of him." "well forget it again and keep on being my good brother as you have in the past." The next day a peon who was watering the trees ran in very much excited saying that six men were coming up the hill to the bed. J-- jumped to his feet and hurried up the hill where the young trees were. Without an arm of any kind, not even a stick. We had a fiery young Mexican as Mayordomo. I said to him, "Teofilo, will you fight for us?" "Si, senora, hasta la muerte" (yes even to death.) "Come on, get the rifle." He made a machete belted to him. I got my shot gun and away we went on the run. When we turned the crest of the hill the men were waving their machetes and telling Jay what they were going to do if he resisted. When they saw us armed with guns they suddenly fell to a dead silence. J-- turned to see what had caused them to stop their clamor. He looked flabbergasted. "Why you little fool. What are you doing here with that gun?" "let them touch you and you will see what I am doing. Never come out against Ortega without arms or you will come up missing some day." The next day we put all the men to taking up that bed and planting them along the creek where we could irrigate them, the only way to save them, as it was not the planting season.

The increasing illness of my husband had me very much worried. He was a victim of fever but principally of overwork and anxiety. In Tapachula he had bought a piece of land with a small house of wattle and daub whitewash, and surrounded by noble old coconut palms, a few cueva trees, the rest covered with timber suitable for

fire-wood, so while J-- hired men to cut the trees and make them into cord wood which was stacked ready for sale. On going on a tour of inspection he found a great blank in the trim rows of wood with broad wheel tracks making a broad curve where they turned toward the exit. I followed the tracks two blocks away and found the cart still loaded, with no pretence of concealing it. I asked the man, "Manuel, what are you doing with my wood?" "It is not your wood, I bought It." "Mentirosa, voy a denunciarle" (Liar, I am going to have you arrested.) "Vaya con Dios!" (Go with God.) That afternoon I went to the police court and stated my case. "Where are your witnesses?" "My evidence is the wheel tracks leading to my wood and back to his house where the cart is still loaded with my wood." "Circumstantial evidence is no good. You must have two reputable persons as witnesses who say him take it. Otherwise your case is thrown out of court." So as I was sure that no reputable people were likely to be found in that town I had to lose my wood.

While I lived in Tapachula I saw many strange customs. A burial that racked me to the soul. At first I was homesick, horribly so. But I heard rather gay music passing by and I ran to the window just as they were under my window, not five feet away, and on a level with my face, the form of a dead girl, being carried on a board covered with flowers, a crowd of men following. No women follow a corpse to the grave in the tropics. I almost fainted and cried until exhausted. She would have a "petate" (mat) laid under her and one to cover her and then be covered with earth. The graves are only rented to the poor and after a certain period, if non payment, the bones are dug up and thrown in a heap in a corner of the cemetery where the whole world can look at them. I see no reason for not extending the burial place for it is bounded on two sides by vacant country space on the roads leading into the town.

The port of San Benito is twenty-four miles away. My husband was down there on business when a breathless boy came calling "Senor, Venga. (come) They have killed Don Jaspas." I do not know how I got there, but when I looked at the man, a small delicate man, it was not my big athletic husband. I was so unstrung by the sight that I was sobbing. I could not make them understand that I could weep for that other bereaved woman. He had a Mexican hat and watch with a broken chain dangling. When he reached the police station he had no boots, no hat and no watch and chain, broken or otherwise.

In those early days in Tapachula I did all of my own work. We were short of capital and so economical in every way. When marketing one day I wore a long coat with pockets and carried my change loose in the pocket. There was a file of soldiers

drawn up buying their supplies for the day. As I passed them I felt a hand in my pocket. I grabbed his hand and held it tight. It was a soldier of course. His comrades roared with mirth at his predicament and the officer in charge gave him a few cuts over his shoulders but I still held on to his hand in my pocket. "Mi plata" (my silver), I cried. The officer opened the thief's hand and he had all of my change in his closed fist. The worst town for pilfering I was ever in. When they went out of barracks on Sunday for a walk, every householder was on watch until it was over. There was nothing too insignificant for them - birds on their perch. I had a fine talking parrot old and wicked like the bald headed old American doctor who gave him to me. They stole him on one Sunday for a walk. (He would yell "Go to hell, you bald headed s..b..") I went to the barracks and complained to the colonel and asked him to accompany me and I could find my bird. The officer was from Sonora and spoke English well. We walked around for some time and Colonel lifted his hat and he was bald "Go to hell, you bald headed s..b..!" yelled the bird. Then there was a near riot. The soldier laughed in one mighty roar. The colonel was purple with rage and threatened to give them all Diana the man who called him that name twenty lashes. A sergeant brought the bird to me and gave an explanation which satisfied the Colonel, and turned to make my leave of him when the bird laughed, "Ha, ha, ha. Go to H..") then I choked him off and made my escape and no one ever stole my bird again. I often saw those soldiers at the market but never without a ripple of laughter going down the ranks. Somehow it made me happier, it was like as if I was one of a brotherhood; When I passed and some one said under their breath - "Go to h.." and when I gave them a sharp look to see them smile. But I must leave the idle reminiscence for more sober things.

The man from whom we bought the place in Tapachula was a very bad man. I mean in it's full meaning. Some men are bad in some ways and good in others, but he was utterly bad - a drunkard, a brawler, a tyrant over the weak. All his neighbors rejoiced when we bought the place thinking he would move elsewhere. He saw their joy and elected to remain. Then his Sunday bullying of the neighbors began, worse than before. One day the most terrible screams reached us. As I could not restrain myself any longer and I started to go over to their house - but my husband held me by main force and did not let me interfere. "That woman is just as bad as he is. So you keep out of it." But later when I saw the beast stagger out and go toward the rum joints, I went over and found the woman stained and bloody. I sent for a doctor and he found her covered with bruises and two ribs broken. I did what I could for her but when she could talk she told me, "Get out of here quick. If he finds you here when he comes back he will surely kill you. He hates you worse then he hates Don Jaspar. He says that you interfere too much." And what do you think that brute of mine said when I told him. "Well he is not such a fool as he looks." I would not speak to him for hours. But some

years afterward he drifted up to the coffee region and carried on in the same way until finally he came to us apparently repentant. "Poor fellow" say Jay, "It would be wrong to refuse him a chance when he is sorry for his past faults." "Gosh, you will be sorry." Well he conducted himself fairly well for a time. He worked making step ladders for the coffee pickers, sold them well paid for the lumber and Jay was jubilant - and then... We were giving a Xmas party for all our neighbors and was building a wide porch around the house and as Jay was getting steadily worse in health he called on Maldonado to do the work. He found him drinking and in an ugly mood. So he told him that he wanted him to come and finish the porch. "I am not your slave to be called whenever you want me." "But you agreed to work when I needed you in payment for the house you live in." I don't feel like work. I only work when I want to." "Then you will have to vacate the house at once. "Oh, will I. You get out or I will kill you." And ran at Jay with the sword pointed at his stomach. Of course, Jay had to back out when he came down to the house he had tears on his cheeks. "What have I come to when I have no strength to defend myself in my own house?" I never was in such a fury in my life to see that brave and good man weeping for his lost youth and strength. Then the woman appeared coming down the hill with a big basket on her head. "That man will carry off something that is essential to the mill. I am going to search her basket." "For God's sake let her go - don't you see him watching up there with his sword? If you stop her I will have to kill him." By this time she was near and I walked out and stopped her. "Lucinda, put down that basket. I am going to search it." "You search my basket, you "Put a" (whore)?" I gave her a blow that knocked her down and in falling she struck her head against a stump. I heard a shout behind me to see that maniac rushing on my husband with his sword. "Stop, Maldonado! If you come near me with that sword I will kill you!" But he rushed on his fate.

Jay grabbed a piece of scantling and as the man came within reach, he brought it down with all his force, and cracked his skull like a coconut. There was one wild piercing shriek and the brute was tamed. What fools women are. This woman had lived a life of terror and was never free from bruises, from foot and fist - she fell on him and raved about her "dear, dear husband." Jay pushed aside tears running down his cheeks and saying, "I am a murderer."

"You had better finish him", I said, "or he will live to make you a lot of trouble." "Oh, you wicked woman. You got me into this. You made me a murderer and you glory in it." "Look here, " and I held up the swedging hammer, the one indispensable tool (as Maldonado well knew, the saw could not run without it) to remove and insert the teeth in the saw. I found it in her basket when she was down. I could have laughed

with joy when I saw what I had done to her. She had an eye that looked like a purple egg fruit.

I sent a runner to our good friend, "Come running. Don Jaspar has killed Maldonado." He was there within the hour. In the meantime Jay had bandaged the man - when our friend arrived he said, "Why Jaspar you fool. Why didn't you finish the job. Everyone who knows would say you were justified." So he had the peons carry the man down to the nearest Jugado. We heard nothing further for sometime. Finally heard that he would recover.

We had a party which was a great success - and Jay was congratulated on his valor. Two months after the event Jay received a demand to appear in court on a charge of "attempted murder". What he suffered on that 24 miles journey only "The One who knows our thoughts and suffering" ever will know. We arrived the night before the trial and Jay tossed and turned, moaned in his sleep. I could sympathize - for he was very sick and weak.

At ten o'clock we went to the Jef Politico's office where he sat alone. He met us with smiling courtesy and smiled at Jay's sorrowful face. "Don't worry, Don Jaspar, this case amounts to nothing." The appearance of Maldonado was a shock! White as chalk supported on each side by a friend head bound in heavy bandages. He dragged himself before the judge. No chair for him - no smiles! Only a stern frown on the face of the Judge. I nearly pitied him - until I remembered how he had suffered also.

"What do you want here?" said the judge. "Senor Jues. Este hombre..." (Senor Judge this man..) "este caballero. canalla!" (This gentleman, you scum." Then I found out what justice in Mexico really was. (The personal wish of the Judge). "You have caused trouble every place you have been with your drunken violence. Many have been weak enough to let you scare them, until this brave and good man struck you down. He had every right to kill you and would have done better to have finished you at once. You have no case in this court - and your sentence is to pay him all expenses you have caused him by your audacious demand." We thanked the Judge and that afternoon went home with lighter hearts. In one place I always sang to him - a long stretch of sweet smelling place, peaceful and quiet, and although Jay did not know Hail Columbia from Yankee Doodle he loved to hear me. What a wonderful thing love is. It is surely blind. Pattie was the shining star in music at that time. We heard her in Salt Lake City one time. And Jay would tell me in all seriousness that I sang better than she.

If "Beauty is in the eye of the gazer" this time music was in the ear of the listener.

Ortega ceased his persecution. Looking at that fading face and dwindling body he thought he had only to wait to reach his heart's desire. But he thought me a negligent quality and there is where he lost out in the end. This was a fight and I was in it to a finish. We had planned for years to go to the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. "If nothing happens, we'll rest from this strenuous life and go to the Fair." But everything happened! When we reached San Benito Jay was so ill that the doctor told him to wait until he was more able to bear the fatigue of the journey. But he was adamant. "I will go if I die on my way to the ship! Don't let them make me stay." That appeal to me, from a man who had always been invincible – I had rested on him as upon a rock - it gave me an anguish more poignant than that which I felt when I closed his eyes in death - ten days after reaching San Francisco.

I was soon "Fed up" with the fair, it was so lonesome with nothing but human beings to look at. It was too much for my solitude loving soul. Too crowded. Too rushing without someone to enjoy it with. At times I would see somebody notable or very amusing and would think I must tell Jay about this, and then with a wrench of the heart I would remember never again could I tell him anything. In one month I had only spoken to three people. The man at the ticket station, the colored maid and the wheelchair man. Oh yes, one woman in a restaurant. She told me she was from Georgia (a cracker I suppose) She asked me all about myself, and I loved here for her lack of convention. Finally she finished her meal, filled her mouth with water, rinsed her mouth, went to the door and squirted the water onto the sidewalk. It cheered me mightily! It made me feel like I was back in Mexico; where we do the same thing, only we don't go to the door to do it, just turn our heads and squirt it on the floor where we throw our bones and then turn gracefully and wipe our mouths and fingers on the edge of the table cloths. The lady then said "I'm sure glad I met up with you" and I believe she meant it, I had a warm feeling for her. She was as unconscious and natural as a pig in her pen.

I was not happy, so resolved to go so I hit the trail for home, with dread, of what might have happened in my absence. My young step-son had left for Mexico before his father died. So I had hopes that things would not be as bad, as he had every reason to protect his own interest as well as mine.

All of those poverty stricken years while his father and I had been straining every nerve, to build this plantation, he had only stayed in Mexico two years - it cost us

great effort to send him home to school, and pay for his tuition. And as the result was, a bill for five hundred dollars lost at poker in the first day of his arrival. I had a precious scotch collie, which he had kicked to death. The plantation neglected, drunkenness and insubordination among the people. In fact a mess.

I arrived without money, and had to borrow money to pay my men, so I put the young man on a salary. Oh no! he would not work for me on a salary on a place which really ought to belong to him. So I gave him one hundred dollars and told him to go rustle himself a job.

He took the money I gave, his father's horse and saddle and hit the trail for town and the gambling table. In one week he had sold his horse and saddle and had not one cent. So he wrote to me begging to come back. Nothing doing.

I finally brought order out of chaos, and by this time Ortega began his last effort to get the place he had struggled for years to obtain. He said to me smiling frankly, "You better make up your mind to sell, before anything worse happens." "No Ortega! not while I live. And I thank you for this warning, you have threatened my life, and I am going to tell Senor Betherana - no is any violence is offered to me, they will make you pay for it. Now go to do your worst." "Why Dona Isabel! I have always been a friend to you and Gaspar." "Yes like Judas. When my husband was dying, you as a brother Mason told him, "You can die in peace, Gaspar, we will help and care for your wife, and the first thing you do is to try and force me to sell. No! No!" "You silly fool, I will assume all debts and give you five thousand dollars not pesos, "Dollars Americano."

"You know how he slaved day and night for nine long years. And I was not idle and you ask me to sell you my husband's work for five thousand dollars. Please leave my house before I throw you out." "Muy bien, Teatare" con Don Genido, hasta manana."

When we were preparing for our trip to Chicago, J-- arranged all of his business giving me sole ownership of "La Joya" our plantation. Made his will and left a life insurance policy to his three remaining children. Three had died during our married life of tuberculosis, and the oldest son died, one year after his father. I offered him (Pindo) four hundred acres, and one thousand dollars to plant, but he refused, because

the land was lower than mine - the fact of the matter was, that he and his brother had planned to oust me completely. So Guido tried to set up a claim but was thrown out of court as my claim was ironclad. Ortega seeing that he was defeated on that score, started anew his depredations, stealing material off of my land.

One day I saw my men go up the hill. I knew what they were after, so I waited until they came down with their first load; when they left their axes, machetes, hats, etc. when they left for another trip I went out and gathered up everything of theirs, put them in my podega and locked the door and sat down to wait for the explosion which I was aware would follow the discovery of their loss. It was not long in coming. I sat with my shot-gun across my knees and my Mayordomo, with the rifle. The men came in a bunch yelling, "Give up those things of our which you have stolen."

"They are locked in my bedega and the first man who touches the door I will shoot. Clear out of here, go and tell your boss to come and pay me the damage which he owes for your thieving. I will not have nay dealing with "Canalla" (low class) such. I know that you are only carrying out the orders of your boss."

They blustered and threatened as is the way of the people of Teopeki but all I said was "send your boss." Finally the manager a German, a (Prussian) very lofty and very supercilious "You know Midas that you know you have no proof to detain the tools of these poor men who only earn twenty five cents per day."

"Excuse me my good sir - since when has a rich man like Ortega, and a high class Prussian like yourself needed to hide behind the rags of a lot of lousy peons. Let me tell you this. Until you pay me just damages for the building material which they have got there in the road, and the damages to my seed bed, done through malice. Those tools and other things remain with me as evidence in the case I intend to bring against Ortega, you had better settle with me, it will cost you less."

But, two days later they sent me fifty dollars and I delivered the tools. The Prussian had a friend in Tapachula, whom he invited to visit him at the finca. The former had a squaw with whom he was living, and when the dinner was announced she sat at the head of the table. "What is this? Do you insult me so! Seating a low down Indian with me?" The other answered that she was more decent then his friend. A challenge followed, they went out into the patio, two shots rang out and they both

fell dead.

Their bodies were carried to Tepachula, and on a long table under a wide spreading mango tree the autopsy was performed in the presence of the multitude of vatos assembled. And so they annoyed me in every little petty way. Then other people agents of Ortega to buy -- then a real offer was made by a German. I told this man that my price was thirty thousand dollars and I stuck to that. I played Ortega's agent against him and when he offered me twenty five thousand I told him I must have time to think about it.

"La Joya is mine" Ortega told his friends the next day I sold to the German. It was balm to my soul when I heard how he raved, and cursed me. I was false, hypocritical, I was not a woman, I was a devil in woman's form. I did not have to do him any harm, he alone ruined himself. Coffee was very high in price and he dreamed of being the coffee king of Tapachula, he bought on every side, borrowed money right and left. Extravagant diamonds for all of his family - in fact tied himself into a financial bow knot and then I left Mexico he was "foreman" on his former great plantation. Coffee had fallen in price and he owed so much debt that it ruined him. Que en pas dieresa. (May he rest in peace).

When I have been in danger of death - which I have been many times, I have felt that God was protecting me and I have another proof since a few days ago I had another proof of divine providence over me. I went to a friend's house who is giving me her help in typing my manuscript. She has a very large police dog - he was chained near the dining room door and as I passed by I stooped and patted his head when without an instant's warning he flew at me his weight knocked me down. I struck my head against the door jam, he tried to reach my throat, but I grasped his head in both hands and with all my strength I pushed his head to the right hand and bunching shoulders to protect my throat, his lower fangs scraped my throat back to my ear but my old skinny neck saved me for his teeth fastened on my massive old jaw of mine. In the meantime, my little friend, a tiny tot of a woman with a month old baby, proved that courage is not of the strong alone. She seeing my danger jumped astride of that mad beast and pulled him backwards. When she pulled him loose I thought my whole face was torn off. I had remained quiet without struggling for fear that he would break his hold on my jaw and grab my throat. When released I was feeling dizzy from the blow on the head. She led me to a chair and dabbed the wound with iodine.

But I feared for her from the shock than I did for myself on account of her delicate condition. She was trembling excessively. I tried to be perfectly calm to not

frighten her more than I could help. She rushed me off to Neumuller hospital where the doctor patched me up. I do not think it will improve my beauty, but I have the consolation of knowing that it cannot make me any uglier. Oh! how pleasant it is to be old! You are immune from so many things, from the persecution of man - an old woman can tell them to go "where the worm dieth not and where the fire brigade is ineffectual." You can wear broad flat heeled shoes and nobody notices the difference. I don't believe they would see if you had no stockings on - but there, some things are "verboten" you cannot be gay and happy joke and laugh, paint your face, nor use the delectable lipsticks not even the kiss-proof ones, of course there are many things you cannot enjoy - but you have the whole world of books to revel in and you have no one to say "are you ever coming to bed? Put out that damned light, I want to go to sleep." Oh yes, age has it's compensations, and when you are seventy four you do not have to worry if your bathing suit is out of style, your horse has a rough gait or that your bicycle is out of order your only serious trouble is - are your false teeth in straight or that your left eyebrow has lost it's stickum and is coming out and may drop in your soup. I must stop, I can think of nothing but foolishness.