

Rainbow's End

A NOVEL by REX BEACH

Author of "THE IRON TRAIL," "THE SPOILERS," "HEART OF THE SUNSET," Etc.

(Copyright, by Harper and Brothers)

ROSA AND HER TWO COMPANIONS FACE DEATH FROM STARVATION OR DISEASE

Synopsis.—Don Esteban Varona, rich Cuban planter, hides his money and jewels and the secret of the hiding place in lost when he and the only other person who knows it are killed. Donna Isabel, step-mother of the Varona twins—Esteban and Rosa—searches vainly for years for the hidden treasure. Johnny O'Reilly, an American, loves and is loved by Rosa. Donna Isabel falls to her death in an old well while walking in her sleep. Esteban's connection with the Cuban insurrection is discovered and he and Rosa are forced to flee. O'Reilly, in New York on business, gets a letter from Rosa telling of her peril and he starts for Cuba. Pancho Cueto, faithless manager of the Varona estates, betrays Esteban and Rosa, leading Colonel Cobo, notorious Spanish guerrilla, to their hiding place. Esteban, who is absent, returns just in time to rescue Rosa. O'Reilly's efforts to reach Rosa are fruitless and he is compelled by the Spanish authorities to leave Cuba. Esteban wreaks a terrible vengeance on Pancho Cueto. A fierce fight with Spanish soldiers ensues. Esteban escapes, but badly wounded and half-conscious, he is unable to find his way back to his camp. Rosa, with the faithful servants who had remained with her, is forced to obey the concentration order of General Weyler, the Spanish commander, and seek refuge in Matanzas. O'Reilly returns to Cuba with a band of filibusters, which includes Norine Evans, an American girl who has dedicated her fortune and services as nurse to the Cuban cause. Although warned by Cuban officers that both Esteban and Rosa probably are dead, O'Reilly refuses to abandon the search. He joins the forces of General Gomez, the Cuban commander.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"I inferred as much from what Lopez told me." The general nodded his white head. "Well, you'll make a good soldier, and we shall be glad to have you." He extended his hand, and O'Reilly took it gratefully.

The city of Matanzas was "pacified." As soon as the boastful bands of the captain general. And this was no exaggeration, as anyone could see from the number of beggars there. Of all his military operations, this "pacification" of the western towns and provinces was the most conspicuously successful and the one which gave Valeriano Weyler the keenest satisfaction; for nowhere did the rebellion lift its head—except, perhaps, among the ranks of those disaffected men who hid in the hills, with nothing above them but the open sky. As for the population at large, it was cured of treason; it no longer resisted, even weakly, the law of Spain. The reason was that it lay dying. Weyler's cure was simple, efficacious—it consisted of extermination, swift and pitiless.

Poverty had been common in Matanzas even before the war, but now there were so many beggars in the city that nobody undertook to count them. When the refugees began to pour in by the thousands, and when it became apparent that the government intended to let them starve, the better citizens undertook an effort at relief; but times were hard, food was scarce, and prices high. Moreover, it soon transpired that the military frowned upon everything like organized charity, and in consequence the newcomers were, perforce, abandoned to their own devices. These country people were dumb and terrified at the misfortunes which had overtaken them; they wandered the streets in aimless bewilderment, fearful of what blow might next befall. They were not used to begging, and therefore they did not often implore alms; but all day long they asked for work, for bread, that their little ones might live. Work, however, was even scarcer than food, and the time soon came when they crouched upon curbs and door-steps, hopeless, beaten, silently reproachful of those more fortunate than they. Their eyes grew big and hollow; their outstretched hands grew gaunt and skinny. The sound of weeping women and fretting babies became a common thing to hear.

Dogs and cats became choice articles of diet, until they disappeared. The government did supply one quality of food, however; at intervals, it distributed yuca roots. But these were starchy and almost indigestible. From eating them the children grew plumped in limb and face, while their abominable bloated hugely. Matanzas became peopled with a race of grotesquely misshapen little folks, gnomes with young bodies, but with faces old and sick.

Of course disease became epidemic, for in the leaky hovels, dirt-floored and destitute of any convenience, there could be no effort at sanitation. Conditions became unspendable. The children died first, then the aged and infirm. Deaths in the street were not uncommon; nearly every morning bodies were found beneath the portales. Starving creatures crept to the market in the hope of begging a stray bit of food, and some of them died there, between the empty stalls. The death wagons, heavy with their daily freight, rumbled ceaselessly through the streets, adding to the giant piles of unburied corpses outside the city.

Typhoid, smallpox, yellow fever, raged unchecked. The hospitals were crowded, and even in them the commonest necessities were lacking. It is believed that men have returned from the grave, but no one, either Spaniard or Cuban, had ever been known to return from one of these pesthouses, and, in consequence, those who were

stricken preferred to remain and to die among their dear ones.

Yes, Matanzas was pacified. Weyler's boast was true. Nowhere in the entire province was a field in cultivation; nowhere, outside the garrisoned towns, was a house left standing. Nor was the city of Matanzas the only concentration camp; there were others dotted through Santa Clara, Habana and Pinar del Rio. In them half a million people cried for food. Truly no rebellious land was ever more completely pacified than this, no people's spirits ever more completely crushed.

Into Matanzas, city of beggary and death, came Rosa Varona and her two negro companions, looking for relief. They made the journey without mishap, for they were too destitute to warrant plundering, and Rosa's disguise concealed what charms remained to her. But once they had entered the city, what an awakening! What suffering, what poverty, what rags they saw! The three of them grew weak with dismay at the horror of it all; but there was no retreat.

Asensio built a makeshift shelter close under La Cumbre—from it the ruins of the Quinta de Esteban were visible—and there they settled down to live. They had hoped to lose themselves among the other prisoners, and in this they were successful, for none of their miserable neighbors were in any condition to notice them, and there was nothing sufficiently conspicuous about two tattered blacks and their hunchbacked daughter to draw attention from the soldiers.

Asensio foraged zealously, and at first he managed somehow to secure enough food for his little family. One day the soldiers seized him and put him to work on the fortifications along with a gang of other men who appeared strong enough to stand hard labor. Asensio was not paid for this, but he was allowed one meal a day, and he succeeded in bringing home each night a share of his allotment.

It is surprising how little nourishment will sustain life. Rosa and her two friends had long felt the pinch of hunger, but now they plumbed new depths of privation, for there were days when Asensio and his fellow conscripts received nothing at all. After a time Evangelina began making baskets and weaving palm-leaf hats, which she sold at six cents each. She taught Rosa the craft, and they worked from dawn until dark, striving with nimble, tireless fingers to supplement Asensio's rations and postpone starvation. But it was a hopeless task. Other nimble fingers worked as tirelessly as theirs, and the demand for hats was limited.

Their hut overlooked the road to San Serrino, that Via Dolorosa on which condemned prisoners were marched out to execution, and in time the women learned to recognize the peculiar blaring notes of a certain cornet, which signified that another "Cuban cock was about to crow." When in the damp of dewy mornings they heard that bugle they ceased their weaving long enough to cross themselves and whisper a prayer for the souls of those who were on their way to die. But this was the only respite they allowed themselves.

Rosa meditated much upon the contrast between her present and her former condition. Matanzas was the city of her birth, and time was when she had trod its streets in arrogance and pride, when she had possessed friends by the score among its residents. But of all these there was not one to whom she dared appeal in this, her hour of need. But even had she felt assured of meeting sympathy, her pride was pure Castilian, and it would never down. She, a Varona, whose name was one to conjure with, whose lineage was of the highest! She to beg? The thing was quite impossible. One crumb, so taken, would have choked her. Rosa preferred to suffer proudly and await the hour when hunger or disease would at last blot out her memories

of happy days and end this nightmare misery.

Then, too, she dreaded any risk of discovery by Mario de Castano, who was a hard, vindictive man. His parting words had shown her that he would never forgive the slight she had put upon him; and she did not wish to put his threats to the test. Once Rosa saw him, on her way to buy a few centavos' worth of sweet potatoes; he was huddled in his victrola, a huge bladder of flesh, and he rode the streets deaf to the plaints of starving children, blind to the misery of beseeching mothers. Rosa shrank into a doorway and drew her tattered shawl closer over her face for fear Don Mario might recognize in this misshapen body and in these pinched, discolored features the beautiful blossom he had craved.

Nor did she forget Colonel Cobo. The man's memory haunted her, asleep and awake; of him she was most desperately afraid. When for the first time she saw him riding at the head of his cut-throats she was like to swoon in her tracks, and for a whole day thereafter she cowered in the hut, trembling at every sound.

In these dark hours she recalled the stories of the old Varona treasure and Esteban's interesting theory of its whereabouts, but she could not bring herself to put much faith in either. Of course it was barely possible that there was indeed a treasure, and even that Esteban's surmise had been correct. But it was little more than a remote possibility. Distance lends a rosy color to reality to our most absurd imaginings, but like the haze that tints a far-off landscape, it dissolves upon approach. Now that Rosa was here, in sight of the ruined quinta itself, her hopes and half-beliefs faded.

More than once she was tempted to confide in Evangelina and Asensio, but she thought better of it. Although she put implicit faith in Evangelina's dis-



Rosa Shrank into a Doorway.

cretion, she knew that Asensio was not the sort of fellow to be trusted with a secret of great magnitude—he was boastful, talkative, extensible; he was just the sort to bring destruction upon all of them. Rosa had sufficient intelligence to realize that even if she found her father's riches they would only constitute another and a greater menace to the lives of all of them. Nevertheless, she wished to set her mind at rest once for all. Taking Evangelina with her, she climbed La Cumbre one day in search of roots and vegetables.

It turned out to be a sad experience for both women. The negro wept noisily at the destruction wrought by Pancho Cueto, and Rosa was overcome by painful memories. Little that was familiar remained; evidence of Cueto's all-devouring greed spoke from the sprouting furrows his men had dug from the faked trees they had felled and piled in orderly heaps, from the stones and mortar of the house itself.

The well remained, although it had been planked over, but it was partially filled up with rubbish, as Rosa discovered when she peered into it. Only a tiny pool of scum was in the bottom. After a long scrutiny the girl arose, convinced at last of her brother's delusion, and vaguely ashamed of her own credulity. No, if ever there had been a treasure, it was hidden elsewhere; all of value that this well contained for Rosa was her memory of a happiness departed. Of such memories, the well, the whole place, was brimful. Here, as a child, she had romped with Esteban. Here, as a girl, she had dreamed her first dreams, and here O'Reilly, her smiling knight, had found her. Yonder was the very spot where he had held her in his arms and begged her to wait the day of his return. Well, she had waited.

But was that Rosa Varona who had promised so freely and so confidently

the poor Rosa whom her bones protruded through her rags? It could not be. Happiness, contentment, hope—these were fictions; only misery, despair, and pain were real. But it had been a glorious dream, at any rate—a dream which Rosa vowed to cherish always.

CHAPTER XIV.

That Sick Man From San Antonio.

It was part of the strategy practiced by the Cuban leaders to divide their forces into separate columns for the purpose of raiding the smaller Spanish garrisons and harassing the troops sent to their relief, reassembling, these bands only when and where some telling blow was to be struck.

When O'Reilly and Branch enlisted in the Army of the Orient they were assigned to the command of Col. Miguel Lopez, and it was under his leadership that they made their first acquaintance with the peculiar methods of Cuban warfare.

There had been, at first, some doubt of Branch's fitness to take the field at all—he had suffered a severe hemorrhage shortly after his arrival at Cuba—and it was only after a hysterical demonstration on his part that he had been accepted as a soldier. He simply would not be left behind. At first the Cubans regarded him with mingled contempt and pity, for certainly no less promising volunteer had ever taken service with them. But upon the occasion of the very first fight all ill will disappeared as if by magic, for although Branch deliberately disobeyed orders, he nevertheless displayed such amazing audacity in the face of the enemy, such a theatrical contempt for bullets, as to stupefy every one. Moreover, he lived up to his reputation; he continued to be insanely daring, varying his exploits to correspond with his mood, with the result that he attained a popularity which was unique, nay, sensational.

O'Reilly alone understood the reason for the fellow's morbid irritability, his suicidal recklessness; but when he privately remonstrated he was gruffly told to mind his own business. Branch flatly refused to modify his conduct; he seemed really bent upon cheating the disease that made his life a misery.

But, as usual, fate was perverse; she refused to humor the sick man's hope. When, after blindly inviting death, Leslie had emerged from several engagements unscathed, his surprise—and perhaps a natural relief at finding himself whole—became tinged with a certain apprehension lest he survive those deliberately courted dangers only to succumb to the ill and privations of camp life. The fellow's tongue grew ever sharper; his society became intolerable, his gloom oppressive and irresistibly contagious. When, after several weeks of campaigning, the column went into camp for a short rest, O'Reilly decided that he would try to throw off the burden of Leslie's overwhelming dejection, and, if possible, shift a portion of it upon the shoulders of Captain Judson.

On the day after their arrival O'Reilly and the big artilleryman took advantage of a pleasant stream to bathe and wash their clothes; then, while they lay in their hammocks, enjoying the luxury of a tattered oil-cloth shelter and waiting for the sun to dry their garments, O'Reilly spoke what was in his mind.

"I'm getting about fed up on Leslie," he declared. "He's the world's champion crepe-hanger, and he's painted the whole world such a deep, despondent blue that I'm completely dismal. You've got to take him off my hands."

O'Reilly's youthful assistant, who at the moment was painstakingly manufacturing a huge, black cigar for himself out of some purified tobacco, pricked up his ears at the mention of Branch's name and now edged closer, explaining:

"Carumba! There's a hero for you. Meester Branch is the bravest man I ever seen. Our people call him 'El Demonio'."

O'Reilly jerked his head toward the Cuban. "You see? He's made the hit of his life, and yet he resents it. My nerves are frayed out. I've argued myself hoarse, but he misconstrues everything I say. I wish you'd convince him that he has a chance to get well; it might alter his disposition. If something doesn't alter it I'll be court-martialed for shooting a man in his sleep—and I'll hit him right in the middle, no matter how slim he is." O'Reilly compressed his lips firmly.

The assistant, who had finished rolling his cigar, now lighted it and repeated: "Yes, sir, Meester Branch is the bravest man I ever seen. You remember that first battle, eh? Those Spaniards seen him comin' and threw down their guns and beat it. I laugh to skill myself that day."

"Jacket" was at once the youngest and the most profane member of Colonel Lopez's entire command. The most shocking oaths fell from his beardless lips whenever he opened them to speak English, and O'Reilly's efforts to break the boy of the habit proved quite unavailing.

the boy his nickname—a name prompted by a marked eccentricity, for although Jacket possessed the two garments which constituted the ordinary insurrecto uniform, he made a practice of wearing only one. On chilly nights, or on formal occasions, he wore both waistcoat and trousers, but at other times he dispensed entirely with the latter, and his legs went naked. They were naked now, as, with the modesty of complete unconsciousness, he squatted in the shade, puffing thoughtfully at his giant cheroot.

Once Jacket's mind was fastened upon any subject, it remained there, and after a time he continued:

"Did I told you about that battle of Pinar Bravo? Eh?" He turned his big brown eyes toward O'Reilly. "O'risto! I still more'n a dozen men that day!"

"It was a hot scrimmage," Judson attested. "Some of Lopez's niggers, those tall, lean, hungry fellows from Santiago, managed to hack their way through a wire fence and get behind a detachment of the enemy who had made a stand under a hill. They charged, and for a wonder they got close enough to use their machetes. It was bloody work—the kind you read about—no quarter. Somehow Jacket managed to be right in the middle of the butchery. He's a brave kid, all right. My son!"

At that moment Branch approached, his long face set in lines of discontent, even deeper than usual. He had been wondering about the camp in one of his restless fits, and now he began:

"Say, what do you think I've been doing? I've been looking up some grub for Miss Evans, and I can't find any."

"Can't find any?"

"Nothing fit for her to eat. You don't expect her to live on this infernal, eternal beef stew."

"Didn't Major Ramos bring anything along?" O'Reilly asked.

"He says there's a famine at Caltas."

"We'd better look into this," Judson exclaimed, and, finding that his clothes were dry, he hurriedly began to dress himself.

Together, the three men made an investigation of the camp's resources, only to discover that Branch was right. There was, indeed, but little food of any kind, and that little was of the coarsest. Ordinarily, such a condition of affairs would have occasioned them no surprise, for the men were becoming accustomed to a more or less chronic scarcity of provisions; but the presence of Norine Evans put quite a different complexion upon the matter. They were still discussing the situation when Miss Evans, having finished her afternoon nap, threw open the flaps of her tent and stepped out.

When she had listened to the account apologetically submitted by her three friends, she drew her brows together, saying, plaintively: "Oh dear! We've been going short for a week, and Major Ramos told me we'd fare better when we got here. I had my mouth all set for a banquet. Couldn't you even find the poor dog a bone?"

"I'm afraid the cupboard is bare," O'Reilly acknowledged.

"Do you know what I want for dinner?" Norine inquired. "Lamb chops with green peas, some nice white bread, a salad, and coffee."

The three men looked at her anxiously. Judson stirred uneasily.

"That's what I want. I don't expect to get it."

With a sigh of relief the captain exclaimed: "I thought you were giving your order."

"Goodness, no!" With a laugh the girl seated herself upon her own camp-stool, inviting her callers to dispose themselves on the ground about her. "If you can stand the food, I dare say I can. Now then, tell me what you've been doing since you left Cuba. I've been frightened to death that some of you would be hurt. That's one reason why I've been working night and day helping to get the hospitals in shape. I can't bear to think of our boys being wounded. Everything is so different to what I thought it would be, and I'm so weak and ineffective. The medical supplies I brought are nearly all gone, and I've learned what hard work it is fitting up hospitals when there's nothing to fit them up with." She sighed.

"I imagined I was going to work wonders—I thought I was going to be a Florence Nightingale, and the men were going to idolize me."

"Don't they?" Judson demanded.

"No. That is—not in exactly the way I expected."

"They all want to marry her," O'Reilly explained.

"Insolent bunch!" growled the captain. Then he swallowed hard and said, "But for that matter, so do I."

"How silly you boys can be!" Norine laughed. "I dare say the others are joking too, but—"

"Joking?" O'Reilly grinned. "Not at all. I'm the only single man in camp who isn't in love with you. When you arrived this morning there was a general stampede for the river. I'll bet the fish in this stream will taste of soap for years to come."

As if to point O'Reilly's words at the moment appeared Colonel Lopez, shaved blood-ran and clad in a recently laundered uniform which was still damp. The three Americans rose to salute him, but discipline was lax and he waved them back to their seats.

O'Reilly, fighting with the Cuban rebels, makes a remarkable discovery that puts new life into his hopes. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Bontanists have found that Alpine plants which push their way through the snow do so by breathing more rapidly than normally to generate heat.

A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

Miss Kelly Tells How Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Restored Her Health.

Newark, N. J.—"For about three years I suffered from nervous breakdown and got so weak I could hardly stand, and had headaches every day. I tried everything I could think of and was under a physician's care for two years. A girl friend had used Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and she told me about it. From the first day I took it began to feel better and now I am well and able to do most any kind of work. I have been recommending the Compound ever since and give you my permission to publish this letter."—Miss FLO KELLY, 476 So. 14th St., Newark, N. J.



The reason this famous root and herb remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, was so successful in Miss Kelly's case was because it went to the root of her trouble, restored her to a normal healthy condition and as a result her nervousness disappeared.



Let Cuticura Be Your Beauty Doctor

411 Broadway, New York, N. Y. Sold Everywhere.

His Views. "I see this attempt to utilize free energy didn't pan out." "No, there's nothing free in this life."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Strong Willstand the Heat of Summer Better Than the Weak. "Old people who are feeble and younger people who are weak will be strengthened and enabled to get through the summer heat of summer by taking Cuticura."—The National Health.

TRYING TO PLEASE JOHNNY

Small Boy Couldn't Understand Objects Being Made to His Tasting the Hair.

A few days ago, there appeared in the News a letter protesting against noise near hospitals. The next morning a hospital patient heard a horn sounding loudly in front.

"There," she said to her nurse. "That's just what that fellow wrote about. If I were in the hospital of New I would take you about three jumps to stop that."

"It won't take me more than four," said the nurse, who had noticed her patient's rising temperature.

On reaching the door, she was surprised to see seated alone in a machine a former patient whom she knew well, in that Greek key who was returned regularly for dressings by a much interested social agency.

"Why, Pete?" she exclaimed. "Don't do that."

"Why not?" asked Peter innocently. "Don't you know there are sick people in the hospital? Think how Johnny (in former state) must feel."

"Now," said Pete in amazement. "It never hurt my leg when it was sick. I was a dick in for Johnny."—Indianapolis News.

Sure Proof. "Do you believe that opium being bad?" "I do. My husband's rich uncle gave him an opal ring when he thought he was dying and he got well the next week."



Children Like

the attractive flavor of the healthful cereal drink

POSTUM

And it's fine for them too, for it contains nothing harmful—only the goodness of wheat and pure molasses.

POSTUM is now regularly used in place of tea and coffee in many of the best of families.

Wholesome economical and healthful.

"There's a Reason"