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LA SERENA.

SOUTH AMERICAN NEW YEAR'S STORY, BY HENRY CLAY LUXENS.

be without its

nce, however, has been mine.
On the contrary,
its past is heaped
up and running

approaches, grow luminous and assume shapes that are startling in their fidelity.

From the diary of a good woman's life, I have torn two pages. One was written in a mist of Doubt; the other beneath the gloriously radiant arch of Delight. After years of uncertainty happings has become to have per-

mist of Doubt; the other beneath the gloriously radiant arch of Delight. After years of uncertainty, happiness has become to her a peremial bow of promise.

What these two pages reveal of truth, only guessed at before, intensifies a memory that will abide with me until the grave's impenetrable shadows are lifted and dispelled.

The scenes of this narrative are "on foreign station."

Almost simultaneously I had reached my thirth-seventh year and the thirty-fifth parallel of south latitude. The turtle-back, peninsular city of Montevideo very comfortably housed me among its one hundred thousand inhabitants. There were, probably, that many of us at that time, although I never had a whole opportunity to verify the local census. One afternoon, as I stood at the portal of the hospitable English club, I somewhat idiotically tried to count the people going back and fortif, crossing and recreasing the Plaza Constitucion; but I soon grew weary of the, monotonous tramp and arm swinging, bowing and oging, the carriage sweep and street car rush. So, resignedly, I faced about, went deliberately upstairs, and gossiped with some genial brother cosmopolities who had been born before that quarter of the world was quite ready for them.

I could not speak the every day language

them.

I could not speak the every day language of my temporary fellow citizens; yet friends were plentiful, skies fair, the society charming, and December's pulse best warmly at eighty degrees or thereabouts.

The previous month, and, in fact, the last week in it, found me loitering at the Brazilian capital. There I had awaited the arrival of a steamer comrade. His mercantile engagements detained him at Pernambuco and Bahia. Thus he escaped a genuine howling, sail splitting pampero, which had given me a toss and tumble idea of what a hard hiew off shore usually is in the vicinity of Cabo Prio.

off shore usually is in the vicinity of Cabo Fréo.

When we were again together, I quickly detected a change in George Hamilton. He seemed preoccupied—his mind far removed from either business or pleasure. I had marked out a grand plan for sight seeing in his company, but he took little or no apparent interest in the detailed programma. Thuca, the magnificent, failed to lure him, and Fao Assucar and lofty Corcovado shared with the renowned Jardin Botanico and its avenue of palms a neglect that was surprising. On the voyage out from New York he had talked so constantly of these freaks and wonders of tropical nature that I was now completely nouplussed by his indifference. During his youth he had spent several years in the Atlantic provinces of Brazil. His father had been one of the first and most encessful railway contractors in that opplent empire. Besides having a thorough acquishmance with the coast cities of South America, no native spoke Fortuguess or Sjanish more finently than George Hamilton. As I had depended upon his oft refeated voluntary promise to be my guide in and around Rio, the disappointment was not hid from him.

Abourd ship our likings had been mutual.

married, but made no further reference to family affairs. He claimed to represent a New England manufacturing company, whose main offices were in Boston. I naturally supposed that his wife was living at or near that city. His almost studied reticence

near that city. His simost studied reticence about domestic associations prevented me from making even ordinary inquiries. I was to learn more, however, and soon; but not all from him.

To describe George Hamilton in his moods, or at his worst or best, would result the same. An attractive man, he easily gained and held esteem. Men and women alike were fascinated by his physical beauty and intellectual strength. I had been proud of his individual preference.

On the third evening, after he had rejoined

On the third evening, after he had rejoined me, he came hurriedly into my room at the Hotel les Estrangeros. His agitation was ill concealed. Throwing himself, full length, upon a bamboo lounge, he rested his head in one hand and looked fixedly at me. This

After a few moments, he sprang to his test, and began pacing the room. Then, suddents halting in his walk, he excitedly sakt:
"I am miserable! Pardon me, senor; I owe you apology and explanation."
"Neither," was my curt reply.

"Neither," was my curt reply.

Without seeming to notice or care for the manner of my interjection, he continued:

"Oh, yes, I do; for outwardly I am no longer the man to whom you freely extended an honorable, sympathetic friendship. Meeting casually, as all earth's travelers do, the passing acquaintance has, with me, ripened into sincere regard. You may not wholly appreciate the bitterness of a necessity now forced upon me or the heartache that comes with it; but here we part. When you return to the States hunt me up. It will be pleasant to relearse old times."

"What!" I exclaimed; "do you not intend joining me on my further southern voyage?"

"To the River Plate cities! No! It is impossible, senor."

"To the River Plate cities? No! It is impossible, senor."

"In furn, pardon me," I said. "But may I ask why this alteration in your former business plans?"

"Well," he responded, with some hesitancy, as he walked to a balcony window overlooking the picturesque, starlit landscape and the rugged mountain frowning entrance to Rio's spacious harbor, "I expected that question, yet do not want to reply to it. I knew how awkward this interview would be, but could not embark to-morrow for Lighon and Liverpool without seeing you."

"You certainly have a right to withhold confidences that until now were unsolicited.

affdences that until now were unsolicited, member, Hamilton, I was never inquisitive about your private matters!"



face each other there. Should you be favored with the smiles of La Serena," be said, with parenotes. But a truce to this! I'm ashaned of my weakness. You go among the Orientals and Argentines without me. I shake your hand to-morrow and quit this port for the distant Mersey, whence a swift North Atlantic liner whirls me westward to home and the censeless buzz of trade."

"At what hour do you sail, Hamilton"
"Eleven o'clock, forenoon, on the Neva, of
the Royal mail. There she lies, just inside
Fort Villegagnon. You will be on board!"

mith the dignity of a cavaller. Then, standing for a moment at the door of my room, he sourteously relifted the hat, extending his other hand, and resting it, caressingly, on my



"Good night, Hamilton," I exclaimed, impulsively. "To-morrow my parting words will be, 'Good voyage and good luck.' As you are speeded away, I shall often repeat them."

opened the wicket and passed to the quiet street beyond.

Next morning breakfast was dispatched with some nervousness. Fully an hour and a half before the advertised time for sailing I stepped on board the Neva. Passenger followed passenger nimbly up the gangway, but no Hamilton appeared. I went in and out of the salcon and the minor cabins, and searched for him until the gong sounded to elear ship. On questioning the first officer as to whether my friend had actually taken passage on that steamer, he referred me to the purser, who said that no such man or name was booked. Perplexed and chagrined at this information, I went over the Neva's port side and was briskly rowed ashore. Something told me that I had been duped and purposely—that my late mysterious companion had a reason for his conduct which was all potent to him, but which I might never know.

That night, at the hotel, when I kicked off my shoes before retiring, my left foot struck a small object on the floor by the lounge. Stooping down, I picked up a velvet and clasp locket. Touching its spring, I saw the face of a woman of exquisite loveliness. She was in Spanish costume. Her tender, beseeching eyes fairly glistened in the ministure, which was an admirable painting on livery. The locket had, without doubt, been dropped by Hamilton when he threw himself on the lounge the evening before. I carefully placed it in my trunk, with saular memorators.

"Was thie La Sermal What was her his-

George Hamilton; and none of them were heard, in Montevideo. She and I must not blank books.

He stepped lightly across the corridor, opened the wicket and passed to the quiet street beyond.

One of the greatest of modern tragic actors had a new triumph.

Toward the close of the play there was a

tad a new triumph.

Toward the close of the play there was a momentary commotion in one of the boxes. A lady had fainted, the heat inside the theatre being extreme. As she was assisted by her friends to a carriage I caught a glimpse of her features. Though the eyes were veiled in unconsciousness I recognised La Berona. There could be only one such face. As Hamilton had said, the original of the locket picture was in Montevideo; but where was hel and what was the unhappiness, the secret, known alone to these two!

On Christmas eve of that year, a very numerous throng of English and Americans were assembled at the quinta of Senor M—, on the Pase del Molina. I had been in Buence Ayres, but came down the river to participate in this holiday festivity. Our popular host and hostess entertained a distinguished company at their elegant suburban home. Evergreens and the rarest tropical flowers bedecked sola and corridor. Ornaments and emblems, appropriate to the season which we celebrated, were draped with Uruguay's stripes of blue and white, intertwined with the national standards of Great Britain and the United States. Many of the guests were neighbors and old friends of Senor M—, made doubly welcome by him because they had not waited for etiquette's special invitation. There was music indoors and out, and open air dancing beneath nature's spangled canopy. From tree to tree, in the grounds, and along the broad graveied promenades, ropes were stretched laden with Chinese lanterns.

Again I saw La Serena. How radiantly

Again I saw La Serena. How radiantly beautiful she was among charming women! Her escort on this occasion was Lieut. S—, a brave officer attached to an English war vessel then at anchor in Montevideo roads. He was a high spirited Briton, yet the very personification of antiability. Knowing him well, I, of course, sought an introduction to his lovely companion, which she most graciously received. Later in the evening Senora M— placed us vis-a-vis at a card table. Then, after supper, came the desired opportunity for conversation. I hastened to improve the chance, for my curiosity was now at the highest pitch. So I quietly said: "Your husband is a good friend of mine, Mrs. Hamilton."

"You know my husband! Impossible!" she murmured. Again I saw La Serena. How radiantly

"Perhaps I misunderstood Lieut. 8-Are you not Mrs. George Hamilton!"
"Yes." "Of Boston, Massachusetts?"

"Yet I cannot be mistaken in your iden-

"I never lived in your country, sir, I assure you! An American, who has business interests in the city which you have named, is, however, my husband. We are separated by a guif that is terrible to contemplate. I am schooling inyself to forget him. He is not now in South America, nor will be over return to this section of it. His name I bear, for it was honorably given to me in marriage. You say that he is a friend of yours. Forgive me, sir, but that man is the friend of no human being other than himself. He is utterly, brutally selfish?"

"I said, senora, that we were acquainted. There is sometimes a distinction between that and solid friendship. We have recently parted company in Rio."

At this announcement she clinched her hands, as if in agony. Her frame visibly shook, and her passionate eagerness was so great that I feared other guests might see it. But merriment ran riot; and each couple or coterie was absorbed in its own enjoyment. Quickly recovering her composure, Mrs.

Quickly recovering her composure, Mrs. Hamilton asked:

"Are you sure that your acquaintance was

"Only in derision."
"No, I scannot think it. His tone when speaking that name (only heard by me once from his lips) was one of affection seemingly speaking that name (only heard by me once from his lips) was one of affection seemingly choked by some bitter disappointment."

Then I briefly told her all that I knew of him whom I had so greatly liked. How, as fallow voyagers, we had first met on a steamer's deck in New York harber; of our pleasurable social intercourse; his last evening with me; the broken appointment on the Neva, and my suspicions as to the reason for his strange action; of my subsequently fluding the locket, and how its portrait enabled me to recognize her at the Testro Solia.

"You say," she replied, "that George Hosnilton must have preceded or followed you to Montevideo!"

"Such is my opinion, senora."

"Why should he do that! Not for your sake, surely; nor yet for his own. With me (so cruelly deceived he cannot hope to be reconciled. Besides, he is outlawed in Brazil and the River Plate republics for heavy defalcations."

falcations."

A light broke upon me. The mystery was being solved, and by an accidental friend of the family. There were two George Hamiltons, and La Serena imagined that she had married the wrong one. It had been my friend's father's name, I knew. He had one day told me that about the time of his father's death, in Massachusetts, the name had been adroitly used by a swindler in South America, who obtained large sums of money.

"You became George Hamilton's wife here, in Montevideo, senora?" was now my leading question.

question.

"No," she said, "at Paris. Though I was born in Uruguay, my education was completed abroad. I never knew George Hamilton in this country. Just as we were preparing for our home coming here, the European newspapers began to print the accounts of my husband's crimes. The knowledge that, by holy bonds, I was allied to such a man overwhelmed me. He was in Liverpool arranging for our passage. I had not yet left London. When I did quit the English me



His family history was given, and even his person descrabed."
"There have been cases of false personation," said I.

tion," said I.

"Prove to me that this is one?" she exclaimed. "Prove to me that I've wronged
my husband; prove that he is true and honorable as was that man, now dead, whose
name he bears; prove this, and all of this,
and my woman's prayers are for you foraver?"

"Oh, sir, do not mock me! There come, at timea, taunting specters in my dreams; but I awake to hopelessness. You have strangely interested me in yourself. Lleut. S— will soon bring you to visit me. Then you can return the locket. Alas, it was my wedding gift to him you still call friend!"

The gay assemblage was now breaking up. On every side were heard shouts of "Good night!" and "Merry Christmas!" Mrs. Hamilton's carriage had been ordered, and, as I handed her into it, she said:

"4 am glad, senor, that we have met. Something tells me joy will come from it." Then, with "good night," sweetly spoken, she sank back on the cushions.

Then, with "good night," sweetly spoken, she sank back on the cushions.
Following ber into the coach, Lieut S—cloud its door. His extended hand was hastily grasped and released. As the vehicle rolled away, they cried in unison, "Merry Christmasi" I responded with a hearty "adioa!"

Overhead glittered the constellation of the Southern Cross. Its exceeding brightness was hailed by me as a good omen.

Modesty and bravery are sterling qualities. Lieut. S—— possessed them both. Whatever he did while on active service for Her Britannic Majesty and the glory of his country was in line of duty. Talking about it was not. Such men can be implicitly trusted. So I told him La Serena's story, and my own confidence. He listened, without comment, until I had finished. Then he said:

"Rumor has it that I love Mrs. Hamilton.

until I had finished. Then he said:

"Rumor has it that I love Mra Hamilton, and would marry her if she were free. In this judgment rumor wrongs me and scandalizes a most estimable woman. I shall never have other wife than England. She is mistress of the seas and of my very soil. It would be a supreme happiness to die in is mistress of the seas and of my very soul. It would be a supreme happiness to die in her defense. If rumor had said that I was an old and firm friend of Mrs. Hamilton, it would have been the sufficient truth. Pahaw! Rumor is a jada. I owe her nothing except contempt. You are, I think, right in what you conjecture about the real George Hamilton. To-morrow is New Year's day. There is an officers' dinner on board the Narcissus. We each invite a male guest. You are to be mine. Surgeon Jocelyn has captured a live Yankee whom he calls Mr. Georga. I may be counting too rapidly, but, as you Americans say, rather guess that Jocelyn's man is also ours. Be on board early in the afternoon."

"I shall not fail."



BEARS HER STURDITY UP. thoughts. I felt now as if her sun was bursting through a huge, dense bank of clouds. I had become almost childish in my impationce. The Loudon mail had come in. A copy of The Daily Telegraph, nearly five, weeks' old, had been torn from its wrapper. I picked it up, and glanced here and there through its news columns. This paragraph hugest tent my head. burnt into my brain:

George Hankinson, alias Hamilton, who, several years ago, committed a series of astomoling for-geries on a number of Bouth American bankers, has been arrested in Birmingham. His identity has been fully established.

years ago, committed a series of astounding forgeries on a number of South American bankers,
has been arrested in Birmingham. His identity
has teen fully established.

Joyously was the birth of another year
proclaimed by the chimes of Matriz. Peal
after peal rose and swelled and died away in
the echores of a bustling town. Big and little,
rich and poor, Montevideo's one hundred
thousand were in holiday attire. The broad
harbor was as as of color. Flags and streamers fluttered everywhere. At 3 o'clock I
joined a party at the "mole," and was rowed
out to the Narcissus. Lieut. S.— cordially
welcomed me at the gangway. Scarcely had
I stepped on board when he said;

"Jocelyn and his friend are in the wardroom. Let us look at Mr. George at once r"
"Agreed," said I, as I followed him across
the deck.

Before we had gone ten paces there was a
cry from the water. A pleasure boot had
been captized by a sudden flaw of wind.
Help was close at hand, but there was too
much of it. Three persons were som clinging to the boat. Then the waves parted, and
a woman's head and arm became withle. She
clutched wildly at the air and sink again.
At that moment I missed Lieut. S.—, who
had been watching the acome with keenest interest. He had swung himself down the side
of the Narcissus and was swimming toward
the unfortunates. But another and more
powerful stroke was in advance of the intrepid Englishman. How my heart beat!
Again the woman's head showed above the
water's surface. I turned away my face. It
was La Sereda, drowning, within reach of
sunny arms of steel.

Had a cheer! Ausother, and yet another!
The forement swimmer, they say, has caught
her, and bears her sturdlify up. I cannot see
distinctly, for tears have welled to my eyes.
Now the mist is gone. Surely I know that
proud head, that sinds so winning. Yes, it
is George Hamilton, and La Serena receives
back her life from him she gave it to in those
first happy days in Paria.

There wasn't a very successful New Year's
benque the wind made a surface of the had
ever

NEW YEAR'S CHIME



In 1890 we shall see

Likewise the festive fly, so flect, Will agitate his nervous fact. The poet will be beard to sing. And from the garbage pile of time Will prick the ashes of a rhyme.

And yet with sorrow in it fraught; Unhappy year! It ends with saconr-

It's a Poor Rute, Etc. THE OVER

Mr. Pluicky savagaly)—This New Yebbiness has got to stop. I'll be hange I'm going to allow these fellows to be trained through my parlors all day, getting a over everything and enting as out of he and home. Why flumbling in his peef Great Scottl where can that bel W

Mrs. Finicky—What have you lost, dear?
Mr. Finicky—Lost! Why, hang it all, my
New Year's visiting list. How in thunder
can I make my calls without it?

