

RAINBOW'S END *A Novel*

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FOREWORD

The Cuba of the days of Weyler and Gomez and the ragged, half-starved bands of "insurrectos" furnishes an admirable background for this delightful story, in which love, war and the search for a buried treasure are the principal strands that are interwoven to make a plot that is worthy of the mind of Rex Beach. The author of "The Spoilers," "The Barrier," and other stirring tales, has produced his most thrilling story in "Rainbow's End."

CHAPTER I.

The Valley of Delight.

In all probability your first view of the valley of the Yumuri will be from the Hermitage of Montserrat, for it is there that the cocheros drive you. There you overlook the fairest sight in all Christendom—"the loveliest valley in the world," as Humboldt called it—for the Yumuri nestles right at your feet, a vale of pure delight, a glimpse of Paradise that bewilders the eye and fills the soul with ecstasy.

Standing beside the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat, you will see beyond the cleft through which the river emerges another hill, La Cumbre, from which the view is wonderful, and your driver may tell you about the splendid homes that used to grace its slopes in the golden days when Cuba had an aristocracy. Your cochero may point out a certain grove of orange trees, now little more than a rank tangle, and tell you about the quinta of Don Esteban Varona, and its hidden treasure; about little Esteban and Rosa, the twins; and about Sebastian, the giant slave, who died in fury, taking with him the secret of the well.

The Spanish Main is rich in tales of treasure-trove, for when the Antilles were most affluent they were least secure, and men were put to strange shifts to protect their fortunes. Certain hoards, like jewels of tragic history, in time assumed a sort of evil personality, not infrequently exercising a dire influence over the lives of those who chanced to fall under their spells. It was as if the money were accursed, for certainly the seekers often came to evil. Of such a character was the Varona treasure. Don Esteban himself was neither better nor worse than other men of his time, and although part of the money he hid was wrung from the toil of slaves and the traffic in their bodies, much of it was clean enough, and in time the earth purified it all. Since his acts made so deep an impress, and since the treasure he left played so big a part in the destinies of those who came after him, it is well that some account of these matters should be given.

The story, please remember, is an old one; it has been often told, and in the telling and retelling it is but natural that a certain glamour, a certain tropical extravagance, should attach to it, therefore you should make allowance for some exaggeration, some accretions due to the lapse of time. In the main, however, it is well authenticated and runs parallel to fact.

Donna Rosa Varona lived barely long enough to learn that she had given birth to twins. Don Esteban, whom people knew as a grim man, took the blow of his sudden bereavement as became one of his strong fiber. Leaving the priest upon his knees and the doctor busied with the babies, he strode through the house and out into the sunset, followed by the wails of the slave women.

Don Esteban was at heart a selfish man, and now, therefore, he felt a sudden, fierce resentment mingled with his grief. What trick was this he asked himself. What had he done to merit such misfortune? Had he not made rich gifts to the church? Had he not knelt and prayed for his wife's safe delivery and then hung his gifts upon the sacred image, as Loyola had hung up his weapons before that other counterpart of Our Lady? Don Esteban scowled at the memory, for those gems were of the finest.

He looked up from his unhappy musings to find a gigantic bare-footed negro standing before him. The slave was middle-aged; his kinky hair was growing gray; but he was of superb proportions, and the muscles which showed through the rents in his cotton garments were as smooth and supple as those of a stripling. His black face was puckered with grief, as he began:

"Master, is it true that Donna Rosa—"

"The fellow choked."

"Yes," Esteban nodded, wearily, "she is dead, Sebastian."

Tears came to Sebastian's eyes and overflowed his cheeks; he stood motionless, striving to voice his sympathy. At length he said:

"She was too good for this world."

God was jealous and took her to Paradise."

The widowed man cried out angrily: "Paradise! What is this but Paradise?" He stared with resentful eyes at the beauty round about him. "See! The Yumuri! Don Esteban flung a long arm outward. "Do you think there is a sight like that in heaven? Paradise indeed! I gave her everything. She gained nothing by dying."

With a grave thoughtfulness which proved him superior to the ordinary slave, Sebastian replied:

"True! She had all that any woman's heart could desire, but in return for your goodness she gave you children. You have lost her, but you have gained an heir, and a beautiful girl baby who will grow to be another Donna Rosa. I grieved as you grieve, once upon a time, for my woman died in childbirth, too. You remember? But my daughter lives, and she has brought sunshine into my old age. That is the purpose of children." He paused and shifted his weight uncertainly, digging his stiff black toes into the dirt. After a time he said, slowly: "Excellency! Now, about the well—"

"Yes. What about it?"

"Did the Donna Rosa confide her share of the secret to anyone? Those priests and those doctors, you know—"

"She died without speaking."

"Then it rests between you and me?"

"It does, unless you have babbled."

"Master!" Sebastian drew himself up and there was real dignity in his black face.

"Understand, my whole fortune is there—everything, even to the deeds of patent for the plantain. As if I thought there was danger of your betraying me I would have your tongue pulled out and your eyes torn from their sockets."

The black man spoke with a simplicity that carried conviction: "Times are unsettled, Don Esteban, and death comes without warning. You are known to be the richest man in this province and these government officials are robbers. Suppose—I should be left alone? What then?"

The planter considered for a moment. "Well, when my children are old enough to hold their tongues they will have to be told. If I'm gone, you shall be the one to tell them. Now leave me; this is no time to speak of such things."

Sebastian went as noiselessly as he had come. On his way back to his quarters he took the path to the well—the place where most of his time was ordinarily spent. Sebastian had dug this well, and with his own hands he had beautified its surroundings until they were the loveliest on the Varona grounds. It was Sebastian's task to keep this place green, and thither he took his way, from force of habit.

Through the twilight came Pancho Cueto, the manager, a youngish man, with a narrow face and bold, close-set eyes. Spying Sebastian, he began:

"So Don Esteban has an heir at last?"

The slave rubbed his eyes with the heel of his huge yellow palm and answered, respectfully:

"Yes, Don Pancho. Two little angels, a boy and a girl. His gray brows drew together in a painful frown. "Donna Rosa was a saint. No doubt there is great rejoicing in heaven at her coming. Eh? What do you think?"

"Um-m! Possibly. Don Esteban will miss her for a time and then, I dare say, he will remarry." At the negro's exclamation Cueto said: "So! And why not? Everybody knows how rich he is. From Oriente to Pinar del Rio the women have heard about his treasure."

"What treasure?" asked Sebastian, after an instant's pause.

Cueto's dark eyes gleamed resentfully at this show of ignorance, but he laughed.

"Ho! There's a careful fellow for you! No wonder he trusts you. But do you think I have neither eyes nor ears? My good Sebastian, you know all about that treasure; in fact, you know far more about many things than Don Esteban would care to have you tell. Come now, don't you?"

Sebastian's face was like a mask carved from ebony. "Of what does this treasure consist?" he inquired. "I have never heard about it."

"Of gold, of jewels, of silver bars and precious ornaments." Cueto's head was thrust forward, his nostrils were dilated, his teeth gleamed. "Oh, it is somewhere about, as you very well know! Bah! Don't deny it. I'm no fool. What becomes of the money from the slave girls, eh? And the sugar crops, too? Does it go to buy arms and ammunition for the rebels? No. Don Esteban hides it, and you help him. Come," he cried, disregarding Sebastian's murmurs of protest. "did you ever think how fabulous that fortune must be by this time? Did you ever think that one little gem, one bag of gold, would buy your freedom?"

"Don Esteban has promised to buy my freedom and the freedom of my girl."

"So?" The manager was plainly surprised. "I didn't know that." After a moment he began to laugh. "And yet you pretend to know nothing about that treasure? Ha! You're a good boy, Sebastian, and so I am. I admire you. We're both loyal to our master, eh? But now about Evangelina."

Cueto's face took on a craftier expression. "She is a likely girl, and when she grows up she will be worth more than you, her father. Don't forget that Don Esteban is before all else a business man. Be careful that some one doesn't make him so good an offer for your girl that he will forget his promise and—sell her."

Sebastian uttered a hoarse, animal cry and the whites of his eyes showed through the gloom. "He would never sell Evangelina!"

Cueto laughed aloud once more. "Of course! He would not dare, eh? I am only teasing you. But see! You have given yourself away. Everything you tell me proves that you know all about that treasure."

"I know but one thing," the slave declared, stiffening himself slowly, "and that is to be faithful to Don Esteban." He turned and departed, leaving Pancho Cueto staring after him meditatively.

In the days following the birth of his children and the death of his wife, Don Esteban Varona, as had been his custom, steered a middle course in politics, in that way managing to avoid a clash with the Spanish officials who ruled the island, or an open break with his Cuban neighbors, who rebelled beneath their wrongs. Esteban dealt diplomatically with both factions and went on raising slaves and sugar to his own great profit.

The twins, Esteban and Rosa, developed into healthy children and became the pride of Sebastian and his daughter, into whose care they had been given. As for Evangelina, the young negress, she grew tall and strong and handsome, until she was the finest slave girl in the neighborhood.

Then, one day, Don Esteban Varona remarried, and the Donna Isabel, who had been a famous Habana beauty, came to live at the quinta. The daughter of impoverished parents, she had heard and thought much about the mysterious treasure of La Cumbre.

Before the first fervor of his honeymoon cooled the groom began to fear that he had made a serious mistake. Donna Isabel, he discovered, was both vain and selfish. Not only did she crave luxury and display, but with singular persistence she demanded to know all about her husband's financial affairs.

Now Don Esteban was no longer young; age had soured him with suspicion, and when once he saw himself as the victim of a mercenary marriage he turned bitterly against his wife. Her curiosity he sullenly resented, and he unblushingly denied her possession of any considerable wealth. In fact, he tried with malicious ingenuity to make her believe him a poor man. But Isabel was not of the sort to be readily deceived. Finding her arts and coquetties of no avail, she flew into a rage, and a furious quarrel ensued—the first of many. For the lady could not rest without knowing all there was to know about the treasure.

She searched the quinta, of course, whenever she had a chance, but she discovered nothing—with the result that the mystery began to engross her whole thought. She pried into the obscurest corners, she questioned the slaves, she lay awake at night listening to Esteban's breathing, in the hope of surprising his secret from his dreams. At length a time came when she lived in frank enmity; when Isabel never spoke to Esteban except in reproach or anger, and when Esteban unlocked his lips only to taunt his wife with the fact that she had been thwarted despite her cunning.

It was only natural under such conditions that Donna Isabel should learn to dislike her stepchildren—Esteban had told her frankly that they would inherit whatever fortune he possessed. As may be imagined, she found ways to vent her spite upon the twins. She widened her hatred so as to include old Sebastian and his daughter, and even went so far as to persecute Evangelina's sweetheart, a slave named Asensio.

It had not taken Donna Isabel long to guess the reason for Sebastian's many privileges, and one of her first efforts had been to win the old man's confidence. It was in vain, however, that she flattered and cajoled, or stormed and threatened; Sebastian withstood her as a towering ceiba withstands the summer heat and the winter hurricane.

His firmness made her vindictive, and so in time she laid a scheme to estrange him from his master.

Donna Isabel was crafty. She began to complain about Evangelina, but it was only after many months that she ventured to suggest to her husband that he sell the girl. Esteban, of course, refused point-blank; he was too fond of Sebastian's daughter, he declared, to think of such a thing.

"So, that is it," sneered Donna Isabel. "Well, she is young and shapely and handsome, as wenches go. I rather suspected you were fond of her—"

With difficulty Esteban restrained an oath. "You mistake my meaning," he said stiffly. "Sebastian has served me faithfully, and Evangelina plays with my children. She is good to them; she is more of a mother to them than you have ever been."

"Is that why you dress her like a lady? Bah! A likely story!" Isabel

tossed her fine, dark head, "I'm not blind; I see what goes on about me. I won't have that wench in my house."

Goaded to fury by his wife's senseless accusation, Esteban cried: "Your house? By what license do you call it yours?"

"Am I not married to you?"

"Yes—as a leech is married to its victim. You suck my blood."

"Your blood!" The woman laughed shrilly. "You have no blood; your veins run vinegar. You are a miser."

"Miser! Miser! I grow sick of the word. It is all you find to taunt me with. Confess that you married me for my money," he roared.

"Of course I did! Do you think a woman of my beauty would marry you for anything else? But a fine bargain I made!"

"Vampire!"

"Wife or vampire, I intend to rule this house, and I refuse to be shamed by a thick-lipped African. Her airs tell her story. She is insolent to me, but—I shan't endure it. She laughs at me. Well, your friends shall laugh at you."

"Silence!" commanded Esteban.

"Sell her, or—"

Without waiting to hear her threat Esteban tossed his arms above his head and fled from the room. Flinging himself into the sea, he spurred down the hill and through the town to the Casino de Espanol, where he spent the night at cards with the Spanish officials. But he did not sell Evangelina.

In the days that followed many similar scenes occurred, and as Esteban's home life grew more unhappy his dissatisfactions increased. He drank and gambled heavily; he brought his friends to the quinta with him, and strove to forget domestic unpleasantness in boisterous revelry.

His wife, however, found opportunities enough to weary and exasperate him with reproaches regarding the slave girl.

CHAPTER II.

Spanish Gold.

The twins were seven years old when Donna Isabel's schemes bore their first bitter fruit, and the occasion was a particularly uproarious night when Don Esteban entertained a crowd of his Castilian friends. Little Rosa was awakened at a late hour by the laughter and shouts of her father's guests. She was afraid, for there was something strange about the voices, some quality to them which was foreign to the child's experience. Creeping into her brother's room, she awoke him, and



"Your Father Has Sold Me to Him!" together they listened. Rosa began to whimper, and when Esteban tried to reassure her his own voice was thin and reedy from fright.

In the midst of their agitation they heard some one weeping; there came a rush of feet down the hallway, and the next instant Evangelina flung herself into the room.

She fell upon her knees before them. "Little master! Little mistress!" she sobbed. "You will save me, won't you? We love each other, eh? See then, what a crime this is! Say that you will save me!"

The children were frightened, but they managed to quaver: "What has happened? Who has harmed you?"

"Don Pablo Peza," wept the negress. "Your father has sold me to him—lost me at cards. Oh, I shall die! Sebastian won't believe it. He is praying. And Asensio— But what can they do to help me? You alone can save me. You won't let Don Pablo take me away? It would kill me."

"Wait!" Esteban scrambled out of bed and stood before his dusky nurse and playmate. "Don't cry any more. I'll tell papa that you don't like Don Pablo."

Rosa followed. "Yes, come along, brother," she cried, shrilly. "We'll tell Don Pablo to go home and leave our Evangelina."

"My blessed doves! But will they listen to you?" moaned the slave.

"Papa does whatever we ask," they assured her, gravely. "If he should growl we'll come back and hide you in the big wardrobe where nobody will ever find you." Then hand in hand, with their long nightgowns lifted to their knees, they pattered out into the hall and down toward the living room, whence came the shouting and the laughter.

Don Mario de Castano, who was facing the door, stopped in the midst of a ribald song to cry: "God be praised! What's this I see?"

The others looked and then burst into merriment, for across the litter of cards and dice and empty glasses they saw a dimpled girl and boy, as like as two peas. They were just out of bed; they were peering through the smoke, and blinking like two little owls.

"So! You awaken the household with your songs," some one chided Don Mario.

"Two cherubs from heaven," another exclaimed.

But the father lurched forward, a frown upon his face. "What is this, my dears?" he inquired, thickly. "Run back to your beds. This is no place for you."

"We love Evangelina," piped the twins. "You must not let Don Pablo have her—if you please."

"Evangelina?"

They nodded. "We love her. . . . She plays with us every day. . . . We want her to stay here. . . . She belongs to us."

Accustomed as they were to prompt compliance with their demands, they spoke imperiously; but they had never seen a frown like this upon their father's face.

"Go to your rooms, my sweethearts," Don Esteban directed.

"We want Evangelina. She belongs to us," they chorused, stubbornly.

Don Pablo shook with laughter. "So! She belongs to you, eh? And I'm to be robbed of my winnings. Very well, then, come and give me a kiss, both of you, and I'll see what can be done."

But the children saw that Don Pablo's face was strangely flushed, that his eyes were wild and his magnificent beard was wet with wine; therefore they hung back.

"You won your bet fairly," Esteban growled at him. "Pay no heed to these babies."

"Evangelina is ours," the little ones bravely repeated.

Then their father exploded: "The devil! Am I dreaming? Where have you learned to oppose me? Back to your beds, both of you." Seeing them hesitate, he shouted for his wife. "Ho, there! Isabel, my love! Come up these steps to rest. Or must I teach them manners with my palm? A fine thing, truly! Are they to be allowed to roam the house at will and get a fever?"

Mere mention of their stepmother's name was enough for Rosa and Esteban; they scuttled away as fast as they could go, and when Donna Isabel came to their rooms, a few moments later, she found them in their beds, with their eyes deceitfully squeezed shut. Evangelina was cowering in a corner. Isabel had overheard the wager, and her soul was evilly alight; she jerked the slave girl to her feet and with a blow of her palm sent her to her quarters. Then she turned her attention to the twins. When she left them they were weeping silently, both for themselves and for Evangelina, whom they dearly loved.

Day was breaking when Esteban Varona bade his guests good-by at the door of his house. As he stood there Sebastian came to him out of the mists of the dawn. He was half crazed from apprehension, and now cast himself prone before his master, begging for Evangelina.

The secret of the hiding place of the buried treasure dies with the two men who possess it. How this happened is told in the next instalment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Profess Musical Education. Music, more than the other arts, is a thing apart, and the instinctive knowledge of it, discovered sometimes in even the youngest children where a rich musical experience is offered, is past all computation by the educational mind. The jealous tutorial mind which presumes to teach music to the young without allowing and insuring them a rich experience of music, and to delay by the penurious educational method, however well meaning, the child's or youth's contact with musical life, is as little thrifty as one who would dam up the springs of a river to construct a meager drain pipe.—Exchange.

The Alert Auditor. "Anybody pay much attention to your speech?" "One person," replied Senator Sorghum. "The stenographer was obliged to get every word of it."

HOW TO AVOID BACKACHE AND NERVOUSNESS

Told by Mrs. Lynch From Own Experience.

Providence, R. I.—"I was all run down in health, was nervous, had headaches, my back ached all the time. I was tired and had no ambition for anything. I had taken a number of medicines which did me no good. One day I read about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and what it had done for women, so I tried it. My nervousness and backache and



headaches disappeared. I gained in weight and feel fine, so I can honestly recommend Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to any woman who is suffering as I was."—Mrs. ADELINA B. LYNCH, 100 Plain St., Providence, R. I.

Backache and nervousness are symptoms or nature's warnings, which indicate a functional disturbance or an unhealthy condition which often develops into a more serious ailment. Women in this condition should not continue to drag along without help, but profit by Mrs. Lynch's experience, and try this famous root and herb remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound—and for special advice write to Lydia E. Pinkham Med. Co., Lynn, Mass.

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W. N. U., OMAHA, NO. 17-1918.

Reverse Result. "Don't lend that man money." "Why not?" "Because you'll be borrowing trouble."

Farmers! Write today to the SKINNER PACKING COMPANY, Suite 912, First National Bank Building, Omaha, Nebraska, in regard to Omaha's New Day Light Snow White Independent Packing Plant.—Adv.

The wise man makes hay while the sun shines, but the fool sows wild oats by electric light.

Marriage a la Mode.

"Would you give up your happy home for me?"

"I might."

"Good!"

"But remember, I won't give up my uterine crowd or my dancing set or my bridge club."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

It Didn't Pay. The poets and others, mainly others, have sung of the virtues and blessings of sleep. No class of men guards sleep as carefully as the doctors.

Some one, with all the wise theories of advertising, decided to mail his little call for business to the medical men of Indianapolis. He spent a large sum getting up some real snappy stuff. He figured out all the psychology and personal appeal, with all of the big "I" stuff he could, and then some. He laid plans to reap a harvest. He did—not.

His good money went to the printer. More went to Uncle Sam for stamps. This wise ad writer put a special delivery stamp on each of his letters.

Result: The doctors of Indianapolis were awakened about 1 a. m. to sign for a bunch of printed matter. Every doctor seen says he tore up the booklet and with curses deposited the unread pieces in the waste-paper basket or elsewhere.

With groans and harsh words the medical men went back to bed. It was a great idea.—Indianapolis News.



A Package of Grape-Nuts teaches food conservation.

Saves FUEL SUGAR TIME WHEAT AND WASTE

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