

## FRAULEIN

The year after we moved into Calle Sur 910 our first governess arrived: Fraulein Wessel. Now we began to learn German, which we spoke fluently by the time she left. We naturally spoke Spanish, and my Father insisted on English being correctly spoken. He never answered if we spoke to him in Spanish.

Fraulein was a great disciplinarian and besides reading and writing, sewing and embroidery, in those years I learned a whole stack of poems: "The Village Blacksmith", "The Wreck of the Hesperus", "The Royal George", "Gray's" "Elegy", "Mary Call the Cattle Home," to say nothing of "The Charge of the Light Brigade", and many more, both in English and German. All the wrecking and the charging and sadness never affected me very much. I got through it all with a happy lilt. But there was one poem in which I could never get beyond the second verse without bursting into tears. It began, "Be kind to thy Father." I would steel myself and determine not to think about it. But when the second verse, "Be kind to thy mother," opened up all the awful possibilities of Dad and Mother growing old and leaving us, and whether or not I was kind enough to them, I was shattered. I could not even tell Fraulein what was the matter. Mother at last stepped in and suggested that we leave it until I was a little older, and we passed on to the next page.

Fraulein also believed in cold baths, and four buckets would be hauled in from the well by Brigido, and placed beside the bath tub. Then one by one we stood in the tub while Fraulein emptied a bucket over each one. When Thurston was about ten, one day he suddenly jumped out of the tub and started to run through the bedrooms towards Father's room at the end. Fraulein was after him like a flash. I will never forget the little naked figure tearing along, and I prayed that he would reach Father's room before he was

caught. After this episode Father decided he would take care of the bath business for Thurston in the future. He was also sent to an English tutor for his lessons, and he was allowed to stay up later at night. I missed him, and I think he did not always know what to do with the extra hour. He was a voracious reader and had a vivid imagination, and when our light was put out he would come and sit by my bed and tell me the tales he had read. Somehow, the "Arabian Nights" could not be taken too seriously. All the Afrits and Djinns had their uses for the people who needed them, but they never kept me awake. One night, though, he told me about the "Hound of the Baskervilles". I crawled right under the sheets when he left. Not even the nearness of my sister, Madys, sleeping beside me in the big brass bedstead we shared, helped. I, being the older, would have had to take charge if that awful dog had decided to put in an appearance.

There began to be talk now of sending my Brother to school in England, and prospectuses were sent for, and clouds began to gather in my world. Just when he was twelve an aunt came from England to visit Grandfather and it was decided that he should go back with her. I was heartbroken at losing him.

Two years at that age make a big difference and I felt so much older than my Sister and other Brothers. My Mother, as always, understood, and drew me into the circle of the younger ones. There were six of us now, and I would help her to look after them, and took my responsibilities very seriously. My Mother called me "La Voz del Pueblo" - "The Voice of the People" - the name of one of the newspapers published here in those days.

Fraulein was engaged to a man who had gone to Chicago to start a hotel, and he was now ready to have her come up to marry and help him. She had saved what seemed to us an enormous sum to put into the business. Her going was a sad break after six years. We lived

near the station and the night she left Madys, Wilfred and I walked with Dad to the Station to see her leave. Mother and Fraulein, with Bobs, came in a carriage with the luggage. Our good-byes were said, and Fraulein started to board the Pullman only to discover that she had left her ticket behind. And so she missed the train.

The same performance was repeated the following night, and, as Father was leaving the Pullman after taking her bags in, we saw him pick something up and rush in again. The train had started to move when he appeared again and jumped off. It appeared that as he was about to get off the train he spied something on the step of the car and to his horror found it was Fraulein's ticket which she had dropped after showing it to the conductor. In anyone as methodical and practical as she was, this was a sign of real upset at leaving us.