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Содержание

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INTRODUCTION

Probably the most important of the South American republics, Brazil has now won for herself world recognition and esteem. Though Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama made formal declarations of war against the German Empire, Brazil alone was able to offer material service. Each brave ally offered her all to the cause of freedom, from the great navy and army, the brains, brawn, and resources of the British Empire, to the little army of three hundred men from the tiny principality of thirty-eight square miles, San Marino. Brazil's offering was her splendid navy, which did signal patrol service and was a valued reserve.

We can be certain that two great nations, large and small brothers of the Western Hemisphere, the United States and Brazil, brought together in the fellowship of such a great cause, will ever show their mutual admiration, and keep bright their friendship.

Preface

Our Little Brazilian Cousin lives in a land not so well known as the countries of Europe and Asia, but one of great natural beauty and charm.

Through it flows the greatest river of the world, the Amazon, whose banks are covered with rich tropical vegetation, most beautiful to behold. Its forests are full of birds of brilliant plumage and strange animals, while the Indians, who were once the only people here, are not yet all civilized.

The Little Brazilian Cousins are nearly all descended from the Portuguese who came to this land, and made it their own, before it finally became a republic like the United States. They built many great cities, and have cultivated the country so that now it is becoming rich and powerful.

With such a beautiful home, and with such advantages, our Little Brazilian Cousin will soon become one of the most important of all the little cousins, as he is now one of the most picturesque and interesting.

CHAPTER I
A QUIET SIESTA

Affonzo was tired of talking to the white cockatoo. It was the time of day when his little sister Lola took her siesta, and he had no one to play with. He was himself such a big boy, soon eleven years old, that he felt no longer the need of the daily siesta, although in the warm country of Brazil where he lived, even grown people like a nap in the middle of the day.

Affonzo himself did not feel very lively. The sun beat down like a great ball of fire and only the cool veranda or the shady garden seemed enticing. The garden should have been pleasant enough to satisfy any boy, for it was a vision of tropic beauty. Tall palms waved their feathery branches heavenward, and gaily coloured flowers flaunted their gorgeous petals while brilliant birds flittered hither and yon.

But Affonzo was used to all this beauty, and he wanted something new to do, for this little Brazilian cousin was very like his American ones and could not be quiet very long. Even the fruit garden seemed tiresome. Generally he was glad to spend his time there, for the huge banana trees which grew in a banana patch at the end of the house were sure of several visits from him during the day. The plants were twice as tall as he, and the fruit grew in great bunches, many of them weighing fifty pounds,

and Affonzo always chose the finest for himself and Lola to eat. Besides these there were figs, pineapples, mangoes, grapes and oranges all of which grow in Brazil.

The American watermelon also had been planted and the Senhor was watching eagerly to see if it would bear fruit, for he had been told that in other parts of Brazil it grew rapidly and bore well. Affonzo was much interested in it too, for his cousin in the States had sent the seeds and told him how delicious the fruit was.

He strolled toward the sunny slope where the vines were tended by Joachim, the black who took care of the garden and helped about the house. Joachim's mother had nursed Affonzo's mother in the days when there were black slaves in Brazil, and he was devoted to the whole family. He was just like a faithful black dog watching the place, and was especially fond of the children. He could cook and bake, wait on the Senhor, tend the garden or the horses, and could always be trusted to take care of little Lola who was his great friend.

Affonzo looked at the green melon and wondered how it tasted. He had heard so much about it that he was very curious and could hardly wait until the day came when it should be served, for his mother had promised that each should have a taste.

Above the melon vines grew one of the tallest of the banana trees, and the fruit seemed to Affonzo to be finer at that particular time than he had ever seen it. He was very hungry and felt he must have one of those bananas at once. Ordinarily

he would have climbed the tree like a little monkey and helped himself, but his mother had excused him from his siesta on condition that he be quiet, and though he looked longingly at the fruit he did not start to climb. He threw himself down upon the grass and looked up through the thick foliage at the blue above.

"I wish something would happen," he said to himself. "It seems to me that nothing ever happens. One half the year I must be in Para and stay at my grandfather's to go to the Laure Sodré Institute – I am tired of the very name! – and the other half I must stay here at the Fazenda with no playmate but Lola, and she is made to sleep half the day. I wish something would happen," and he sighed discontentedly. "How hungry I am," he thought. "I must have one of those bananas, they never looked so good! I believe mamma will not care if I climb for one, for she only said I must keep quiet and I'm sure I'll make no noise." With that the boy rose to his feet, and with a quick glance around, he began to climb and was soon squirming around the trunk of the tree like a snake. Once there he reached for the best bananas and filled the pockets of his linen suit with them. He was just starting down when he heard voices coming and peering cautiously down the garden path he saw his father with an uncle of whom he was very fond, and whom he had not seen for some time.

"Uncle Prudente," he thought. "I wonder when he came from Para and how long he is going to stay. Oh, dear! how will I get down from here?" Affonzo knew that his father would not be likely to pass over any disobedience and that he would be

punished if he came down at that moment. So he crouched among the leaves and was still as a mouse while the two gentlemen came directly under the banana tree and stopped to talk.

"This is the American melon," said the Senhor. "It will be ripe in another week. There are others ripening but this is the finest. If it is good I shall keep all the seeds and have a large crop next year. If Juan comes, I shall ask him to bring me the seeds of various kinds, for there is nothing like variety in a garden. In our hot climate these should do well and they are very agreeable when properly cooled. I hope Juan will come; a long visit from him would be a good thing for Affonzo, who is growing spoiled from being the only boy. He is wilful and high-spirited but on the whole he is – what is that?"

The Senhor stopped suddenly and Affonzo never knew what he himself was, besides being wilful and high spirited. Distressed at being a listener, he had leaned too far out on the branch on which he sat and it broke under his weight. He gave a wild clutch and fell down, down, down. He thought he would never stop, and oh, horror! when he did light, it was astride the shoulders of his uncle. Affonzo was a sturdy little fellow and his uncle was slight and small, the result being that both went down in a heap on top of the melon.

For a moment no one spoke; then his father pulled him off his uncle and helped his irate brother to his feet. Uncle Prudente's white linen suit was splashed from head to foot with watermelon

juice, his panama hat was crushed out of shape, watermelon juice ran down his face and several black seeds stuck to his face. He was speechless with rage, but he looked so very funny that Affonzo, sore and bruised by his fall and terribly frightened, could not help laughing. He sat down upon the ground and laughed till he cried, and the noise woke all the parrots dozing in the trees, and all began jabbering at once, while the cockatoo gave one of his terrible screeches.

When the noise had subsided a little, Senhor Dias said sternly to Affonzo, "What is the meaning of this?" Affonzo was silent, but he quickly sprang to his feet and stood respectfully in front of his father, for Brazilian boys are taught to treat their elders with great deference.

"What were you doing in that tree?" demanded his father.

"Eating bananas," said Affonzo simply.

"Does your mother permit that?" asked the Senhor, for in Brazil, as in most South American countries, the mother arranges all matters in regard to the children.

"My mother allows me to climb trees and eat bananas," said Affonzo. "That was not a disobedience, but – "

"But what?" demanded his father.

"But," continued Affonzo slowly. "She had at the hour of the siesta requested me to keep quiet."

"Do you call this quiet?" asked his father sternly though his eyes twinkled. "Such a noise has not been heard at the Fazenda for many days."

"Not very quiet," said Affonzo, his head drooping, though he could scarce keep from laughing again. "I ask your pardon, my uncle," he added. "I intended nothing of disrespect. I did but lose my hold upon the tree and the next thing I knew I sat astride of your august shoulders. I pray you pardon me." Affonzo's tone was contrite, and his dancing eyes were on the ground.

"Say no more of it," said his uncle, as he laid his hand on the boy's head. "Boys will be boys and Affonzo is not unlike others. But next time I come do not receive me with such a fierce embrace. Indeed I thought my neck was broken with the warmth of your welcome."

Affonzo's laugh rang out gaily, but he sobered down when his father said, "I excuse you since your uncle asks it, but remember after this that the commands of your mother are to be obeyed. Go now with your uncle and attend to his wants while he repairs the damage your carelessness has wrought."

Affonzo bowed to his father and made the military salute as all school boys are taught to do in Brazil, but he sighed to himself as he went, "I wonder what he meant about Juan but I am afraid to ask. And the worst of it all is, that now I shall never know how the American melon tasted."

CHAPTER II
IN THE FOREST

The sun was just rising and its slanting rays cast a golden glow over the thick foliage when Affonzo sprang out of bed next morning, awakened by the noisy chattering of the birds.

"Hurrah!" he exclaimed. "It is a fine day! How glad I am, for now I can go hunting with my father and Uncle Prudente."

He hurried into his clothes and down to the breakfast-room, where Joachim was serving strong black coffee, rolls and fruit to his father and uncle.

"Here you are, bright and early," said the Senhor. "Do you want to go with us? Perhaps you would better not!"

Affonzo's face fell.

"Oh, father! last night you promised!" he said, and his father answered, "Oh, you may go. I merely thought perhaps it might tire you too much, for we shall have a long tramp."

"We must start at once," said his uncle, "if we are to have any sport before midday," and they started toward the forest.

The Fazenda of the Senhor Dias was situated on the edge of the magnificent woods which line the banks of the Amazon near the City of Para.

"No wonder that this region around Para is called the Paradise of Brazil," said the Senhor as they entered the forest, where heavy

dew glittered on the leaves like diamonds in an emerald crown. "Every time I enter the forest it seems to me more splendid than it did the last time."

"What are those huge trees?" asked Affonzo.

"You ought to know those, for they are among the most famous of all Brazilian trees. They are the Stanba or stone wood, and beside them grows a cinnamon tree. In addition to these there is the jacaranda, pas d' arc, the euphorbia, the large lofty cotton-wood tree, the tall white syringa."

"I know that one," said Affonzo. "It is a rubber tree. Won't you take me to see the rubber gathered to-day?"

"Not to-day, but to-morrow, perhaps, for your uncle wishes to make the rounds and you may go with him."

"Thank you, that will be delightful," said Affonzo.

Their path led through the forest where long racemes of tropic moss hung down and waved in the breeze, while fern and vines grew in a tangle across the narrow path. Often the undergrowth was so thick, that Joachim had to go before the party and cut it away with his *tracado*.[1]

"You must keep silent now," said the Senhor.

"We shall frighten the game away if we talk. Ah!" As he spoke he raised his gun to his shoulder and fired. There was a shrill cry, a flash of red and green wings, and a large bird with an enormous bill fluttered to the ground before them.

"A toucan!" cried Affonzo, as Joachim quickly bagged the

[1] A sharp blade like the Cuban machete.

bird. "Isn't it queer that the bird's cry sounded just like its name, *Toucano! Toucano!*"

"That is just the reason that the Indians named them *toucano*," said the Senhor. "But listen, I hear monkeys."

Looking carefully about, the hunters saw two monkeys at the top of a high tree, about which clung a monkey's ladder, an enormous vine which wound around the tree from its roots to its very topmost branches. When the little animals saw that they were perceived, they tried to conceal themselves behind the huge leaves of the tree, and the Senhor's shot showed no result beyond an increased chattering.

"It seems a shame to kill such cunning little creatures," said Affonzo, but his father said,

"We hunt for food, not for mere sport, my son. Monkeys make an excellent dinner, and you will be glad enough to eat after we have tramped all morning through the heat."

"Master will not hit the monkeys," said Joachim. "I will get them," and he quickly stripped off all his clothing, except his cotton trousers, and began to climb the monkey ladder.

It was not easy to climb with his gun in one hand but he was careful and as nimble as a cat, and he soon neared the top of the tree. He perched in a crotch of the tree, which branched out thickly at the top, and hiding behind some leaves he waited until he could get a glimpse of the monkeys. At last he spied one of them at the end of a branch and firing quickly, the monkey fell to the ground, fifty feet below.

Joachim climbed down after it and the party soon went its way through the forest. Now the Senhor shot, and then his brother, and the boy himself was allowed to fire at an ocelot which crept through the bushes, and great was his delight when he shot it.

As the noon hour approached, the sun rose high in the heavens, and the heat grew so intense that the Senhor said,

"We will go no farther. Let us rest and eat until it grows cooler. Joachim, lead us to a shady spot where we may camp."

"Yes, Senhor," said the black, and soon he brought them to a ruined building of stone, covered with vines and hidden among the trees. Here upon the stone floor of the ruin, he kindled a fire and cooked the monkey, the flesh of which was simply delicious, and Affonzo ate until he was so sleepy that he could not keep his eyes open.

"What was this building?" he asked his father. "I did not know anyone had ever lived here."

"No one knows what it was," replied his father. "It has been here for years and the Indians say it was built many, many years ago by a Black Gown, as they called the early missionaries. It may have been the beginning of a mission house, but in any case it makes a very nice cool place in which to take our siesta now. So sleep, my son, and wake refreshed."

Affonzo closed his eyes and was soon in dreamland. He slept long but had strange dreams of some one's putting a heavy stone upon his chest and pressing it down. At last he awoke with the pressure still on him. He lay quite still, drowsily wondering what

was the matter with him and before he stirred, Joachim's voice said in a hoarse whisper,

"Don't move, little master, don't even open your eyes!"

Affonzo had been trained to habits of strictest obedience, and he lay perfectly still without moving a muscle, although wondering very much what was the matter. He heard Joachim dart quickly to his side. There was the sound of a blow, and a loud exclamation from his father, and Joachim said,

"Jump up, there is no danger now!"

As Affonzo sprang to his feet, the weight rolled off his chest, and he saw the body of a large snake pinned to the earth by the blade of Joachim's trocado. It was a *jararaca*, a Brazilian snake about six feet long, of a yellowish colour. Sleeping in the cool of the old stone ruin it had been disturbed by the intruders, and had crawled across Affonzo's body to reach the door.

"My boy, you have Joachim to thank for saving your life," said his father warmly, as he put his arm around his boy and drew him to his side. "The *jararaca* is very poisonous, and had your awakening disturbed him, he might have driven his fangs into you."

"Good old Joachim," said Affonzo, as he threw his arms around the black's neck. Negro servants in Brazil who have been in a family for years are always much beloved, and Affonzo was devoted to the old negro. Joachim didn't say much, but smiled at the boy as he took the dead body of the snake outside, and prepared to take off its beautiful skin.

CHAPTER III
A TROPICAL STORM

"What fortunes could be made in these forests," said the Senhor Dias to his brother, "if people with capital only knew of the riches stored here. Mahogany, satinwood, rosewood and many other kinds of trees grow here in the greatest abundance, and were there railroads and ships to transport them, Brazil would be one of the richest countries in the world."

"We should try to develop our own land," said his brother, and the two men entered into a long conversation as to the wonderful forests of the country, to which Affonzo listened with interest.

"Oh, father!" he exclaimed, at last. "When you go up the river to see the forests may I go with you?"

"Perhaps, but I could not make a promise without first asking your mother's consent. The trip will be an interesting one, but very hard, though it might do you good."

"I should love to go," said Affonzo, and his uncle added, "He will grow up a milksop if you keep him in the nursery much longer; let him go."

"It is about time we were starting now," said the Senhor. "Joachim, make ready the bag. Your uncle and I will walk on a little ahead, Affonzo, and you can follow with Joachim. But do not stray away from him, or you will miss the path, and all

manner of dangers lurk in these forests."

Affonzo sat lazily waiting and watching as the black put up the dinner things. "Take care of my snake skin," he said, and Joachim smiled, and replied, "That will make a fine belt for the little master when it is dried."

"I should like that very much," said Affonzo. "You must make it for me."

"Yes, sir," said Joachim as he swung over his strong shoulders the wicker-work hamper and game bag. "Is the young master ready to go?"

"I am," Affonzo replied, and the two started down the narrow path along which the Senhor had disappeared.

"What kind of a tree is that?" asked Affonzo pointing to a tall tree a hundred feet high.

"That is the *castanhao*," said Joachim. "Some people call it the Brazil nut, and I have often gathered nuts from it for you to eat. The nuts grow at the very top of the tree in shells like cocoanuts, and each shell has fifteen or twenty nuts in it. Often I have thought my head was broken when a shell fell upon it."

"I wonder why we don't catch up with my father?" said Affonzo. "Joachim, what makes it so dark?"

"Storm coming. We must hurry," was the brief answer.

Heavy clouds had gathered quickly; not a glimmer of sunlight came through the trees, and great drops of rain began to fall.

"Father!" cried Affonzo, but there was no answer. "Father!" he called again and Joachim shouted, "Senhor! Senhor!"

Nothing was heard but the screaming of the wind, and the rain fell faster and faster. Vivid flashes of lightning illuminated the forest, and the thunder muttered and grumbled in the distance.

"Come with me quickly," said Joachim, as he seized the boy by the hand. "We mustn't stay here."

"But my father," cried Affonzo and tried to get away from Joachim, but the negro held tight to him.

"The Senhor can take care of himself; I must take care of you," he said, as he pulled the boy into a side path which led through the woods. They made their way with difficulty through the dense tangle of underbrush and vines. Often a swinging branch would strike Affonzo on the face, or he would tangle his feet in a swaying vine and fall full length in a bed of fern. The rain poured down in torrents, but the leaves and interlaced branches served as a shield from the great drops which pelted down like bullets. Soon they came to a small hut with a thatched roof and no door to bar the entrance. Into it Joachim pulled the boy with scant ceremony. As they entered the hut a man rose hurriedly from his grass couch, and Affonzo recognized an Indian who had often been to the Fazenda to see his father.

"Ah, Vicente," said Joachim. "Give us shelter."

"Welcome," said the *syringuero*.[2] "The storm is bad. You reached shelter just in time. See!"

He pointed through the door-way and Affonzo saw that the streams of water were well-nigh rivers, and the thunder and

[2] Rubber gatherer.

lightning were almost incessant.

"Where do you suppose my father is?" he asked, and Joachim answered,

"The Senhor has found shelter, do not fear; and he will know you are safe with me."

"There is nothing to do but sit still, I suppose," said Affonzo, rather mournfully, for that was the hardest thing in all the world for him to do.

Vicente gave him a slow smile. He was an old Indian of wiry frame, with keen black eyes. His hair was straight and black, his chin firm and strong, his features clean-cut, his face proud and intelligent. He was in great contrast to curly-haired, black Joachim with his good-humoured, stolid face.

Vicente was one of the Indians whose fathers had owned the land before the Portuguese discovered it and named it Brazil from the red colour of its dye woods. He gathered rubber from the great trees which grew in the forest, and lived alone in his little hut. He sat smoking and watching the boy who looked out into the rain feeling very miserable.

"Vicente," he said at last, "have you lived long in the forest?"

"Many years have I been here," said the old man. "And my fathers were here before me. They hunted and fished and were chiefs in the land until the white men came. Many died, many went to the great hills, but I stayed here, for the home of my fathers is my home."

"Tell me a story, Vicente," begged the little boy.

"In the days of my fathers," said Vicente, "and of my father's fathers and their fathers, things were not as to-day they are in the country of the great river. There were no white Senhores. The Indians dwelt alone. They roamed the forests hunting with the bow and arrow; they fished in the great stream; they dwelt in their lodges and were happy.

"Often there were fights with other Indians and these were of great glory. But my people were peaceful and loved not war, never fighting if they could first have peace. To secure peace for our village, each year they made a sacrifice and this was the manner of it.

"A chief smeared his body with gum and then powdered himself with gold dust. He powdered it all over, for in our mountains was much gold and precious gems. He placed himself on a raft and was rowed to the middle of the great river. There he raised his hands to heaven, praying the Great Spirit to save his village, and jumping into the water he washed off the precious dust. This he sacrificed for his village.

"This was done each year and should have been done still, when, perhaps, the Indian villages would not have been destroyed and deserted, but it ceased for the sin of one man. A chief loved gold. That is an evil and a foolishness, for gold is but for use and not for love. He loved its glitter, and it seemed to him stupid to waste it in a sacrifice.

"It was his turn to make the river sacrifice and become the

Gilded Man.[3] But he was angry within himself, and said, 'why shall I do this thing? If the village wishes gold, why must it take mine? It is a foolish thing!'

"Yet he could not refuse the sacrifice, for to be the Gilded Man was thought an honour, and did he refuse, many would suspect him of faithlessness to his tribe. So he gilded himself as was the custom, and his brother chiefs rowed him to the river and he raised his hands to heaven.

"'Spirits of Rain and Wind, of Fire and Water, of Good and Evil, keep our village and our people,' he cried. 'We offer all to thee!' Then he plunged into the stream and washed the gold from his arms and legs. All the time his heart was hot within him and he thought to himself, 'How my soul grieves to see this waste of the beautiful, shining dust!' Then an evil spirit tempted him and he did not wash off all the gold. He left beneath his arms where others could not see it, some of the glittering dust, and returned to his village, an insult to the Spirits of Heaven.

"That night came fierce rain and wind and with it a horde of enemies who descended like a hurricane and destroyed the village, – men, women and children. So the chief with all his gold was destroyed utterly and he was the last Gilded Man. Thus were the Spirits of Heaven avenged!"

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[3] This is the Indian legend of *El Dorado*, which is really *El Hombre Dorado*, or the gilded man, and it was this story which led so many of the early explorers to search for "*El Dorado*."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.