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### *How They Leave Cuba*

THERE is one thing relating to the Spanish evacuation of Havana of which, surely, the less said the better, and yet the exquisite mournfulness of it comes to one here at all times. For instance: A friend and myself went on board the *Alfonso XIII* a few days ago as she was about to sail for Spain with an enormous passenger list of sick soldiers, officers, Spanish families, even some priests—all people who, by long odds, would never again set their eyes on the island of Cuba.

The steamer was ready to sail. We slid down the gangway and into our small boat. There were many small boats crowding about the big ship. Most contained people who waved handkerchiefs and shouted "Adios!" quite cheerfully in a way suggesting that they themselves were intending to take the next steamer, or the next again, for Spain. But from a boat near to ours we heard the sound of sobbing. Under the comic malting sun shelter was a woman, holding in her arms a boy about four years old. Her eyes were fastened upon the deck of the ship, where stood an officer in the uniform of a Spanish captain of infantry. He was making no sign. He simply stood immovable, staring at the boat. Sometimes men express great emotion by merely standing still for a long time. It seemed as if he was never again going to move a muscle.

The woman tried to get the child to look at its father, but the boy's eyes wandered over the bright bay with maddening serenity. He knew nothing; his mouth was open vacuously. The crisis in his life was lowering an eternal shadow upon him, and he only minded the scintillant water and the funny ships.

She was not a pretty woman and she was—old. If she had been beautiful, one could have developed the familiar and easy cynicism which, despite its barbarity, is some consolation at least. But this to her was the end, the end of successful love. The heart of a man to whom she at any rate was always a reminiscence of her girlish graces was probably her only chance of happiness, and the man was on the *Alfonso XIII*, bound for Spain.

The woman's boatman had a face like a floor. Evidently he had thought of other fares. One couldn't spend the afternoon for three pesetas just because a woman yowled. He began to propel the boat toward the far landing. As the distance from the steamer widened and widened, the wail of the woman rang out louder.

Our boatman spat disdainfully into the water. "Serves her right. Why didn't she take up with a man of her own people instead of with a Spaniard?" But that is of small consequence. The woman's heart was broken. That is the point.

And that is not yet the worst of it. There is going to be a lot of it; such a hideous lot of it! The attitude of the Cubans will be the attitude of our old boatman: "Serves them right; why didn't they take up with men of their own people instead of with Spaniards?" But, after all—and after all—and again after all, it is human agony and human agony is not pleasant.