

**THE SPY COMPANY.  
A STORY OF THE  
MEXICAN WAR**

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The Spy Company. A Story of the Mexican War by Archibald Clavering Gunter

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**ARCHIBALD CLAVERING GUNTER**

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MISS GOWERLY AT SARATOGA, 1914

# The Spy Company

A Story of the Mexican War

By

ARCHIBALD CLAVERING GUNTER

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# THE SPY COMPANY.

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## BOOK I.

ESTRELLA GODFREY.

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### CHAPTER I.

SARATOGA IN EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR.

The summer night was falling softly upon Saratoga when that great watering place was scarce more than a village enbowered in trees; when most of its present magnificent avenues were pretty turnpike roads and some only bridle paths; Saratoga when those who sought its summer retreat came to it leisurely, many of them by stage-coach, to find recreation in its pleasant country and health in the living waters of its sparkling springs; the Saratoga of 1844, before half a dozen converging railroads had made it part of our rushing, bustling, frantic, modern world; a quiet, serene picnic place only disturbed—by politics.

Even on this placid evening towards the end of August, though the lights of the big dining room of the old United States Hotel illuminated the great fancy dress ball of the season, Democrats and Whigs clashed as hotly upon the big verandas and tree shaded pleasance as they did at political joint discussions and torchlight demonstrations or even in the halls of Congress itself.

The scene was one of great beauty, the grounds of the hotel being made brilliant with colored lanterns and the ball-room vivacious by shepherdesses, Italian peasant girls, vivandieres and "queens of the night," who chatted coyly with courtiers, knights and troubadours; while bad imitations of Indians, inspired by brandy smashes and mint juleps uttered their war whoops in the bar-room or smoked their pipes of peace on the broad verandas with equally incompetent representatives of the trappers of the West and voyageurs of Canada.

Though the ladies were robed as queens, fairies, sylphs and maids of honor, and were supposed to exemplify every clime and every century since history began, still they could not forget they were American women, and their usual topics of conversation, rides to the lake, visits to the Indian encampments and even the all-pervading gossip as to how many glasses were drunk by each individual at the Congress Spring in the morning, were sometimes mixed with as excited annexation discussions as those indulged in by their cavaliers.

For the hardy band of pioneers, settlers and sometimes even fugitives from justice in the United States that had gradually, during preceding years, drifted across the Louisiana border had in 1836 achieved Texan independence, defeating the Mexican forces under Santa Anna in the pitched battle of San Jacinto, and avenging the cruel massacre of Goliad and the bloody shambles of the Alamo.

For eight years, though recognized by France, England and Spain, the young Republic had been in a quasi state of war with its mother country, Mexico, a large portion of its plains being raided over by alternate bands of rancho bandits and Comanche Indians.