

**NAOMI TORRENTE:
THE HISTORY OF A
WOMAN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649160297

Naomi Torrente: the history of a woman by Gertrude F. De Vingut

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GERTRUDE F. DE VINGUT

**NAOMI TORRENTE:
THE HISTORY OF A
WOMAN**

NAOMI TORRENTE:

THE

HISTORY OF A WOMAN.

BY

GERTRUDE F. DE VINGUT.

Every dream of love argues
a reality in the world of supreme
beauty. Believe all that thy heart
prompts, for everything that it
seeks exists.—PLATO.

NEW YORK:
JOHN BRADBURN, PUBLISHER,
(LATE M. DOOLADY.)
49 WALKER STREET
1864.

PS
3129
V.75n

NEW YORK, May 3, 1864.

ESTEEMED FRIEND—

For by this title I may address you, though we have met only in the world of thought, and known each other simply by the exchange of our written ideas. To you, who have rendered into the harmonious language which I love, some of my earlier productions, I dedicate this book. The first years of my youth were linked to one of your compatriots; and around those years cluster the dearest memories of my life. Is it strange, then, if, without sacrificing my nationality, I should look upon the natives of your sunny isle almost as my countrymen? You say in one of the literary productions which from your distant home you had the kindness to send me: "He vivido; he amado; he sufrido" (I have lived, loved, and suffered). It is to you, therefore, and those who like you have deeply felt, that the history of a woman's soul-life will prove more interesting than the mere narrative of the chances and occurrences that make up the every-day, material existence. You will know how to appreciate whatever merit it may possess, and you will be indulgent to its faults for the sake of your friend and fellow laborer in the great field of literature.

G. F. DE VINGUT.

SR. DN. JUAN CLEMENTE ZENEA,
Editor of *La Charanga*,
Havana.

932735

NAOMI TORRENTE:
THE HISTORY OF A WOMAN.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

IN the small and very modestly furnished parlor of a tiny, but neat and respectable looking house, standing alone, a little beyond the White House, in Washington City, a mother and daughter, sole occupants of the dwelling, with the exception of a servant, were sitting alone one lovely June evening, at the hour of sunset.

The mother, a lady of some forty-five years, reclined in a large easy chair, drawn towards one of the open windows, with her feet resting on a cushion, and from her languid attitude, and the pallor of her face, it was easy to perceive that she was an invalid. She wore a dress of black silk, plainly and loosely made; and a little black lace cap, fitting tightly to her small and beautifully shaped head, softly overlaid the bands of dark brown hair, threaded here and there with silver, that shaded a face that had evidently once been one of rare loveliness.

The young girl was but a few steps off, half kneeling, half sitting on the floor, in a position of childish grace, one arm resting on the sill of the low window, and her eyes fixed on the floating clouds above. Her hair, only moderately redundant, but of silky fineness, and rarely beautiful in color, extremely

dark, yet with warm golden reflections, was slightly disarranged, as though in her abstraction she had pushed it away ; and her features, not perfectly regular, yet approaching the antique type in their clear cut but rounded outlines, were plainly visible. The face had the pure Grecian oval. The brow, too, was Grecian, low, broad, and full. The large, well shaped melancholy eyes, were of the sea-blue color that Lamartine loves ; the nose, just prominent enough to indicate decision of character, and the mouth had those curved and impressible lines capable of expressing every feeling. Her complexion was olive, soft, and clear, and pale, with that utter paleness which is seldom seen. As she sat, her figure was about the medium height ; and her girlish dress of white muslin, low-necked and short-sleeved, showed her neck and arms, that were formed and rounded with wonderful beauty. Her lithe form, slender yet full, possessed all the youthful, innocent grace of her years, combined with something of the voluptuousness of womanhood.

There was intellect in the upturned face, and power and passion, too, not so much undeveloped as held in check by the timidity of her eighteen years ; yet, wondrously attractive as such a face and form must have been to one of a refined mind and appreciative taste, such was her shrinking air, such the rapt and melancholy expression of her face when in repose, that she might have passed almost unnoticed in a crowd ; and there were doubtless many who would not have called her beautiful.

So absorbed was she in her own thoughts, that she did not perceive that the garden gate opened and shut, and a white-haired old gentleman, of a majestic figure, walked with creaking boots up the gravelled path, and entered the house. A moment after, coming unceremoniously into the parlor, with the familiarity of an old friend, he tossed his hat upon the sofa, wiped the perspiration from his brow, and sitting down, made a significant gesture towards the young girl, as much as to say "There she is again, dreaming as usual."

"Naomi," said her mother, softly, "you don't see the Colonel."

The young girl turned quickly, and with a slight smile parting her lips, inclined her head towards him.

"Ah! child," he said, in his naturally brusque manner, "don't dream. Dreams won't get you bread and butter."

A vivid color mounted suddenly into her cheeks, and after remaining irresolute for a moment, as if she did not know whether to reply or not, she rose abruptly, stepped out of the window upon the piazza, and walked rapidly away.

"A fiery little puss," he said; "she is angry now."

"No, not exactly angry. She is very, very sensitive, and any little jesting remark that others reply to in kind, wounds her so deeply that at the moment she cannot speak. I wish she were not so; but all the circumstances of her past life and her present position tend to increase this disposition and render it almost morbid."

"It is of no use to indulge her in whims; now this notion to become a singer, looking at it in a rational manner, is all nonsense, Mrs. Torrente—all nonsense, and you should not encourage her."

"I don't encourage her, believe me; but it is a very difficult matter to *discourage* her. She has such a passion for music and the stage, she is so enthusiastic, that this thought makes her forget her solitary life, and gives her a hope in the miserably uncertain future. When I see this, it is hard for me to even try to dissuade her from it. You know that she is young and beautiful, but you do not know—few do—that she is full of talent and ambition. Think for a moment of the lonely and aimless life she leads, caged here, seeing the first years of her youth pass away in this useless manner, and then you will not wonder that even I should sometimes think that, could it be accomplished, it might be the best thing for her."

"Ay, if it could be accomplished; there is where the difficulty lies. Let us look at it coolly for a moment. In the first

place, she must have two or three years' tuition under the best masters. There are none here sufficiently good; you would have to go to New York. How would you live there? Then, when fitted for her profession, there would be a wardrobe to obtain; and some person, some relative of course, must needs accompany her on her travels, for you know how roving an artistic life is. Where are the means for all this? Where is the relative to accompany her? Not surely you—an invalid—who often cannot walk alone in your room."

"O, I know the obstacles are very great; but yet these things are managed frequently under perhaps greater difficulties."

"Yes, there is one very easy and practicable plan. Take her to New York: her beauty will insure her an engagement. Find her a boarding-house; young, lovely, and inexperienced—as all are at her age—leave her in that great Babylon alone. That would work beautifully."

"Pray don't talk in that way. Do you imagine for a moment that I would do such a thing? Leave my child—fling her out on the great ocean of the world? Heaven help us! I would rather see her dead."

"I have only spoken so to show you the absurdity of cherishing an utterly impracticable thought. Dismiss it from your mind—my old constant friendship gives me a right to speak to you thus. Why did I not know you in your girlhood? Ah! that leaving your splendid home to share the fortunes of an exiled Cuban was a foolish——"

"Hush!" she said, and the color mounted to her pale cheek. "I never have—never shall regret it. Only when I look at Naomi, my lonely orphan—only then I feel a pang; but not even then regret."

"You will never lose your romance—well, well! But now, as to Naomi, my dear friend, she must get married."

"She does not seem to have the wish to marry that girls generally have; she might have married two years ago, not badly

either, if she would. In our secluded life she has little opportunity of seeing any one calculated to please her."

"Not want to marry! All nonsense again. Don't you see that it is the only thing for her? Do you think she would object to a fine-looking, gentlemanly person, with a good income?"

Mrs. Torrente leaned forward, and slightly lowered her voice as she answered.

"Speak low, Colonel, where is there such a person?"

"Here now—He is a gentleman from New York; an old friend of mine; and he is seeking a wife—with your permission I will bring him here."

"Do you think she would fancy him?"

"That is too much for me to say, indeed. I don't pretend to understand women's vagaries, you can but try—I tell you that he is a gentleman—I have extolled Naomi to him till he is dying to see her."

"Very well, you may bring him, but Naomi must believe it to be entirely an accidental thing. Should she suspect any preconcerted arrangements it would spoil everything."

"Never fear. It shall be to-morrow evening; we are taking a walk, you know, and I stop to inquire after your health. By the way, I have not asked you yet how you do feel?"

"Nervous and feeble, though not quite so much so as usual."

"I must be going now. I wonder where that little Sensitive Plant vanished to. If I were only twenty-five instead of—no matter how much, I would marry her myself, for she is almost as pretty as her mother used to be."

She smiled, and it was strange to see how the smile lit up her faded face with its old pleased, coquettish expression at hearing a compliment, as she said:

"I was pretty once, Colonel, was I not?"

"The prettiest woman I ever saw," he answered, and, adjusting his white locks, he passed leisurely out to the piazza, where Naomi was pacing slowly up and down.