



RAINBOW'S END

A NOVEL BY REX BEACH

AUTHOR OF 'THE IRON TRAIL', 'THE SPOILERS', 'HEART OF THE SUNSET' ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

Retribution. Although for a long time Donna Isabel had been sure in her own mind that Pancho Cueto, her administrator, was robbing her, she had never mustered courage to call him to a reckoning.

Nevertheless, De Castano's blunt accusation, coupled with her own urgent needs, served to fix her resolution, and on the day after the merchant's visit she sent for the overseer, who at the time was living on one of the plantations.

Cueto was plainly curious to learn why he had been sent for, but since he asked no questions, his employer was forced to open the subject herself. Through dry, white lips she began:

"My dear Pancho, times are hard. The plantations are falling, and so—"

Pancho Cueto's eyes were set close to his nose, his face was long and thin and harsh; he regarded the speaker with such a sinister, unblinking stare that she could scarcely finish:—"and so I—"

"I can no longer afford to retain you as administrator."

"Times will improve," he said. "Impossible! I tell you I'm bankrupt."

"So? Then the remedy is simple—sell a part of your land."

Although this suggestion came naturally enough, Donna Isabel turned cold, and felt her smile stiffen into a grimace.

She wondered if Cueto could be feeling her out deliberately. "Sell the Varona lands?" she queried, after a momentary struggle with herself.

"Esteban would rise from his grave. No, it was his wish that the plantations go to his children intact."

"And his wish is sacred to you, eh?" Cueto nodded his approval, although his smile was disconcerting.

"An admirable sentiment! It does you honor! But speaking on this subject, I am reminded of that dispute with Jose Oroz over the boundary to La Joya. I have promised to show him the original deed to La Joya and to furnish him with the proofs about the boundary line."

"That would be better than a lawsuit, wouldn't it?"

"Decidedly! But—I will settle with him myself!"

Cueto lifted an admonitory hand, his face alight with the faintest glimmer of ironic mirth. "I couldn't trust you to the mercies of that rascal," he said piously.

"No, I shall go on as I am, even at a sacrifice to myself. I love Don Esteban's children as my very own; and you, senora—"

Isabel knew that she must win a complete victory at once or accept irrevocable defeat.

"Never!" she interrupted, with a tone of finality. "I can't accept your sacrifice. I am not worthy. Kindly arrange to turn over your books of account at once."

Then Pancho Cueto did an unexpected thing; he laughed shortly and shook his head.

Donna Isabel was ready to faint and her voice quavered as she went on: "Understand me, we part the best of friends despite all I have heard against you. I do not believe these stories people tell, for you probably have enemies. Even if all they said were true, I should force myself to be lenient because of your affection for my husband."

The man rose, still smiling. "It is I who have been lenient," said he. "Oh? Speak plainly."

"Gladly. I have long suspected that Don Esteban hid the deeds of his property with the rest of his valuables, and now that you admit—"

"What I don't believe in ghosts." Nevertheless, he was on the point of setting Asensio an example of undignified flight when the mysterious object emerged from the shadows into the open moonlight; then he sighed with relief: "Ah-h! Now I see! It is my stepmother. She is asleep."

For a moment or two they watched the progress of the white-robed figure; then Esteban stirred and rose from his seat. "She's too close to that well. There is—" He started forward a pace or two. "They say people who walk at night go mad if they're awakened too suddenly, and yet—"

When the somnambulist's deliberate progress toward the mouth of the well continued he called her name softly. "Donna Isabel!" Then he repeated it louder. "Donna Isabel! Wake up!"

The woman seemed to hear and yet not to hear. She turned her head to listen, but continued to walk.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, reassuringly. "It is only Esteban—Donna Isabel! Stop!" Esteban sprang forward, shouting at the top of his voice, for at the sound of her name Isabel had abruptly swerved to her right, a movement which brought her dangerously close to the lip of the well.

"Stop! Go back!" screamed the young man.

Above his warning there came a shriek, shrill and agonized—a wail of such abysmal terror as to shock the night birds and the insects into stillness. Donna Isabel slipped, or stumbled, to her knees, she balanced briefly, clutching at random while the earth and crumbling cement gave way beneath her; then she slid forward and disappeared, almost out from between Esteban's hands.

There was a noisy rattle of rock and pebble and a great splash far below; a chuckle of little stones striking the water, then a faint bubbling. Nothing more. The stepson stood in his tracks, sick, blind with horror; he was swaying over the opening when Asensio dragged him back.

Pancho Cueto, being a heavy sleeper, was the last to be roused by Esteban's cries. When he had hurriedly slipped into his clothes in response to the pounding on his door, the few servants that the establishment supported had been thoroughly awakened. Cueto



"What's That?" Gaped the Negro, thought they must be out of their minds until he learned what had befallen the mistress of the house.

Then of a sudden Isabel's whole dream-world dissolved. She awoke, or thought she did, at hearing her name shouted. But although she underwent the mental and the physical shock of being startled from slumber, although she felt the first swift fright of a person aroused to strange surroundings, she knew on the instant that she must still be asleep; for everything about her was dim and dark, the air was cold and damp, wet grass rose to her knees.

Before she could half realize her condition she felt herself plunged into space. She heard herself scream hoarsely, fearfully, and knew, too late, that she was indeed awake. Then—whirling chaos—A sudden, blinding crash of lights and sounds—Nothing more!

Esteban Varona sat until a late hour that night over a letter which required the utmost care in its composition. It was written upon the thinnest of paper, and when it was finished the writer inclosed it in an envelope of the same material.

Esteban put the letter in his pocket without addressing it. Letting himself out into the night, he took the path that led to the old sunken garden. He passed close by the well, and its gaping mouth, only half protected by the broken coping, reminded him that he had promised Rosa to cover it with planks. In its present condition it was a menace to animals, if not to human beings who were unaware of its presence.

Seating himself on one of the old stone benches, the young man lit a cigarette and composed himself to wait. He sat there for a long time, grumbling inwardly, for the night was damp and he was sleepy; but at last a figure stole out of the gloom and joined him. The newcomer was a ragged negro, dressed in the fashion of the poorer country people.

"Well, Asensio, I thought you'd never come. I'll get a fever from this!" Esteban said irritably.

"It is a long way, Don Esteban, and Evangelina made me wait until dark. I tell you we have to be careful these days."

"What is the news? What did you hear?"

Asensio sighed gratefully as he seated himself. "One hears a great deal, but one never knows what to believe. There is fighting in Santa Clara, and Maceo sweeps westward."

Taking the unaddressed letter from his pocket, Esteban said, "I have another message for Colonel Lopez."

"That Lopez! He's here today and there tomorrow; one can never find him."

AMERICAN SOLDIERS OUT OF NEW CONFLICTS

WASHINGTON, April 1.—President Wilson has informed other members of the American delegation to the peace conference that no American soldiers should be used in any trouble in eastern or southeastern Europe, a Central News dispatch from Paris says.

PARIS, April 1.—What is construed as a warning that the world could not long countenance further delay in the adjustment of peace was delivered to the allied premiers and military representatives of the associated powers by President Wilson yesterday.

U. S. SECRETARY IS CERTAIN OF LOAN SUCCESS

WASHINGTON, April 1.—Confidence in the financial condition of the country and its ability to float the forthcoming victory liberty loan was expressed today by Secretary Glass in replying to the suggestion of Senator Calder of New York that a special session of congress should be called to stop depreciation in the market of liberty bonds.

Far from agreeing that the decline in outstanding bonds might jeopardize the popular campaign for flotation of the victory issue this month, thereby tying up credits by forcing the banks to take the new bonds, Mr. Glass declared that he was assured the treasury's efforts to solve the financial problems of the country would have the support of "a united and victorious people."

PREPARATIONS MADE BY BOCHE FOR RESISTANCE

PARIS, March 28.—News was received here today that the Germans are increasing the garrisons at Danzig. This is taken as indicating an intention to resist whatever disposition the peace conference may make of the port.

COPENHAGEN, March 28.—The government at Weimar has received from the allied high command a demand for permission for Polish troops to land at Danzig and to march through German territory to Poland, according to a dispatch received here from Weimar.

Fight to Start On Prohibition

CHICAGO, March 28.—A "well-planned legal fight to test the constitutionality of the dry amendment" will be put into operation today by representatives of the largest distilleries in the United States, who, at the same time, will seek appropriate relief from congress.

AUTO DRIVER HELD

PORTLAND, March 31.—Peter Westberg of Colton, driver of the automobile which ran down 7-year-old Dorothea Moeller Sunday, inflicting injuries from which the girl died at 4 o'clock this morning, is in the county jail charged with involuntary manslaughter, on a warrant sworn to by the child's father. Bail was fixed at \$2500.

WANTED

News of interest such as social items, visitors in the city, those visiting out of the city, or in fact, activities of any nature will be appreciated by the Editor if they are sent in or phoned.

PACIFIC COAST BOYS ARRIVE IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK, March 31.—Aboard the transport Siboney, which arrived here today, were the first troops from the 91st (Pacific coast) division. It was the first detachment of that division to return, and included a total of 3020 men from the Pacific seaboard.

The Pacific coast troops arrived in France during the first week in July. They were in the big drive in St. Mihiel salient and they also played their part on the Meuse and in the Argonne. They took 2360 prisoners and considerable war material.

The regiments lost about 1160 officers and men killed, and about 5000 wounded. After fighting in the Argonne they were ordered to Flanders by General Foch, where they were under command of King Albert of Belgium. When the armistice was signed original orders directed these troops to join the Army of Occupation and they had almost reached German soil when they received orders to turn back and set out for home.

U. S. WANTS REPORT ON ACTIVITY OF JAPAN

WASHINGTON, March 31.—The American embassy at Mexico City was instructed today to make inquiries concerning the report that the Mexican government has granted agricultural concessions to Japanese in lower California and to report the facts as quickly as possible. No official information has reached the department about the concessions and surprise was occasioned by the dispatch from Mexico City yesterday quoting General Amado Aguirre, under secretary of development and agriculture, as saying they had been granted.

The American government is interested both because of the apparent success of Japanese in obtaining a long-sought foothold in Lower California and because the tract of land involved was developed and is claimed by an American company, whose rights were declared forfeited by the Mexican government in 1917.

Telgraph Rates Up 20 Per Cent.

WASHINGTON, March 29.—Increase of 20 per cent in domestic telegraph rates, effective April 1, were announced today by Postmaster-General Burleson.

The increase was agreed upon at a meeting of the federal wire board and was made necessary, Mr. Burleson's announcement said, to meet the "increased cost of operation occasioned by wage increases now in effect, made during the past year."

The Gasoline Problem of Supply and Demand

The second of a series of three statements

The war directed attention to the need of petroleum conservation. Speaking on this subject, Mark L. Requa, General Director, Oil Division, United States Fuel Administration, recently said:

"The disproportion between the supply of and demand for gasoline is enormous and constitutes a critical problem.

"Projected at the percentage of increase, 1904-1914, we should require in 1927 something like 700,000,000 barrels of petroleum. In 1918 our total production was only 350,000,000 barrels."

To meet this situation both the petroleum and automobile industries have for several years been making every effort. The problem has been approached from every angle:

- (a) The oil producers are constantly prospecting for new fields. They have sunk many wells and are doing everything possible to increase petroleum production.
- (b) The oil refiners, with the help of their chemical engineers, are ever devising new and improved processes of refining by which they squeeze every possible drop of gasoline out of each barrel of petroleum.
- (c) The automotive engineers have aided much in gasoline conservation by their constant improvement of automobile engines and methods of carburization. Their efforts are to secure the operation of automobiles on grades of gasoline that permit the maximum production of this motor fuel from each barrel of crude oil and which, at the same time, will give the greatest power and mileage from each unit of gasoline consumed.

All these methods are succeeding to a marked degree, and yet gasoline consumption is increasing much faster than production.

Facing these bald facts last summer, it became evident to President Wilson and the United States Fuel Administration that there was virtually as great need for gasoline conservation as for food conservation.

In consequence the United States Fuel Administration requested Eastern states to discontinue entirely all non-essential use of passenger automobiles, and for a time this request was so extended that only automobiles in Government, emergency or war service were in use on Sunday. These limitations were not extended to the Western states, because at the time there was enough gasoline being produced in California for Pacific Coast needs and its distribution did not require the use of transcontinental transportation facilities needed for war.

It was part of this same campaign to conserve gasoline that led President Wilson to appoint a Government committee to determine and adopt standard

specifications for gasoline and other petroleum products.

This committee consisted of the United States Fuel Administration and representatives of the War and Navy Departments, the United States Shipping Board, the Director General of Railroads, the Bureau of Mines and the Bureau of Standards.

The committee was assisted and advised by technical experts from each of these departments and bodies.

After extended discussions, exhaustive tests and experimentation, this Government committee adopted standard specifications for gasoline, not only for aviation purposes, but also for general motor use on land and sea.

These United States Government specifications were drawn up with a view to providing a grade of gasoline that would meet every practical requirement and yet allow maximum production. They deal with the problem on the basis of the best utilization of our petroleum resources, and the maintenance of reasonable prices to the consumer.

Drafted as they were by impartial Government experts, these United States Government gasoline specifications are today being generally considered as the most practical standard for gasoline. They insure an efficient and satisfactory gasoline and at the same time have due regard for the necessity of petroleum conservation.

The gasoline being furnished today is more powerful and gives greater mileage than the gasoline of ten years ago. Its use is made possible by the improvements in automobile engines and methods of carburization. To go back to the gasoline of ten years ago would be to accept a more highly volatile but less powerful gasoline giving less mileage. It would also result in decreasing the production and increasing the cost of gasoline.

All Red Crown gasoline now being supplied in the Pacific Coast states is refined to conform with the United States Government standard specifications. It has the full, uniform chain of boiling points necessary for full-powered, dependable gasoline: Low boiling points for easy starting, medium boiling points for quick, smooth acceleration, and high boiling points for power and mileage.

LEAGUE CHANGES ARE OUTLINED BY C. E. HUGHES

NEW YORK, March 26.—Several amendments to the league of nations covenant intended primarily by their author to insure the American continent against European aggression, to protect the United States from enforced administration of foreign territory and to revoke the "trouble breeding" guaranty of the existing political independence of member nations, were proposed here tonight by Charles E. Hughes.

Minor suggestions of the former republican presidential candidate were that definite limitation be placed upon the league's field of inquiry, reserving to the several nations exclusive control of immigration, tariffs and other internal problems and that provision be made for the withdrawal of states from the organization.

STRIKE NOT LIKELY

TACOMA, March 29.—Despite a vote among shipyard workers on a proposed strike on the Pacific coast among metal trades on April 1, the developments today indicate that Tacoma shipyards will not shut down Tuesday next.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY (California)

