THE RED TRAIL

GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER V.

The sun rose; its beams played on the trembling yellow leaves of the trees, and tinged them with a thousand shades of gold and purple. The birds, cozily nestled in the bushes, struck up their matin carol; the awakening of nature was as splendid and imposing as it is in all mountainous countries.

The leader of the caravan left his tent and gave orders to strike the camp. The tent was at once folded up, the mules were loaded, and, so soon as the horses were saddled, the party started without waiting for the morning meal, for they generally breakfasted at the 11 o'clock halt.

The caravan advanced along the road from Santa Fe to the United States, at a speed unusual under such circumstances.

When he left the camp, the chief of the caravan spurred his horse and joined the Indian, who was marching alone in front, examining the bushes and apparently performing all the duties of an experienced guide. Curumilla, though he heard the hurried paces of the Mexican's horse, did not turn round, but continued trotting along on his sorry mule.

"Indian," said the caravan chief in Spanish, "I wish to speak with you on an important subject; be good enough to put off your usual silence for a while and answer like an honest man. You engaged with me at Santa Fe to lead me, for the sum of four ounces, safely to the frontiers of Upper Mexico. Since you have been in my service I must allow that I have only had reason to praise your prudence; but we are at this moment in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, that is to say, we have reached the most dangerous part of our journey. Two days ago you lifted the trail of Crow Indians, very formidable enemies of caravans, and I want to consult with you as to the means to employ to foil the snares in which these Indians will try to catch us."

The Indian felt in a bag of striped calico thrown over his shoulder, and produced a greasy paper, which he opened and offered the Mexican.

"What is this?" the latter asked. "Oh, yes, certainly; your engagement. Well, what has this to do with the question I asked you?"

Curumilla, still impassive, laid his fingers on the paper, at the last paragraph of the engagement.

"Well, what then?" the Mexican exclaimed ill-humoredly. "It is said there, it is true, that I must trust entirely to you, and leave you at liberty to act as you please for the common welfare. What proves to me that you are acting for our common welfare, and that you are not a traitor?"

At this word traitor, so distinctly uttered by the Mexican, Curumilla gave a tiger glance at the speaker, while his whole body was agitated by a convulsive tremor; he uttered two or three incomprehensible guttural exclamations, and ere the Mexican could suspect his intentions he was seized round the waist, lifted from the saddle, and hurled on the ground, where he lay stunned. Curumilla leaped from his mule, drew from his belt four gold ounces, hurled them at the Mexican, and then bounding over the precipice that bordered the road, disappeared.

The situation was becoming most critical for the chief of the caravan; he found himself abandoned without a guide, in unknown regions, doubtless watched by hidden foes, and exposed at any moment to an attack.

The march was continued; no suspicious sign was discovered; and the Mexicans were justified in believing that, with the exception of the time they would be compelled to lose, the flight of the Indian would entail no disagreeable consequences.

Singularly enough, Carnero seemed rather pleased than annoyed at the disappearance of the guide. Far from complaining or deploring the delay in the continuance of the journey he laughed at what had happened and made an infinitude of more or less witty jests about it, which considerably annoyed his master, whose joy was merely on the surface, and who, in his heart, cursed the mishap which kept them in the mountains and exposed them to the insults of the plunderers.

"Pray, what do you find so agreeable in what has happened that you are or affect to be so merry, No Carnero?" he at length asked.

"Forgive me, mi amo," the capataz answered; "but you know the proverb, 'What can't be cured must be endured.'"

"Hum!" said the master.

"And besides," the capataz added, as he stooped down, "however bad our position may be, is it not better to pretend to consider it good?"

A little before 11 a. m. the caravan reached the terrace, and it was with a feeling of joy, which they did not attempt to conceal, that the peons recognized the strength of the position.

"We shall stop here for the present," the Mexican said. "Unload the mules, and light the fires. Immediately after breakfast we will begin entrenching ourselves."

The peons obeyed with the speed of men who have made a long journey and are beginning to feel hungry; the fires were lighted in an instant, and a few moments later the peons vigorously attacked their maize tortillas, their tocina and their cecina—those indispensable elements of every Mexican meal. When the hunger of his men was appeased the chief rose.

"Now," he said, "to work."

CHAPTER VI.

The position which the leader of the caravan fancied he had been the first to [illegible]ver, and where he had made up his [illegible] halt, was admirably selected to [illegible] an intrenched camp. The im[illegible]adero hovering at a prodigious [illegible]ve the precipices, and guarded [illegible] and left by enormous masses [illegible]ed such conditions of security that the peons regained all their merry carelessness, and regarded the mysterious flight of the guide as an accident of no real importance.

It was, hence, with well promising ardor that they rose on receiving their chief's command and prepared under his directions to dig the trench which was intended to protect them from a surprise. This trench was to be bordered by a line of tall stakes, running across the open space between the rocks, which gave the sole access to the terrace.

At the moment when the leader proceded with several peons armed with picks and spades toward the entrance, with the probable intention of marking the exact spot where the trench was to be dug, the capataz approached, and said with a respectful bow:

"Mi amo, I have an important communication to make to you."

His master turned and looked at him with ill-concealed distrust.

"An important communication to make to me?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"What is it? Speak, but be brief."

"I have discovered a grotto."

"What?" his master exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes, excellency."

"Where?"

"There," he said, stretching out his arm; "behind that mass of rocks."

A suspicious look flashed from behind his master's eyelashes.

"Well, we will enter it together. Fetch some torches of ocote wood, and show us the way. By the by, do not forget to bring weapons, for we know not what men or beasts we may find in caverns thus opening on a high road."

The Mexican selected six of his peons, on whose courage he thought he could rely, ordered them to take their muskets, and, bidding the others keep a good watch, but not begin anything until he returned, he made a signal to the capataz that he was ready to follow him. Carnero had followed the arrangements made by his master with an evil eye, but probably did not deem it prudent to risk any remark, for he silently bowed his head, and walked toward the pile of rocks that masked the entrance of the grotto.

These granite blocks, piled one on top of the other, did not appear, however to have been brought there by accident, but, on the contrary, they appeared to have belonged in some early and remote age to a clumsy but substantial edifice.

"It would not be prudent," said the chief, "to venture without precautions into this cavern. Prepare your arms, muchachos, and keep your eyes open; at the slightest suspicious sound, or the smallest object that appears, fire. Capataz, light the torches."

The latter obeyed without a word; the leader of the caravan assured himself at a glance that his orders had been properly carried out; then taking his pistols from his belt, he cocked them, took one in each hand, and said to Carnero:

"Take the lead. It is only just that you should do the honors of this place which you so unexpectedly discovered. Forward, you others, and be on your guard."

The eight men went into the cavern at the heels of the capataz, who raised the torches above his head, doubtless in order to cast a greater light.

They thus reached a rather large hall, into which several passages opened. All at once the leader stopped and listened.

"Listen," he said to the capataz, "do you not hear something?"

The latter bent his body slightly forward and remained motionless for some seconds.

"I do," he said, drawing himself up, "it sounds like distant thunder."

"Is it not? or, perhaps, the rolling of subterranean waters."

"I can swear that you are right. It would be a piece of luck for us to find water in the cave, for it would add greatly to our security, as we should not be obliged to lead our horses, perhaps, a long distance to drink."

"I will assure myself at once of the truth. The noise proceeds from that passage, so let us follow it. As for our men, they can wait here; we have nothing to fear now, for if the pirates or the Indians are ambushed to surprise us, they would not have waited so long before doing so, and hence the assistance of our peons is unnecessary."

The capataz shook his head doubtfully.

"Hum," he said, "the Indians are very clever. I believe it would be more prudent to let the peons accompany us."

"Nonsense," said his master, "it is unnecessary; we are two resolute and well-armed men; we have nothing to fear, I tell you."

They then entered the passage. It was very narrow, and ran downward a steep incline. The further they proceeded the more distinct the sound of water became; it was evident that at a very short distance from the spot where they were, perhaps but a few steps, there ran one of those subterranean streams so frequently found in natural caverns.

All at once, without being warned by the slightest sound, the leader of the caravan felt himself seized round the waist, his torch snatched roughly from his hand, and extinguished against a rock, and himself thrown down and securely bound, before he was able to attempt the slightest resistance, so sudden and well calculated had the attack been. Carnero had been thrown down at the same time as his master, and bound.

"Cowards, demons!" the Mexican yelled, "show yourselves, at least, so that I may know with whom I have to deal."

"Silence! Gen. Don Sebastian Guerrero, resign yourself to your fate, for you have fallen into the power of men who will not liberate you."

Gen. Guerrero made a movement of impotent rage, but he was silent; he perceived that the originators of the snare of which he was a victim were implacable enemies.

When his conquerors had borne him to the hall, where his peons were disarmed and guarded, he saw, by the light of the torch that [illegible] hall, that among the men who saved him few were the Mexican costume, it was true, and they had their faces hidden by a piece of black crape, forming a species of mask, and so well fastened round their necks, that it was entirely impossible to recognize them.

"What do these men want with me?" he muttered, as he let his head fall on his chest sadly.

"Patience!" said the man who had already spoken, "you will soon know."

CHAPTER VII.

There was a short delay, during which the conquerors appeared to be consulting together in a low voice; while doing so, an Indian chief, who was no other than the Jester, entered the hall. The general and the capatas were then again picked up by the redskins, and at a sign from one of the masked men, transported on to the voladero.

One hundred and fifty to two hundred Indians, mostly armed with guns, and ranged in good order round the terrace, the center of which remained free, faced the cavern, having among them the disarmed Mexicans, the baggage, horses and mules.

The tent still stood in the middle of what was to have been the encampment; but the curtain was raised, and a horseman was standing in front of it, as if to defend the entrance.

At the moment when the party emerged from the cave and appeared on the terrace, the horsemen drawn up at the entrance of the defile opened out to the right and left, leaving a passage for a small troop of men dressed in hunter's garb, and whom it was easy to recognize as white men; two ladies, mounted on ambling mules, were in the midst of them.

This troops of strangers was composed of eight persons altogether, leading with them two baggage mules. As the men were disarmed, and walked on foot amid some fifty Indian horsemen, they had, in all probability, been surprised by a party of redskins.

The two ladies, one of whom was of a certain age, while the other appeared scarce 18, and who might be supposed closely related, through the resemblance of their features, were treated with an exquisite politeness they were far from expecting by the Indians, and conducted to the tent. The curtain was then lowered, to conceal them from the glances of the Indians.

The newcomers, at a signal from their conductors, ranged themselves with the other prisoners; they were powerful men whom the Indians had probably not given a chance to defend; otherwise they looked as if they would sooner be killed than yield.

Two masked men took their seats on the granite blocks, and the Indians who carried the general laid him on the ground in front of this species of tribunal. The person who seemed to be the president of this sinister assembly gave a sign, the prisoner's bonds at once fell off, and he found himself once more able to move his limbs.

The general drew himself up, crossed his hands on his chest, threw his body back haughtily, raised his head and looked at his judges with a glance of withering contempt.

"What do you want with me, bandits?" he said; "enough of this; these insolent maneuvers will not alarm me."

"Silence!" the president said, coldly; "it is not your place to speak thus."

Then he remarked to the Jester, who was standing a few paces from him:

"Bring up the other prisoners, old and new; everybody must hear what is going to be said."

The Jester gave a signal to the warriors; some of them dismounted, approached the prisoners and, after loosening the cord that bound the capataz, they led him, as well as the peons and prisoners of the second caravan, in front of the tribunal. Then, at a signal from the Jester, the horsemen closed up round the white men.

(To be continued.)

Dehorning a Rhinoceros.

A rhinoceros which lived in the London zoo was troubled by its horn, which grew down in front of its mouth, so that only with difficulty could it eat or drink. To save its life the keeper decided on amputation. The horn of a rhinoceros is not a horn at all, but an accumulation of hair and skin which has hardened and become cemented together by some gummy substance. The owner of this one had a very touchy temper and was not easily approached. Its keeper, however, decided to try what he could do. For some days it required all his skill to persuade the beast to come to the front of the cage and put its horn through. Then for some days he stroked the horn, much to the animal's disgust at first, although later it seemed to like it. When it found he meant no harm it let him take the horn in his left hand and then with the right imitate the motion of a saw across it. When this had been done some time and the rhinoceros no longer minded it, a piece of wood was held in the right hand, and at last, when even this no longer worried the animal, a real saw was brought in and the horn cut off without the slightest remonstrance from the owner of it.

Hardest of All Metals.

Tantalum has been hammered into sheets, which are extremely hard. Sir William Crookes, F. R. S., states that "a hole had to be bored through a plate of this metal and a diamond drill was used, revolving at the date of 5,000 revolutions per minute. This whirling force was continued ceaselessly for three days and nights, when it was found that only a small depression 25 mm. deep had been drilled, and it was a moot point which had suffered the more damage—the diamond or the tantalum."

As Usual.

Friend—You took your son into your establishment some months ago to teach him the business, I understand. How did it turn out? Business Man (wearily)—Great success. He's teaching me now.—Chicago Journal.

It is only a waste of time to look at the ashes after you have burned the [illegible].

FARMS AND FARMERS

Summer Pest.

The illustration shows one of the most destructive of the summer insect pests, which attacks both fruit and ornamental trees. It is known as the yellow-neck caterpillar, and is usually found in numbers along the branches of trees, feeding on the foliage until the limb is entirely denuded, when they migrate to another limb. The female deposits the eggs on the leaf of the tree, where they are usually hatched during July, and the young insects begin feeding on the leaves.

The full-grown moth is shown in the upper part of the illustration. The caterpillar is about two inches long, with a dull yellow band just back of the black head. This pest is familiar to most farmers, for it may be found in nearly every section of the country.

THE YELLOW CATERPILLAR.

A good way to rid the trees of them is by spraying with paris green, but if this is not desirable because of fruit on the trees, a torch made of cloth or small rags and saturated with kerosene may be applied to the infested limbs and the insects destroyed in this manner.

Dog Sausage No Joke.

The old joke about eating "hot dog" is no joke in Germany any more, for no less than 7,000 canines of various breeds were slaughtered and eaten by the subjects of Kaiser William last year, according to a report from Consul George N. Ifft at Annaberg. The eating of horse meat seems to be quite general in Germany, for no less than 182,000 horses were slaughtered for human food in 1906.

"Horseflesh is very generally advertised in the German papers," says Consul Ifft, "especially in those in large industrial centers, and most German cities have at least one market which makes it a specialty, claiming for it a higher percentage of nourishment than that of beef, veal, mutton or pork. Neither is it unusual to find advertisements of dog meat or for the purchase of dogs for slaughter. In the city of Cassel recently the police, in searching for a lost dog, discovered a private slaughter house and arrested the proprietors, who were apparently making a regular business of stealing and killing dogs."

In the city of Chemnitz alone, Consul Ifft reports, 698 dogs were slaughtered for human food in 1906, this being an increase of eighty-eight over the previous year.

Hedge Trimmer.

The trimming of a hedge is properly the work of an expert, many years of practical experience being required before first class work can be accomplished. As a rule expert hedge trimmers employ a cutter having but a single pair of blades. A Virginia man thought that a trimmer could be devised which would simplify the trimming and assure greater accuracy. Accordingly he designed the implement shown in the illustration. It comprises a pair of knives, containing numerous cutting teeth. The knives are attached to pivoted handles, one knife moving over the other. When the latter are grasped, one in each hand, considerable power can be applied to the cutter, whereby over a foot of the hedge can be trimmed in a single cut. It would be impossible, with this tool, to trim too much in spots, forming an uneven surface to the hedge. The extreme length of the blades insures an even cut throughout.

HEDGE TRIMMER.

Cacti as Stock Food.

The New Mexico Experiment Station has issued a very creditable bulletin dealing with the composition and feeding value of the prickly pear and other cacti. The spines of the cacti are removed by singeing with a torch. The protein content in the air-dry material ranges from 2 to 10 per cent, the fruit being the richest part. The cacti compare favorably with many forage plants. Heretofore the great difficulty in the way of utilizing cacti as forage has been the spines, but since they can be removed by the torch a large amount of cheap forage is made available to the stockmen of the arid plains.

How Book Learning Pays.

"Book learning" for farmers has been a thing to laugh at in the past. It used to be thought that an almanac and one or two patent office reports were all a man needed to make him competent to "run a farm." We are getting past that day, and doing it at a pretty fast pace, in our times. Think of the report just published by the commissioners appointed a couple of years ago in the State of Louisiana to investigate crop pests, with particular reference to the boll weevil and the terrible injury it has wrought to the cotton crop. For two years these commissioners have been studying and experimenting on the State farms in the Red river region, and now they send word out to the world that they have succeeded in growing cotton that cannot be hurt by the boll weevil. Just how they have done this we must wait to learn. The great fact is that they have done it. Think what this will mean in money to the farmers of the cotton growing States! Nor will the benefit of their work stop there. Other people than the cotton growers are interested in cotton. We all have a for the plant and its products. From the poor man down in the most obscure quarter of the city to the millionaire in his beautiful home, we all need cotton in some form or other. And "book farming" cuts the cloud which has hung over the men who grow the plant and lets the sunshine out all over the world.

Potato Tests at Cambridge.

The university experiment station at Cambridge, Mass., reports that a variety of tests were conducted on light loam. The sprouting of seeds before planting did not appear very useful for ordinary purposes. Planting entire tubers gave better results than the use of cut seed pieces. Tubers weighing nine or ten to the pound, or 1½ to 1⅝ inches in size, were most suitable for planting.

Seed imported from Scotland produced equally good crops the first and second years, while the third year the crop was much reduced. The second growth, induced by weather conditions in 1904, had a very injurious effect on the cooking quality of the potatoes. The best results on poor light land were secured with a fertilizer application consisting of 175 pounds of sulphate of ammonia, 350 pounds of superphosphate and 150 pounds of sulphate of potash. On the light loam soil the best yield was secured where this same application of fertilizers, together with twelve tons of barnyard manure per acre, was used. The barnyard manure alone gave good results.

Fruit Gatherer.

Professional growers of small fruits have been on the lookout for some such satisfactory device in which the picked fruit can be temporarily held by the picker. These devices have taken many forms, the majority consisting of baskets and similar receptacles, which are secured to the body of the picker. A vast improvement in this line is the fruit gatherer shown here, the invention of a New Jersey man. It consists of a leather receptacle which is attached to the arm, one end overlapping the palm of the hand, the opposite end being sealed. The open end is shaped like a scoop. As the operator picks the fruit, such as berries, cherries, etc., he drops it into the receptacle. The device does not in any way interfere with the free movement of the arm or hands, nor is there any likelihood of the fruit falling out of the receptacle.

FRUIT GATHERER.

Cabbage Rot.

The disease known to the cabbage growers as black rot, or stem rot, has come into prominence within the few years, and is said to be a great hindrance to cabbage growing in several States. From a recent farmers' bulletin prepared by the chief of the division of vegetable pathology it appears that no way is known of curing the disease or of entirely ridding a locality of it when once it is established. The whole subject of the disease and its management may be summed up in one word—preventing. The disease is not confined to the cabbage, but attacks a number of species belonging to the mustard family. The planting of other crops for a long series of years is said to be the only satisfactory way to get rid of this disease of the cabbage when it has once become serious.

Summer Feeding of Sheep.

The summer feeding of sheep is not difficult. There is no other animal that can be shifted from field to field in summer to consume the weeds as can sheep. When handled in this way, they will keep the fence corners clean. To what better use could you put your weeds than to turn them into mutton? inquires a grower in New England Homestead. But do not overlook the fact that they also enjoy and thrive upon good grass. In order to keep a large number on a small farm you should have small fields and change them often, for this gives them short, tender grass, which they like best, and also keeps them healthy by not allowing them to remain upon one pasture too long.

AS WEATHER PROPHET.

ging of bad weather by croak-
in before a storm.

axine says that there is real-
ason to believe that the green
trds somewhat experienced as
rematic conditions and acts ac-
co. In fine weather he skips
along the branches of trees,
wiberty, catching flies. At the
apf winter he seeks the water
anuimself a bed in the mud un-
tillowing spring calls him out
to his war on the flies.

frog on the ladder without
doches the weather conditions
kel rises to look out for flies
wlircumstances seem favorable.
Omr hand, when the weather is
coamp he is reminded of win-
testinctively retires to bury his
sot the imaginary mud which
hethe bottom of his prison.

A SAFE MAN TO WED.

'ons in regard to courtship
ange held by Tibble, the young
Scan who presided over the
Jaltchen, were a never-ending
soumusement to her mistress.
"I'l me mind off Archie Mac-
Lan'am," Tibble announced one
daing to a young carpenter who
hated her domain for some
wele's no the man for me. I
cast weel."

'as poor Archie done?" asked
Mson, her heart filled with joy
at wledge that she was not to
losmestic treasure, as she had
fe

at he has na done, ma'am,"
res Tibble, briskly. "I put a
few him. I said, 'Archie, if ye
hae, an' come home some day
to 'd gone gadding with her kin
anhe boose in disorder wherl
yo And he looked at me with
th smile o' his, an' said he,
'I to rights myself.'

tried him with churchgoing.
rchie, if ye had a wife that
beth morning would up an'
was too tired to bide the
sitting under the minister,
t do?' An' again he smiled
me, an' said, 'I'd go an' lie
p.'

last I tried him with the
this world. I said, 'Archie,
wife that would take some
d-earned money an' spend it
ons an' kickshaws to put on
at'd you do?' An' he smiled
dn ever, an' says he, 'I'd take
e lookin' at her wi' 'em on

So I up an' told him he's
ng elsewhere for a wife.
You a fearfu' pleasant man to
wd,' to him, 'but such easy-
going would na train a lass like
ma.'

Theer to every one o' the three
questiould 'a' been, 'I'd take a
wick to an' you know it!

"So we've parted, ma'am."

How They Do It.

Ponder how a Morgan, a Harriman, an, a Wanamaker can carry on srodigous enterprises. The secret, ding to Success, lies in their to protect themselves throughighty system by being able to choon who will fit the places they at in, men who can carry out tholoyer's program to the letter ance hired to take their risks.

The United States has 260,000 school buildirwhich 460,000 teachers are at wording nearly 18,000,000 children.