

THE RED TRAIL

BY GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER I.

Toward the end of June, 1854, a well mounted traveler, carefully wrapped up in the thick folds of a sarape, raised to his eyes, was following one of the most precipitous slopes of the Sierra of the Wind river, at no great distance from the source of the Green river, that great western Colorado which pours its waters into the Gulf of California.

It was about seven in the evening; the traveler rode along, shivering from the effects of an icy wind which whistled mournfully through the canyons. All around had assumed a saddening aspect in the vacillating moonbeams. He rode on without hearing the footfall of his horse, as it fell on the winding sheet of snow that covered the landscape; at times the capricious windings of the track he was following compelled him to pass through thickets, whose branches, bent by the weight of snow, stood out before him like gigantic skeletons, and struck each other after he had passed with a sullen snap.

The traveler continued his journey, looking anxiously on both sides of him. His horse, fatigued by a long ride, stumbled at every step, and in spite of the repeated encouragement of its rider seemed determined to stop short, when, after turning an angle in the track, it suddenly entered a large clearing, where the close-growing grass formed a circle about forty yards in diameter and the verdure formed a cheery contrast with the whiteness that surrounded it.

"Heaven be praised!" the traveler exclaimed in excellent French, "here is a spot where I can camp for to-night without any excessive inconvenience."

While thus speaking the traveler had stopped his horse and dismounted. His first attention was paid to his horse, from which he removed the saddle and bridle, and which he covered with his sarape, appearing to attach no importance to the cold, which was, however, extremely severe in these elevated regions. So soon as it was free the animal, in spite of its fatigue, began browsing heartily on the grass, and thus reassured about his companion, the traveler began thinking about making arrangements for the night.

It was no easy task to find dry firewood at a spot almost denuded of trees, and whose soil, covered with snow, except in the clearing, allowed nothing to be distinguished; but the traveler was patient, he would not be beaten, and within an hour he had collected sufficient wood to feed through the night two such fires as he proposed kindling.

"Ah! ah," said the traveler, "the fire will do, so now for supper."

Then fumbling in the double pockets, which travelers always carry fastened to the saddle, he took from them all the requisite elements of a frugal meal; that is to say, pemmican and tassajo, or meat dried in the sun. At the moment when, after shutting up his alforjas, the traveler raised his head to lay his meat on the embers to broil, he stopped motionless, with widely opened mouth, and it was only through a mighty strength of will that he suppressed a cry of surprise and possibly of terror. Although no sound had revealed his presence, a man, leaning on a long rifle, was standing motionless before him and gazing at him with profound attention.

At once mastering the emotion he felt, the traveler carefully laid the tassajo on the embers, and then without removing his eye from this strange visitor, he stretched out his arm to grasp his rifle, while saying in a tone of the most perfect indifference:

"Whether friend or foe, you are welcome, mate. 'Tis a bitter night, so if you are cold, warm yourself, and if you are hungry, eat. When your nerves have regained their elasticity and your body its usual strength we will have a frank explanation, such as men of honor ought to have."

The stranger remained silent for some seconds; then, after shaking his head several times, said in a low and melancholy voice, as if speaking to himself:

"Can any human being really exist in whose heart a feeling of pity still remains?"

"Make the trial, mate," the traveler answered, "by accepting without hesitation my hearty offer. Two men who meet in the desert must be friends, unless private reasons make them implacable enemies. Sit down and eat."

This dialogue had been held in Spanish, a language the stranger spoke with a facility that proved his Mexican origin. He seemed to reflect for a moment and then instantly made up his mind.

"I accept," he said, "for your voice is too sympathizing and your glance too frank to deceive."

"That is the way to speak," the traveler said gaily. "Sit down and eat without further delay."

The stranger smiled sadly. The two men then attacked with no ordinary vigor the provisions placed before them. The general appearance of the stranger was most wretched and his ragged clothes scarce covered his bony, fleshless body; while his pale and sickly features were rendered more sad and gloomy by a thick, disordered beard that fell on his chest. His eyes, inflamed by fever and surrounded by black circles, glistened with a sombre fire. His weapons were in as bad a condition as his clothes, yet there was in him something grand and sympathetic which aroused not only pity but also respect for torture so proudly hidden and

so nobly endured. This man, in short, ere he fell so low, must have been great, either in virtue or in vice; but assuredly there was nothing common about him and a mighty heart beat in his bosom.

There was a rather long silence, during which the two men indulged in thought. The wind howled fiercely over their heads, the eddying snow was piling up around them and the echoes of the canyons seemed to utter notes of complaint. It was a horrible night. Beyond the circle of light produced by the flickering flame of the watch fire all was buried in dense gloom.

"Now that the ice is broken between us," the traveler said in a friendly voice, "for we have been sitting at the same fire and have eaten together—the moment has arrived, I fancy, for us to become thoroughly acquainted."

The stranger nodded his head silently. It was a gesture that could be interpreted affirmatively or negatively, at pleasure.

"For twenty years I have been traversing the prairies and great savannahs in every direction, and I shall probably continue to do so till an Indian bullet comes from some thicket to stop my wanderings forever. Towns are hateful to me. And now, mate, you know me as well as I do myself. I will merely add, in conclusion, that my name among the white men, my countrymen, is Valentine Guillois, and among the redskins, my adopted fathers, Koutenepi."

The speech, which the hunter had commenced in that clear voice and with that careless accent habitual to him, terminated involuntarily, under the pressure of the flood of saddened memories that rose from his heart, and when he concluded he let his head fall sadly on his chest with a sigh that resembled a sob. The stranger regarded him for a moment with an expression of gentle commiseration.

"You have suffered," he said; "suffered in your love, suffered in your friendship. Your history is that of all men in this world; who of us but at a given hour has felt his courage yield beneath the weight of grief? You are alone, friendless, abandoned by all, a voluntary exile, far from the men who only inspire you with hatred and contempt; you prefer the society of wild beasts less ferocious than they, but at any rate you live, while I am a dead man!"

The hunter started and looked in amazement at the speaker.

"I suppose you think me mad?" he continued with a melancholy smile; "reassure yourself, it is not so. I am in full possession of my senses, and my thoughts are clear and lucid. For all that, though, I repeat to you, I am dead, dead in the sight of my relations and friends, dead to the whole world in fine. Mine is a strange story, and one that you would recognize through one word, were you a Mexican or had traveled in certain regions of Mexico."

"Did I not tell you that for twenty years I have been traveling over every part of America?" the traveler replied.

"What is the word? Can you tell it me?"

"Why not? I am alluding to the name I bore while I was still a living man."

"What is that name?"

"It had acquired a certain celebrity, but I doubt whether it has remained in your memory."

"Who knows? Perhaps you are mistaken."

"Well, since you insist, learn, then, that I was called Martial el Tigero."

"You?" the astonished hunter exclaimed. "Why, that is impossible!"

"Of course so, since I am dead," the stranger answered, bitterly.

CHAPTER II.

The Tigero had let his head fall on his chest again, and seemed engaged with gloomy thoughts. The hunter, somewhat embarrassed by the turn the conversation had taken, and anxious to continue it, mechanically stirred up the fire.

"Stay," he said, presently, as he thrust back with his foot a few embers that had rolled out; "pardon me, sir, any insult which my exclamation may seem to have contained. You have mistaken my meaning, although we have never met, we are not such strangers as you suppose. I have known you for a long time."

The Tigero raised his head and looked at the hunter incredulously.

"You?" he muttered.

"Yes, I, and it will not be difficult to prove it to you."

"What good will it do?" he murmured; "what interest can I have in the fact of your knowing me?"

Valentine reflected for a moment, and then went on as follows:

"Some months ago, in consequence of circumstances unnecessary to remind you of, but which you doubtless bear in mind, you met at the colony of Guetzall a Frenchman and a Canadian hunter, with whom you eventually stood on most intimate terms."

"It is true," the Tigero replied, "the Frenchman to whom you allude is the Count de Prebois Crance. Oh! I shall never be able to discharge the debt of gratitude I have contracted with him."

A sad smile curled the hunter's lip. "You no longer owe him anything," he said.

"What do you mean?" the Tigero exclaimed eagerly; "surely the count cannot be dead!"

"He is dead, caballero. He was assassinated on the shores of Guaymas. His murderers laid him in his tomb, and

his blood, so treacherously shed, cries for vengeance."

The hunter hurriedly wiped away the tears he had been unable to repress while speaking of the count, and went on in a voice choked by the internal emotion which he strove in vain to conquer:

"But let us, for the present, leave this sad reminiscence to slumber in our hearts. The count was my friend, my dearest friend, more than a brother to me; he often spoke about you to me, and several times told me your gloomy history, which terminated in a frightful catastrophe."

The Tigero, in a few moments, began his narrative as follows:

"My friends must have fancied me dead. You are aware that I was attacked by Black Bear just as I believed I had saved friends. We fought on the edge of a pit and I was just about to finish him when the Comanche war cry was heard. Startled, I let the Indian go he rushed at Dona Anita, a member of the party, who, however, repulsed him. He fell backward in the direction of the pit, clutching me, and down we went together."

"Go on," the hunter said, "I am listening to you with the greatest attention."

"The Indian was desperately wounded and it was a corpse that dragged me down. The chief was the first to reach the bottom, and I fell upon his body which degenerated my fall. I cannot say how long I remained in this state, but I fancy my faint must have lasted two hours. When I opened my eyes again, I found myself in utter darkness. That did not trouble me greatly, as I had about me everything necessary to light a fire. Within a few moments I had a light, and was enabled to look about me. I was lying at the bottom of a species of tunnel, for the pit grew narrower in its descent. When I reached the floor of the cavern, I lay for more than half an hour on the sand, exhausted, panting, unable to make the slightest movement. Fortunately for me this terrible condition did not last long, for the refreshing air from without, reaching me through the passage of the cavern, recovered me. The ground around me was covered with dead bodies and there had, doubtless, been a terrible struggle. I sought in vain for the corpse of Dona Anita and her father. I breathed again, and hope re-entered my heart. Those for whom I had given my life were saved. This thought restored my courage and I felt quite a different man. I rose without any excessive difficulty, and, supporting myself on my rifle, went toward the mouth of the cavern, after removing my stock of provision, and taking two powder horns from stores I had previously cached. No words can describe the emotion I felt when, after a painful wall through the grotto, I at length reached the river bank, and saw the sun once more."

"An hour later, mounted on my good horse, I bent my steps toward houses. My journey was a long one, and when I reached Sonora the news I heard almost drove me mad. Don Sylva de Torres had been killed in the fight with the Apaches, as was probably his daughter. For a month I hovered between life and death. When hardly convalescent, I dragged myself to the house of the only man competent of giving me precise information. This man refused to recognize me, although I had been intimate with him for many years. When I told him my name he laughed in my face, and when I insisted, he had me expelled by his peons, telling me that I was mad that Don Martial was dead, and I an impostor. I went away with rage and despair in my heart. After this all my friends to whom I presented myself refused to recognize me, so thoroughly was the report of my death believed. All the efforts I attempted to dissipate this alarming mistake and prove the falsehood of the rumor were in vain, for too many persons were interested in it being true on account of my large estates; and also I suppose, through a fear of injuring the man to whom I first applied—the only living relation of the Torres family. What more need I tell you? Disgusted in every way, heartbroken with grief, and recognizing the inutilty of the efforts I had made I left the town, and, mounting my horse returned to the desert, seeking the most unknown spots and the most desolate regions in which to hide myself."

"Brother," Valentine said, gently, "you have forgotten to tell me the name of that influential person who had you turned out of his house, and treated you as an impostor."

"That is true," Don Martial answered. "His name is Don Sebastian Guerrero and he is military governor of the province of Sonora."

"Don Martial," cried the hunter, "you may thank heaven for decreeing that we should meet in the desert, in order that the punishment of this man should be complete."

(To be continued.)

Didn't Wish to Interrupt.

A husband was being arraigned in court in a suit brought by his wife for cruelty.

"I understand, sir," said the judge addressing the husband, "that one of the indignities you have showered upon your wife is that you have not spoken to her for three years. Is that so?"

"It is, your honor," quickly answered the husband.

"Well, sir," thundered the judge, "why didn't you speak to her, may I ask?"

"Simply," replied the husband, "because I didn't want to interrupt her."

Old Adage Comes Up.

Creditor (angrily)—Say, when are you going to pay the \$50 you owe me? Debtor (calmly)—That query reminds me of the old adage.

Creditor—What old adage?

Debtor—The one about a fool's ability to ask questions that a wise man is unable to answer.

AGRICULTURAL



The New Farmer.

The President's address last month at the Michigan State Agricultural College is so clear an expression of the conditions of modern farm life that a future historian may turn to it to read our times. All national leaders have told us that the farmer is the backbone of the nation. Washington and Jefferson were farmers, and good ones. The Illinois that bred Lincoln was one vast farm—Chicago was then only a small town. The President of to-day, not bred in farm life, although he has been a practical ranchman, is the first to express the unity between farm labor and all other kinds. The farmer to him is an expert mechanic and business man, whose problems are precisely those of the workman in the town, who depends for success on industrial and social co-operation. He must be an educated, aggressive participant in the work of life, competing with the farmer of Europe, inviting to his workshop of many acres the most skilful young men, learning from technical students and the practical experience of his neighbors the best that is known about his business. City workers, meeting in the friction of crowded life, have always learned their craft from one another. The farmer has until recently been in social and business isolation. Now he is a citizen of the world, often closer in point of time, to the nearest city than his grandfather was to the farmers of the adjacent town. The difference between the townsman and the countryman in educational and intellectual opportunities and in industrial responsibility is rapidly diminishing. That means the diminishing of the old real or fancied disadvantage of farm life which drove ambition and initiative to the city for opportunity to show themselves. The advantage remains and increases, for no matter how near together modern instruments of unity, the trolley and telephone, bring city and country, broad acres still remain broad, and produce the conditions of free and independent life.—Youth's Companion.

Weed Cutter and Gatherer.

Weeds are a constant source of trouble to the gardener, cropping up quicker than he can cut them down, and spoiling the appearance of the lawn. A Massachusetts man has invented an implement intended to help him solve the problem and lighten the labor of stopping and digging up the roots.

NEW WEED CUTTER

It is a combined weed cutter and gatherer, as shown in the accompanying illustration. The cutter is adjustable, and is operated by a lever which terminates close to the handle of the implement. The gatherer is placed in the rear of the cutter. In front of the cutter are a pair of small, light wheels. It will be seen that after bringing the implement close to the weed a pull on the lever is all that is required to operate the cutter. As the implement is pushed on to the next spot, the weed is gathered up by the rake and carried on.

The Best Hog to Raise.

It is not the large hog that pays, but the one that makes the largest quantity of pork in the shortest time and on the smallest amount of food. If a pig comes in during April he has nearly nine months during which to grow by the end of the year. If he is well bred, and from a good stock of hogs, he should easily be made to weigh 250 pounds during the nine months of his life.

Buckwheat is a profitable crop and thrives on sandy soil. It is what may be termed a summer grain crop, as the seed may be broadcasted in June and he crop harvested before frost. It is grown as a green manure crop, or for the grain. It provides an abundant forage for bees when in blossom, though some do not claim the honey herefrom to be of the highest quality. Being of rapid growth, buckwheat crowds the weeds and prevents them from growing, and as it shades the soil is regarded as one of the best crops that can be grown for that purpose.

To Destroy Insects.

The grayish black squash bug is difficult to manage. Gathering the eggs and the old bugs early in the spring is laborious but sure, if thoroughly done. The bugs will crawl upon a piece of board laid among the vines, and may be gathered and caught. The use of poisons will do no good in the case of the bugs, as they do not eat the leaves, but pass their beaks through the outside of the leaf to suck the juices, and will not consume any of the poison. In a series of experiments in the method of preventing the attacks of the squash vine borer the preventatives employed were paris green at the rate of half a teaspoonful to two gallons of water, corn-cobs dipped in coal tar, and the kerosene emulsion; the application of the paris green and the kerosene was repeated after every hard rain until September; the cobs were dipped in coal tar again once in three weeks. All three of the applications seemed to be beneficial, with perhaps a little something in favor of the corn-cobs as being cheapest and most convenient. The odor of the tar has no effect on the insects, but sometimes repels the moth, causing her to lay her eggs elsewhere.

To Give Pigs a Bath.

The unfortunate pig has always had the reputation of being the most uncleanly animal in existence. This is not entirely the fault of the pig, as his environment is generally accountable for his cleanliness. Pig raisers seldom attempt to give the pigs a bath, as it is almost impossible to catch and hold them, even for a minute. Nevertheless a Missouri stockman tackled the problem and succeeded in planning an apparatus by which the pigs are given a good washing before they are slaughtered. It should also prove equally as useful at other times. The construction and operation of the dipping tank, as it is called, will be plainly evident by a glance at the accompanying illustration. Resting on the ground is the water tank, which is connected to an inclined inlet and outlet. On the incline of the outlet are tiny stairs to assist the pig in ascending. In preparation for his "annual" the pig is forced down the incline into the water, and if his common sense does not direct him on the incline, he is prodded from behind with a bar. In fact, in time this device may become very fashionable with pigs, and it would not be surprising to hear of them taking their daily "dip" hereafter.

PIG BATH.



Testing Dairy Cows.

The Illinois station publishes a circular which emphasizes the importance of studying the production of individual cows, and contains records for one year of eighteen dairy herds in Illinois, including 221 cows.

The average year production was 5,619.99 pounds of milk and 226.63 pounds of butterfat.

The best herd averaged 350.17 pounds of butterfat and the poorest 142.05 pounds.

The best ten cows averaged 388.75 pounds of butterfat and the poorest ten 109.42 pounds.

It is believed that at least one-third of the cows in the ordinary herds are practically unprofitable.

A marked improvement was observed in herds where grading had been practiced.

It was found possible to remove five cows from a herd of ten and thereby increase the profit \$7.62 per head.

Care of the Hedge.

When the hedge plants begin to die out the cause may sometimes be traced to lack of plant food. There is considerable wood removed from hedge plants every year when the hedges are trimmed, and this annual loss cannot be sustained by the plants unless they are assisted. Apply wood ashes freely every fall.

"Wild Silk."

Among the peculiar products of Manchuria, which are becoming better known to the outside world since the opening of that country, is "wild silk," produced by an insect named *Antheraea pernyi*, which lives upon the Mongolian oak leaves in southeastern Manchuria. The annual production for a few years past is estimated at 15,000,000 cocoons. In Shantung this silk is manufactured into pongee.

The Belgians as potato eaters far outstrip the Irish.