

THE RED TRAIL

By GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER XVI.

We will leave the Mother Superior for a little while and return to the two young ladies. So soon as the abbess had withdrawn they drew closer together, Dona Helena taking the seat on the bench previously occupied by the abbess.

"My dear Anita," she said, "let me profit by the few minutes we are left alone to impart to you the contents of a letter I received this morning. It is most important."

"What do you mean, my dear Helena? Does the letter to which you refer interest me?"

"I cannot positively explain to you, but it will be sufficient for you to know that my brothers are very intimate with a countryman of ours who takes the greatest interest in you."

"That is strange," said Dona Anita, pausing. "I never knew but one Frenchman, and I have told you the sad story which was the cause of all the misfortunes that overwhelmed me. Who can this gentleman be who takes so lively an interest in me—do you know him?"

"Very slightly," the young lady answered, with a blush, "but sufficiently to be able to assure you that he possesses a noble heart. He does not know you personally; but," she added, as she drew a letter from her bosom, "shall I read a passage in my brother's letter which refers to you and him?"

"Pray read it, my dear Helena."

"Listen, then. 'Valentine begs me, dear sister, to ask you to tell your friend that the confessor she asked for will come to the convent this very day. Dona Anita must arm herself with courage, for she will learn to-day some news possessing immense importance.' This is underlined," the young lady added, pointing to the sentence with the tip of her rosy finger.

"That is strange," Dona Anita murmured. "Alas! what news can I learn?"

"Who knows?" said her young companion. "Before all, Dona Anita must be prudent; and however extraordinary what she hears may appear to her, she must be careful to conceal the effect produced by this revelation, for she must not forget that if she has devoted friends, she is closely watched by all-powerful enemies, and the slightest imprudence would hopelessly neutralize all efforts." The rest," the maiden added, with a smile, "only relates to myself."

At this moment the lay sister, who had already informed the Mother Superior of the arrival of Don Serapio de la Ronda, appeared.

"Senorita," she said, addressing Dona Helena, "our holy mother abbess wishes to speak to you both, without delay. She is waiting for you in her private cell in the company of a holy Franciscan monk."

They followed the lay sister, who led them to the Mother Superior's cell, and discreetly withdrew on reaching the door. "Come, my child," she said, as she held out her arms to Dona Anita; "come and thank heaven who has deigned to perform a miracle on your behalf."

The maiden stopped through involuntary emotion, and looked wildly around her. At a sign from the abbess the monk rose, and throwing back his hood at the same time as he fell on his knees before the maiden, he said to her in a voice faltering with emotion:

"Anita, do you recognize me?"

At the sound of this voice, whose sympathetic notes made all the fibers of her heart vibrate, the maiden suddenly drew herself back, tottered and fell, as she frantically shrieked out:

"Martial! oh, Martial!"

A sob burst from her overcharged bosom, and she burst into tears. She was saved, since the immense joy she had so suddenly experienced had not killed her. The Tigreiro, as weak as the woman he loved, could only find tears to express all his feelings.

"Anita," he cried, "I have found you again at last; no human power shall separate us again."

"Never, never!" she murmured, as she let her head fall on the young man's shoulder; "Martial, my beloved Martial, protect me, save me!"

"Oh, yes, I will save you; angel of my life," he exclaimed, looking up defiantly.

"Is that the promise you promised me?" the abbess said, interposing. "Remember the perils of every description that surround you, and the implacable foes who have sworn your destruction; look up in your heart these feelings which, if revealed before one of the countless spies who watch you, would cause your death and that, perhaps, of the poor girl you love."

"Thank you, madam," the Tigreiro replied; "thank you for having reminded me of the part I must play for a few days longer. If I forget it for a few seconds, subdued by the passion that devours my heart, I will henceforth adhere to it carefully. Do not fear lest I should imperil the happiness that is preparing for me; no, I will restrain my feelings and let myself be guided by the counsel of the sincere friends to whom I owe the moments of ineffable happiness I am now enjoying."

"I now understand," Dona Anita exclaimed, "the mysterious hints given me. Alas! misfortune made me suspicious; so forgive me, holy mother."

"I forgive you, my poor child," the abbess answered; "who could blame you?"

Dona Helena pressed her friend to her heart without saying a word.

"Oh, now our misfortunes are at an end, Anita," the Tigreiro exclaimed passionately; "we have friends who will not abandon us in the supreme struggle we are engaging in with our common enemy."

"Martial," the maiden replied, "I was weak because I was alone, but now that I know you live, are near me to support me, oh! if I were to fall dead at the feet of my persecutor, I would not be false to the oath I took to be yours alone. Believing you dead, I remained faithful to your memory; but now, if persecution assailed me, I should find the strength to endure it."

CHAPTER XVII.

General Guerrero was one of those powerful athletes who do not allow themselves to be overcome easily. His revolted pride restored his expiring courage; and since an implacable warfare was declared against him, he swore that he would fight to the end, whatever the consequences for him might be.

Moreover, two months had elapsed since his arrival in Mexico, and his enemy had not revealed his presence by one of those terrible blows which burst like a clap of thunder above his head.

The general gradually began supposing that the hunter had only wished to force him to abandon Sonora, and that, in despair of carrying out his plans advantageously in a city like Mexico, he was prudently keeping aloof, and if he had not completely renounced his vengeance, circumstances at any rate, independent of his will, compelled him to defer it.

The general so soon as he was settled in the capital of Mexico, organized a band of highly paid spies, who had orders to be constantly on watch, and inform him of Valentine's arrival.

Seven or eight days had elapsed. Gen. Guerrero, after a long conversation with Col. Don Jaime Lupo, Don Sirven and two or three others of his most faithful partisans—a conversation in which the final arrangements were made for the pronouncement which was to be attempted immediately—gave audience to two of his spies, who assured him that the person whose movements they were ordered to watch had not yet arrived in Mexico.

When the hour for going to the theater arrived, the general prepared to be present at an extraordinary performance, but at the moment when he was about to give orders for his carriage, the door of the room, in which he was sitting, opened, and a footman appeared on the threshold, with a respectful bow.

"What do you want?" the general asked.

"Excellency," the valet replied, "a caballero desires a few minutes' conversation with you."

"At this hour," the general said, looking at the clock, "impossible; anyone you know, Isidro?"

"No, excellency; he is a caballero whom I have not yet had the honor of seeing in the house."

"Hum," said the general, shaking his head thoughtfully, "is he a gentleman?"

"That I can assure your excellency; he told me he had a most important communication to make."

In the general's present position, as head of a conspiracy on the point of breaking out, no detail must be neglected, no communication despised, so, after reflecting a little, he continued:

"You ought to have told the gentleman that I could not receive him so late, and that he had better call again tomorrow."

"I told him so, excellency."

"And he insisted?"

"Several times, excellency."

"Well, do you know his name, at least?"

"When I asked the caballero for it, he said it was useless, as you would not know it."

"What a strange person," the general muttered to himself; "very good," he then added aloud, "lead the gentleman to the small mirror room, and I will be with him immediately."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The mirror room was an immense apartment, only separated from the covered gallery by two anterooms. It was furnished with princely luxury, and it was here that the general gave those banquets which are still talked about in the high Mexican circles.

This room, merely lighted by two lamps standing on a console, was at this moment plunged into a semi-obscurity, when compared with the other apartments in the mansion, which were full of lights.

A gentleman dressed in full black, and with the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor carelessly knotted in a buttonhole of his coat, was leaning his elbows on the console where the lamps stood, and seemed so lost in thought that when the general entered the room the sound of his steps, half subdued by the petates, did not reach the visitor's ears and he did not turn to receive him. Don Sebastian, after closing the door behind him, walked toward his visitor, attempting to recognize him.

"Don Valentine!" he said.

"Myself, General," replied the visitor, with an almost imperceptible smile and a profound bow.

"Pray sit down. May I offer you any refreshments?"

"I will not abuse your patience, General," said Valentine. "I have merely come to propose a bargain."

"A bargain?" Don Sebastian exclaimed

ed with surprise, "I do not understand you."

"Allow me, in the first place, to explain to you what our position to each other is."

"Go on, senor," the general remarked, with a smile.

"In two words, this is your position. In the first place, you wish to overthrow General R—, and have yourself proclaimed President."

"Ah, ah," said the general, with a forced laugh; "you must know, senor, that in our blessed country this ambition is constantly attributed to all officers. This accusation, therefore, is not very serious."

"It would not be so, if you limited yourself to mere wishes, possibly legitimate in the present state of the country, but, unfortunately, it is not so."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, general, that you are the head of a conspiracy; that this conspiracy, several times already a failure in Sonora, you have renewed in Mexico, under almost infallible conditions of success, and which, in my opinion, would succeed, had I not resolved on causing them to fail. I mean that, only a few days ago, your conspirators assembled in a velorio kept by a certain No Lusacho. Through the agency of Don Jaime Lupo, you divided among them two bags of gold, brought by you for them, and emptied in your presence. I mean that, after this distribution, the final arrangements were made, and the day was almost fixed for the pronouncement. Am I deceived, general, or do you now see that I am well informed, and that my spies are quite equal to yours, who were not even able to inform you of my arrival at the ciudad, where I have been for more than a week and you have not known a word about it?"

"I will imitate your frankness, senor. Of what use would it be to dissimulate with an enemy so well informed?"

"Let us for the present," Valentine went on, still calmly and coldly, "leave this conspiracy, to which we will revert presently, and pass to a more interesting subject. I believe, Senor Don Sebastian, you have a ward of the name of Dona Anita de Torres?"

The general started, but remained silent.

"Now," continued Valentine, "in consequence of a frightful catastrophe, this young lady became insane. But that does not prevent you from insisting on marrying her, in contempt of all law, divine and human, for the simple reason that she is enormously rich. It is true that the young lady does not love you, and never did love you; it is also true that her father intended her for another, and that other you insist on declaring to be dead, although he is alive. Unfortunately, one of my intimate friends, of whom you probably never heard, Senor Don Serapio de la Ronda, has heard this affair alluded to. I will tell you confidentially that Don Serapio is greatly respected, and has very considerable power. Don Serapio, I know not why, takes an interest in Dona Anita, and has made up his mind, whether you like it or not, to marry her to the man she loves."

"The villain is dead," the general exclaimed, furiously.

"You know to the contrary," Senor Valentine answered, "but to remove any doubts you might still happen to have, I will give you the proof, Don Martial," he said aloud, "come in, pray, and tell Gen. Guerrero yourself that you are not dead."

"Oh!" the general muttered furiously, "this man is a demon."

At this moment the door opened and a new personage entered the room.

(To be continued.)

SNOBISHNESS OF A BRIDE.

Substitutes the Card of a Society Leader for a Friend's Name.

Untold depths of snobishness among freeborn Americans seem to be revealed by a recent incident that is worthy a place in literature. A wealthy and cultured family of good ancestry, but who did not happen to figure as social leaders in a certain city, received invitations for a wedding among people whom they knew very well but whose social aspirations were rather more pronounced than their own.

The gift selected for the bride was a beautiful and expensive clock. It was bought at one of the best shops and the cards of the givers were left to be sent with the clock at a certain date. Time passed, the wedding came off but no acknowledgement reached the people who sent the clock. The clerk remembered shipping it with the cards, but nothing further was known until a mutual friend of the two families was moved to make inquiries of the bride's mother.

This lady seemed to be a little vague about it, but it eventually transpired that the ambitious young bride had removed the cards of the donors and had substituted that of a conspicuous society leader with whom she happened to have the merest calling acquaintance.—Harper's Weekly.

The Feminine Failing.

"Did you take a late train to New York?"

"I took several."

"Several?"

"Yes; the one running on the tracks and the ones packed in my wife's trunks of evening dresses."—Baltimore American.

Drawing the Line.

Timkins—Then you do not favor a central form of government?

Slmkins—I should say not. I married a telephone girl, you know.



If you have anything to say to a mule, say it to his face. — Chicago Daily News.

Anthropology Instructor—What effect has the climate on the Eskimo? Student—Cold feet.—Harvard Lampoon.

Officer—Seen anything of my baggage, sentry? Sentry—She's waitin' round the corner for ye, sir!—Regiment.

"Did I tell you the story of the old church bell?" "No. Let's hear it." "Sorry, but it can be tolled only on Sunday."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

He—So they got married and went off in their new motor car. She—And where did they spend their honeymoon? He—In the hospital.—London Tit-Bits.

Footie Lighte—Has your sister a strong part in the new piece? Miss Sue Brette—Why, yes; she has to carry around one of those heavy spears!—Yonkers Statesman.

Mrs. Kelly—"Tis another of thim soovyneer post cyards from me darter Maggie—the fourth this month, begorry! She sinds me wan every tolme she changes her place.—Puck.

Anxious Mother—I hope you are not thinking of marrying young Clarkson. He spends every cent he earns. Pretty Daughter—Oh, well, he doesn't earn very much.—Chicago Daily News.

"Do you ever talk back to your wife?" asked the solicitous friend. "Sometimes," answered Mr. Meekton; "a very little; just to show her that I have not gone to sleep."—Chicago Daily News.

Tommy—Does it make any difference if baby takes all his medicine at once? Baby's Mother (in horror)—Good heavens! Of course it does! Tommy—But it hasn't made any difference.—Punch.

Mrs. Wickwire—If you go first, you will wait for me on the other shore, won't you, dear? Mr. Wickwire—I suppose so. I never went anywhere yet without having to wait for you.—Illustrated Bits.

"Any accident in your motor trip through Italy and France, Morgan?" "Nothing worth mentioning. My wife was thrown out and bruised a bit, but the machine never got so much as a scratch."—Life.

"So Jack's been made secretary and treasurer of the company, has he?" "Yes. He has to copy all the letters, and take all the deposits to the bank, and, oh, Mary, I'm so proud of him."—Harper's Bazaar.

Church—I like to see a man who can forget an injury. Gotham—Well, there's that neighbor of mine; he's suing the railroad company for an injured leg, and every once in a while he forgets to limp!—Yonkers Statesman.

A kind old gentleman, seeing a small boy who was carrying a lot of newspapers under his arm, said: "Don't all those papers make you tired, my boy?" "Naw; I don't read 'em," replied the lad.—Canadian Courier.

"But to my mind," said the clerical tourist from the East, "a plurality of wives is unspeakable." "Huh," snorted the good-natured Mormon. "I never even heard of one wife that was unspeakable."—Philadelphia Press.

Young Lady—You are a wonderful master of the piano, I hear. Professor von Spieler (hired for the occasion)—I play accompaniments sometimes. "Accompaniments to singing?" "Accompaniments to conversations."—Tattler.

Walter—Mr. Brown's left his umbrella again, sir. I do believe he'd leave his head if it were loose. Robinson—I dare say you're right. I heard him say only yesterday he was going to Switzerland for his lungs.—Ally Sloper.

Church—See that man going along with his head in the air, sniffling with his nose? Gotham—Yes; I know him. Church—I suppose he believes in taking in the good, pure ozone? Gotham—No; he's hunting for an automobile garage, I believe.—Yonkers Statesman.

"I cracked a lawyer's house the other night," said the first burglar, disgustedly, "and the lawyer was there with a gun all ready for me. He advised me ter git out." "You got off easy," replied the other. "Not much I didn't! He charged me \$25 for de advice."—Philadelphia Press.

"In the summer," remarked the obese passenger with the big diamond stud, "people should eat nothing but cold food and drink the coldest water obtainable." "Ah!" exclaimed the railway detective, "you are evidently a doctor?" "Not me," replied the o. p. "I'm an ice dealer."—Chicago News.

Parson (on a bicycling trip)—Where is the other man who used to be here as keeper? Park Gatekeeper—He's dead, sir, Parson (with feeling)—Dead! Poor fellow! Joined the great majority, eh? Park Gatekeeper—Oh, I wouldn't like to say that, sir. He was a good enough man. — as far as I know. —Punch.

THE MOUND BUILDERS.

Burial in This Manner Practiced Up to Advent of Whites.

Mound builders of the Mississippi valley, in the manner of burial of their dead, were in close touch with those of the valley of the Ohio, and had something in common with them embracing the ideals displayed in the ancestor worship of the oriental, as well as antedating the custom of setting a granite shaft as a mark of respect over the graves of our departed at the present time.

Formerly mound builders were supposed to have become an extinct race, occupying the territory in which these numerous burial mounds are found, prior to its occupancy by the North American Indians, but in the light of more recent and more thorough investigation, writes Richard Hermann, in Records of the Past, it has been shown that burial of the dead in mounds has been practiced by the Muskawakies of the Foxes, who occupied the territory up to and including some of the time when the first white people settled in the upper Mississippi valley.

The former erroneous supposition came about principally through the uncommunicativeness of the Indian. When questioned concerning the mounds and their contents he would invariably act the stoic, for according to his ideas of ancestor worship the subject was held sacred and was not to be touched upon, nor were any of the belongings which had been buried with him ever in any manner to be used again by any living man. For this reason, when shown flint arrow or spearheads they would profess ignorance and insist that they were there before the arrival of the Indian.

The conical mounds, Mr. Hermann states, are generally individual or family burial mounds. The earth, sand and other material is carried there by the members of the tribe or the nearest of kin and filled around the body. Apparently the further the earth, sand or other material of which the mound is being built is brought or the more laborious the work of carrying it to the place of interment, the higher the respect paid to the dead. And in this respect they do not differ materially from the white people. We would disdain to erect over a grave in the middle west a shaft made from the limestone of the local Galena formation, but instead get a granite shaft shipped from Vermont or elsewhere, equally as great a distance and at as great an expense.

FAST IMPORTER OF RUBBER.

United States Purchaser of \$50,000,000 Worth in a Year.

The United States imported an aggregate of \$50,000,000 worth of crude India rubber the year 1906, according to a statement made public by the bureau of statistics of the department of commerce and labor. If to this is added the value of old and scrap rubber intended for remanufacture the total will considerably exceed that amount. In the ten months ending with October 53,500,000 pounds of India rubber, with a value of \$41,500,000, were imported. During the single month of October 5,000,000 worth of this product found its way into this country.

The enormous growth in the importations of India rubber into the United States, which consumes more than one-half of the world's production, is attributed to the popularity of the bicycle and automobile, coupled with the increased use of electricity in the daily affairs of the people. The importations of this product into this country have more than trebled during the last twelve years and show now a larger value in the import list than almost any other single product.

The statement shows that the value of India rubber importations has increased more than 200 per cent in a decade. The increase is attributed to the great demand in the various parts of the world for the use of this product.

The statement says the indications seem to justify the belief that the Philippine and Hawaiian islands are capable of producing large quantities of this article as a result of this government's establishment of nurseries in those possessions for the distribution of rubber plants for use of rubber plantations.

Possibilities of Cotton Stalks.

Some recent experiments have demonstrated that all grades of paper can be manufactured from cotton stalks, and in addition to this a variety of by-products, including alcohol, cotton fiber and smokeless powder, can be secured in commercial quantities. On the estimate that an acre of land producing a field of cotton will also produce one ton of stalks, 10,000,000 or 12,000,000 tons of raw material can be depended on annually. Some enthusiast claims that in addition to increasing the value of the South's annual cotton crop by \$10,000,000 the removal of the stalks from the fields early in the fall will mean the extermination of the boll weevil.—Farming.

Men enjoy doing anything they don't have to do for a living.