

THE RED

BY GUSTAVE AIMARD

TRAIL

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

Without speaking, the sister made the visitor a sign to follow her, and led them to the parlor where we have already taken the reader, and where the abbess was waiting for them.

"I had the honor, madam," M. Rallier said, with a respectful bow, "to send you yesterday by one of my servants, a letter, in which I informed you of this morning's visit."

"Yes, caballero," she at once answered, "I duly received this letter, and your sister Helena is ready to go away with you, whenever you express the wish. Still permit me to make one request of you."

"Speak, madam, and if I can be of any service to you, believe me, that I shall eagerly seize the opportunity."

"I know not, caballero, how to explain myself, for what I have to say to you is really so strange that I fear lest it should call up a smile to your lips. Although Dona Helena has only been a few months in our convent, she has made herself so beloved by all her companions, through her charming character, that her departure is an occasion of mourning for all of us."

"You render me very happy and very proud by speaking thus of my sister, madam."

"This praise is only the expression of the strictest truth, caballero. We are all really most grieved to see her leave us thus. Still I should not have ventured thus to make myself the interpreter of our regrets were there not a very strong reason that renders it almost a duty to speak to you."

"I am listening, madam, though I can guess beforehand what you are going to say to me."

She looked at him in surprise.

"You guess! Oh, it is impossible, señor," she exclaimed.

The Frenchman smiled.

"My sister Dona Helena, as is generally the case in convents, has chosen one of her companions, whom she loves more dearly than the others, and made her her intimate friend. Is such the case, madam?"

"How do you know it?"

He continued, with a smile:

"Now, this young lady, so beloved not only by Helena but by you, madam, and all your community, is a gentle, kind, loving girl, who, in consequence of a great misfortune, became insane, but whom your tender care has restored to reason. Still, you keep the latter fact a profound secret, before all from her guardian, who, not contented with having stripped her of her fortune, now insists of robbing her of her happiness by forcing her to marry him."

"Señor, señor," the abbess exclaimed, as she rose from her seat, with an astonishment blended with terror, "who are you that you know so many things of which I believed the whole world ignorant?"

"Who am I, madam? the brother of Helena, that is to say, a man in whom you can place the most entire confidence."

"Go on, caballero."

"The guardian of Dona Anita, either that he has suspicion, or for some other motive, wrote to you yesterday, ordering you to prepare her to marry him within twenty-four hours. Since the receipt of this fatal letter, Dona Anita has been plunged in the deepest despair, a despair further heightened by the sudden departure of my sister, the only friend in whose arms she can safely reveal her heart's secrets. Did you not receive a visit yesterday from Don Serapio de la Ronda?"

"Yes, that gentleman deigned to visit me a few moments before I received the fatal letter to which you have referred."

"Did not Don Serapio, on leaving you, say these words: 'Be kind enough to inform Dona Anita that a friend is watching over her; that this friend has already given her unequivocal proofs of the interest he takes in her happiness, and that, on the day when she again sees the Franciscan monk, to whom she confessed once before, all her misfortunes will be ended?'"

"Yes, Don Serapio did utter those words."

"Well, madam, I am sent to you, not only by him, but by another person, who is no less than the President of the Republic, not only to take away my sister, but also to ask you to deliver up to me Dona Anita, who will accompany her."

"Heaven is my witness, señor, that I would be delighted to do what you ask of me. Unhappily, it is not in my power; Dona Anita was entrusted to me by her sole relation, who is at the same time her guardian, and though he is unworthy of that title, and my heart bleeds in refusing you, it is to him alone that I am bound to deliver her."

"This objection, madam, the justice of which I fully appreciate, has been foreseen by the persons whose representative I am. Hence they consulted on the means to remove the scruples by entirely releasing you from responsibility. Father, give this lady the paper, of which you are the bearer."

Without uttering a word, Don Martial took from his pocket the blank signature Valentine had entrusted to him, and handed it to the abbess filled up.

"What is this?" she asked.

"Madam," the Frenchman answered, "that paper is a blank signature of the President of the Republic, who orders you to deliver Dona Anita into my hands."

"I see it," she said, sorrowfully; "unfortunately this blank signature, which

would everywhere else have the strength of the law, is powerless here. We only indirectly depend on the temporal power, but are completely subjugated to the spiritual power, and we can only receive orders from it."

The Tigre took a side glance, full of despair, at his companion, whose face was still smiling.

"What would you require, madam," he continued, "in order to consent to give up this unhappy young lady to me?"

"Alas, señor, it is not I who refuse compliance. Heaven is my witness that it is my greatest desire to see her escape from her persecutor."

"I am thoroughly convinced of that, madam; that is why, feeling persuaded of your good feeling towards your charge, I ask you to tell me what authority you require in order to give her up to me."

"I cannot, señor, allow Dona Anita to quit this convent without a perfectly regular order, signed by Monseigneur the Archbishop of Mexico, who alone has the right to command here, and whom I am compelled to obey."

"And if I had that order, madam, all your scruples would be removed?"

"Yes, all, señor."

"You would have no further difficulty in allowing Dona Anita to depart?"

"I would deliver her to you at once, señor."

"Since that is the case, madam, I will ask you to do so, for I have brought you that order."

"You have it?" she said, with undisguised delight.

"Here it is," he answered, as he took a paper from his pocketbook and handed it to her.

She opened it at once, and eagerly perused it.

"Oh, no," she continued, "Dona Anita is free, and I will—"

"One moment, madam," he interrupted her, "have you carefully read the order I had the honor of giving you?"

"Yes, sir."

"In that case be kind enough to allow the young ladies to put on secular clothing, and, as their departure must be kept secret, allow my carriage to enter the front courtyard."

"What must I say, though, to the young lady's guardian? I am going to see him to-day."

"Gain time; tell him that you may succeed in getting her to consent to the projected marriage, but, on the condition that it be deferred for eight and forty hours. In forty hours, madam, General Guerrero will not come to claim the hand of Dona Anita."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The abbess, who understood the importance of a speedy conclusion, left her visitors in the parlor, and, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, herself undertook to fetch the two young ladies, after giving a lay sister orders to call the carriage into the first courtyard.

The leave-taking was short, for there was no time to lose in vain compliments. The young ladies drew down their veils, and proceeded to the courtyard under guidance of the abbess. The carriage had been drawn as close as possible to the cloisters, and the court was entirely deserted, only the abbess, the sister porter, and a confidential nun witnessing the departure.

As the Frenchman opened the door of the carriage a piece of paper lying on the seat caught his eye. He seized it without being seen, and hid it in the hollow of his hand. After kissing the good abbess for the last time, the young ladies took the back seat, and Don Martial the front, as did M. Rallier, after previously whispering to the coachman, that is, to Curumilla, two Indian words, to which he replied by a sinister grin. Then, at a signal from the abbess, the convent gates were opened, and the carriage started at full speed, drawn by six powerful mules.

It was about seven o'clock in the morning. The fugitives—for we can give them no other name—galloped in silence for the first ten or fifteen minutes, when the Frenchman gently touched his companion's shoulder, and offered him the paper he had found in the carriage.

"Read," he said.

The paper only contained two words, hurriedly written in pencil:

"Take care."

"Oh, oh," the Tigre exclaimed, turning pale, "what does this mean?"

"It means that in spite of our precautions, or perhaps on account of them, for in these confounded affairs a man never knows how to act in order to deceive the persons he fears, we are discovered, and probably have spies at our heels."

"And what will become of the young ladies in the event of a dispute?"

"In the event of a fight, you mean, for there will be an obstinate one, I foretell. Well, we will defend them as well as we can."

"I know that; but suppose we are killed?"

"Ah! there is that chance; but I never think of that until after the event."

Dona Anita hid her head in her friend's bosom.

"Reassure yourself, señorita," the Frenchman said, "and, above all, be silent, for the sound of your voice might be recognized, and change into certainty what may still be only a suspicion. Besides, remember that if you have enemies you have also friends, since they took the precaution to warn us. Now, in all probability, this unknown offer of advice

will not have stopped there but thought of the means to come to our assistance in the most effectual manner."

General Don Sebastian Guerrero had organized a band of spies composed of lepers and scoundrels, who, however, possessed acknowledged cleverness and skill, and if Valentine had escaped their surveillance and foiled their machinations, it was solely through the habits which he contracted during a lengthened life in the prairies, and which had become an intuition with him, so far did he carry the quality of scenting and unmasking an enemy, whatever might be the countenance he borrowed.

The Convent of the Bernardines had naturally become for some days past the center of the surveillance, as it was the spying headquarters, of Don Sebastian's agents. The arrival of a carriage with closed blinds at the convent at once gave the alarm; and though M. Rallier was not personally known, the fact of his being a Frenchman was sufficient to rouse suspicions.

While the Frenchman and the monk were conversing with the abbess, a leproso pretended to hurt himself, and was conveyed by two of his acolytes to the convent gate, and the good-hearted porter had not refused him admission, but, on the contrary, had eagerly given him all the assistance his condition seemed to require.

While the leproso was gradually regaining his senses, his comrades asked questions with that caution still peculiar to their Mexican nature. The sister-porter was a worthy woman, endowed with a very small stock of brains, and fond of talking. On finding this opportunity to indulge in her favorite employment, she was easily led on, and, almost of her own accord, told all she knew, not suspecting the harm she did.

When the three leproso had drawn all they could out of the sister-porter, they hastened to leave the convent. Just as they emerged into the street, they found themselves face to face with No Carnero, the general's capataz, whom his master had sent on a tour of discovery. They ran up to him, and in a few words told him what had happened.

This was grave, and the capataz trembled inwardly at the revelation, for he understood the terrible danger by which his friends were menaced. But Carnero was a clever man, and at once made up his mind to his course of action.

He greatly praised the leproso for the skill they had displayed in discovering the secret, put some piastres into their hands, and sent them off to the general, with the recommendation, which was most necessary, to make all possible speed. Then, in his turn, he began prowling round the convent, and especially the carriage, which Curumilla made no difficulty in letting him approach, for the reader will doubtless have guessed that the animosity the Indian had on several occasions evinced for the capataz, was pretended, and that they were perfectly good friends when nobody could see or hear them.

The capataz skillfully profited by the confusion created in the crowd by the carriage entering the convent, to throw in, unperceived, the paper M. Rallier had found. Certain now that his friends would be on their guard, he went off in his turn, after recommending the spies he left before the convent to keep up a good watch, and walked in the direction of the Plaza Mayor.

At the corner of the Calle de Plateros he saw a man standing in front of a pulqueria. The capataz entered the pulqueria and let fall a piastre which rolled to the foot of the man standing in the doorway. The latter stooped, picked up the coin, and restored it to its owner, and the capataz walked out, doubtless satisfied and cautiously continued his way. On reaching the plaza again, the man of the pulqueria, who was probably going the same road as himself, was at his heels.

"Belhumeur?" the capataz asked in a low voice, without turning round.

"Eh?" the other answered in the same key.

"The general knows the affair at the convent; if you do not make haste, Don Martial, Don Antonio and the two ladies will be attacked on the road while going to the quinta; warn your friend, for there is not a moment to lose."

When he turned back, Belhumeur had disappeared; the Canadian with his characteristic agility was already running in the direction of Valentine's house. As for the capataz, as he was in no particular hurry, he quietly walked back to the general's, where he found his master in a furious passion with all his people, and more particularly with himself.

By an accident, too portentous not to have been arranged beforehand, not one of his horses could be mounted; three were foundered, four others had been bled, and the last three were without shoes. In the midst of this the capataz arrived with a look of alarm, which only heightened his master's passion. Carnero prudently allowed the general's fury to grow a little calm, and then answered him.

He proved to him in the first place that he would commit a serious act of imprudence by himself starting in pursuit of the fugitives in the present state of affairs, and especially on the eve of a pronouncement which was about to decide his fortunes. Then he remarked to him that six peons, commanded by a resolute man, would be sufficient to conquer two men probably badly armed, and, in addition, shut up in a carriage with two ladies, whom they would not expose to the risk of being killed. These reasons being good, the general listened and yielded to them.

"Very good," he said; "Carnero, you are one of my oldest servants, and to you I entrust the duty of bringing back my niece."

(To be continued.)

China has ten railways in operation, with a total mileage of 2,235, or about one-tenth that of Great Britain.

FOOD FOR CAMPERS.

Provisions Which Will Be Found Suitable for Outings.

The inexperienced camper is always perplexed as to what to carry in the way of food supplies, says the New York Tribune. It is all-important that those selected should not only be able to bear transportation well but should possess some keeping qualities and be of an appetizing nature. Preserves and similar articles which must be carried in glass jars are not to be recommended except in small quantities owing to the extreme care needed in packing and the danger of breakage. Cucumber and similar pickles are for this reason preferable to chow-chow, and liquid catchups. Fresh, thick-skinned fruits, such as bananas, oranges and figs, are better than preserves or the more perishable fruits. In the way of drinks, raspberry shrub is superior to root beer and such beverages, because it is made in concentrated form and a few quart bottles will go a long way, as only a tablespoonful or so is used to every glass of ice water. Lemonade, of course, can be made whenever needed if lemons are carried. Sweet chocolates, raisins and nuts are always desirable additions to the outfit. Baked beans and cabbage salad are familiar old stand-bys, because they will keep rather well and can be packed in jugs. An onion buried in a dish of beans before baking is thought by some housewives to improve them.

If the cabbage for salad is put through a meat chopper the chopping will be hastened and the salad improved.

A boiled ham will have a more savory flavor if, after boiling, it is sprinkled with bread crumbs and a tablespoonful or two of sugar, according to the size of the ham, and baked twenty minutes. Care should be taken to boil it or, more correctly, simmer it long enough, at least five or six hours, according to size, adding to the water a few spoonfuls of molasses. If the ham is quite salty it should be soaked fully twenty-four hours before cooking.

Potted meats are always welcome when one is camping. When chicken is potted a cup of minced ham is sometimes added to enhance the flavor—one cup to every quart of chicken. Veal and tongue are often put up together, half and half, in layers. Veal and ham may be used in the same way.

Father of the Indian Army.

In regard to a recently proposed memorial to Lord Clive, the popular hero of India, it has been suggested that justice should be done by recalling the services of Clive's great predecessor, Gen. Stringer Lawrence, who by his heroic campaign against the French in the East, became the real founder of English supremacy in India. Lawrence had no brilliant essayist to publish his deeds, as Clive had in Macaulay. A monument to the great soldier stands in Westminster, but his service to his country is almost forgotten.

When General Lawrence, then a major, was sent to India in 1748, he found the army at his command to consist of a few companies of British soldiers and a small force of natives, hastily recruited and armed with old matchlocks. With this inadequate material as a nucleus, he built an army which performed the splendid victories by which England became undisputed mistress of India.

The most brilliant and decisive of Lawrence's triumphs was that of Golden Rock. The French, advancing on Trichinopoly, determined to drive the English, who held the Rock, into the city. The Rock was defended by a weak force of sepoys. Lawrence's army was on the plain.

The French made an assault and captured the Rock. Lawrence, with a hastily collected force of not quite a thousand of English and sepoy men, stood little apparent chance against a vastly superior force of a triumphant enemy. He hesitated but a moment, however.

"It is better to die advancing than retreating," he declared.

The attack on the Rock was made with such vigor and impetuosity that the astonished and bewildered French were driven out in panic at the very moment they were exulting over victory. A British officer says of this feat of arms:

"Nothing finer was ever performed in any part of the world than this assault, by a handful of grenadiers, upon Golden Rock, held by the enemy who had just captured it, and whose army was formed at the base. It was one of those deeds of heroism which deserve to be recorded in the archives of national history, never to be suffered, as in this case, to fall into oblivion."

Still Another Theory.

"Father," said little Rollo, "what is evolution?"

"Evolution, my son, is a sort of apology which man has invented for displaying so many of the traits of the lower animals."—Washington Star.

NAPPING ON THE FLOOR.

Knowledge of How to Rest Is Necessary.

A knowledge of how to rest will be a saving of many ill attacks in hot weather. One might think that each individual would know the best way for her to find repose, but I have seen so many women fling themselves down to "rest" in summer, or winter for that matter, with all their clothes on, necks bound in tight collars and closely corseted, that I realize comparatively few have even a notion of how to relax body and mind. Resting is a science, and to do it so that one will be refreshed, it is necessary to completely relax. There will be little or no renewal of strength if the nerves and brain work like mad during the "rest."

Three things essential to repose are light garments (one is enough during this season), quiet and a subdued light, says the New York Evening Telegram. Lacking any one of these much good is lost, and twenty minutes used in this way are worth hours of lying down without relaxing.

A woman who is at home all day may take such a rest at any time that she chooses to arrange her household affairs for that purpose, but for a business woman it is different. Yet she needs it, and I wish all would try using half an hour in this way when they come home from a day downtown, particularly while the summer heat has been exhausting.

To begin the "rest," first remove all the clothes one has worn during the day, and if possible take a shower bath. Failing this, a sponging in cold water (a real sponging, not a bath) is sufficient, and then don a thin dressing gown.

No matter how small the apartment, there must be one room into which a person can go to be quiet, and there she should lie herself. If a woman can lie on the floor comfortably she will find this the coolest place in the house. For this a sheet should be spread, and she will want a couple of pillows in nice, cool cases.

TALKS ON ADVERTISING

A new argument in favor of newspaper advertising comes from Des Moines by way of Waverly, Iowa. The editor of the Waverly Democrat, a weekly paper with no special interest in the fortunes of its daily neighbors, reports an illuminating conversation with a successful Des Moines merchant who said, speaking of his advertisements:

"They pay in two ways. They bring customers to our store, and they keep down our expense for clerk hire fully one-half, for the ads make it possible for one clerk to do the work of two. They prime the customers with the information that they would otherwise have to get from the clerk at the expense of his time."

"Having read our announcements, in four cases out of five, a customer comes into our store knowing just what he wants and just what he will have to pay, and all the clerk has to do is to produce the goods and get the money for them. In a store that advertises properly there are very few people who come in 'just to look around,' and as a consequence business moves easily and briskly."

The merchant went on to say that several years ago, when one of his partners thought that the advertising bills were too high, the firm dropped its Saturday ads, just to see what would happen.

There was the usual rush Monday, and the partner who wanted to cut down the advertising smiled triumphantly. But he laughs best who laughs last. The man who tells the story says that when night came everybody in the shop was worn out. Heads of departments said they must have more help.

Yet the sales were the lightest of any Monday for a year. An unusual number of buyers did not know exactly what they wanted and the clerks' time had been consumed in helping them make their conclusions. On other Mondays their conclusions had been made in advance by reading the ads.

No doubt merchants in other towns could give similar testimony. A force in business that at once increases sales and keeps expenses down is too important to be ignored.

Not Qualified.

No, sub, Harris isn't ready for de Kingdom yit," declared Uncle Peter. "Hit don't gib yo' wings ter hab yo' name on de fly-leaf ob de Bible."

No matter how much a man's funeral costs it saves him a lot of money afterward.

A man seldom does much good in the world until he stops trying to do harm.