

THE RED TRAIL

By GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER III.

Don Martial gazed at the hunter in amazement.

"What do you mean?" he asked him. "I don't understand you."

"You will soon do so, my friend," said Valentine. "How long have you been roaming about?"

"Nearly two months."

"In that case you are well acquainted, I presume, with these mountains?"

"There is not a tree or a rock whose exact position I cannot tell, nor a wild beast trail which I have not followed."

"Good; are we far from a spot called the Fort of the Chichimeques?"

"I know the place to which you refer, and have often camped there on stormy nights, because there is a deep cavern, excavated by human hands, and divided into several passages, every turning of which I know."

"I was not aware of the existence of this grotto," the hunter said, with a glad start, "and I thank you for having told me of it. Are we any great distance from this terrace?"

"In a straight line, not more than five or six miles, and, if it were day, I could show it to you, but as we must ride round to reach the caravan road, we have about three hours' ride before us."

"That is a trifle, for I was afraid I had lost my way in these mountains, which are strange to me."

While saying this, Valentine had risen to explore the clearing. The storm had ceased, the wind had swept away the clouds, the deep blue sky was studded with brilliant stars, and the moon profusely shed its rays.

"This is a magnificent night," the hunter said. "It is past midnight, and I feel no inclination to sleep. Are you fatigued?"

"I am never so," the Tigero answered with a smile.

"In that case, what do you think of a ride in this magnificent moonlight? Bravo! that is what I call speaking. We will go, if you have no objection, as far as the Fort of the Chichimeques."

"I was about to propose it; and, as we ride along, you will tell me in your turn what motive compelled you to come to these unknown regions."

"As for that," the hunter said, with a smile, "I cannot satisfy you; at any rate not for the present. But be easy, I will not put your patience to too long a trial."

"This happy meeting has already made a different man of me," the Tigero said, as he rose.

The hunter laid his hand on his shoulder. "One moment," he said to him; "before leaving this bivouac let us clearly agree as to our facts, so as to avoid any future misunderstanding."

"Be it so," Don Martial answered. "Let us make a compact in the Indian fashion."

"Well said, my friend," Valentine remarked, as he drew his knife from his belt. "Here is my navaja, brother; may it serve you as it has done me to avenge your wrongs and mine."

"I receive it in the face of that heaven which I call as witness of the purity of my intentions. Take mine in exchange, and one-half my powder and bullets, brother."

"I accept it as a thing belonging to me, and here is half my ammunition for you; henceforth we cannot fire at one another, all is in common between us. My horse is yours."

"Mine belongs to you, and in a few moments I will place it at your service."

Then the two men, leaning shoulder to shoulder, with clasped hands, eyes fixed on heaven, and outstretched arm, uttered together the following words:

"I take heaven to witness that of my own free will, and without reservation, I take as my friend and brother the man whose hand is at this moment pressing mine. I will help him in everything he asks of me, without hope of reward, ready by day and night to answer his first signal, without hesitation, and without reproach, even if he asked for my life."

There was something grand and solemn in this simple act, performed by these two powerful men beneath the pallid moonbeams, and in the heart of the desert, alone, far from all human society. After repeating the words of the oath they embraced and finally shook hands.

"Now let us be off, brother," Valentine said; "I confide in you as in myself; we shall succeed in triumphing over our enemies. By the bye, I must warn you, brother, that if you are not mistaken, and we are really following the road to the Fort of the Chichimeques, we shall probably meet several persons there; they are friends of mine, with whom I have an appointment and I will introduce them to you."

They set out again, still following the windings of the track, which gradually grew steeper; and, after a very zigzag course, reached the terrace half an hour later.

"This is certainly the place," the hunter exclaimed.

"But your friends—?" the Tigero asked.

The hunter without speaking discharged his gun, and at the sound three men appeared, though it was impossible to say whence they came. They were Belhumeur, Black Elk and Eagle-head.

CHAPTER IV.

About five or six leagues at the most from the spot where Valentine and the Tigero met, a caravan, composed of some ten persons, had halted on the same night and almost at the same moment as the

hunter in a narrow valley.

The caravan was lodged on the bank of a running stream, the mules had been unloaded, a tent raised, fires lighted, and when the animals were hobbled, the travelers began to make preparations for their supper.

One of the travelers appeared to belong to the highest class. The rest were only servants or Indian peons. Still the dress of this person was most simple, but his stiff manner, his imposing demeanor and haughty air, evidenced the man long accustomed to give orders without admitting refusal. He had passed his fiftieth year; he was tall, well built, and his movements were extremely elegant. His broad forehead, his black eyes large and flashing, his long gray moustaches, and his short hair, gave him a military appearance, which his harsh, quick way of speaking did not contradict.

Among the peons two men more especially attracted attention. One was a redskin, the other a half-breed, with a crafty, leering manner, who, for some reason or another, stood on most familiar terms with his master; his comrades called him No Carnero, and at times gave him the title of Capataz.

No Carnero was the wit of the caravan, the funny fellow—ever ready to laugh and joke. The redskin was a tall, thin, dry man, with angular features and gloomy and sad face, illumined by two black eyes deeply set in their orbit. Like most Indians, it was impossible to form any opinion as to his age, for his hair was black as the raven's wing, and his parchment skin had not a single wrinkle.

He had engaged at Santa Fe to act as guide to the caravan, and, with the exception of his obstinate silence, there was every reason to be satisfied with him. The peons called him The Indian, or sometimes Jose—a mocking term, employed in Mexico to designate the Indios mansos; but the redskin appeared as insensible to compliments as to jokes, and continued coldly to carry out the task he had imposed on himself. When supper was ended the master turned to the capataz.

"Carnero," he said to him, "though in these remote regions, we have but little to fear, still do not fail to place sentries."

"I have warned two men, mi amo," the capataz replied; "moreover, I intend to make my rounds to-night; eh, Jose," he added, "are you certain you are not mistaken, and that you really lifted a trail? Do you know to what nation the sign you discovered belongs?"

"Crow," the redskin answered hoarsely.

"Carai!" the master exclaimed, "if they are Crows we shall do well to be on our guard."

"None sense!" Carnero remarked with a grin of derision. "Indians tell as many lies as old women."

The Indian's eyes flashed; without deigning to reply he drew a moccasin from his breast, and threw it so adroitly at the capataz as to strike him across the face. Furious at the insult so suddenly offered by a man whom he always considered inoffensive, the half-breed uttered a yell of rage, and rushed knife in hand on the Indian.

But the latter had not taken his eye off him, and by a slight movement he avoided the desperate attack of the capataz; then, drawing himself up, he caught him round the waist, raised him from the ground as easily as he would have done a child, and hurled him into the fire, where he writhed for a moment with cries of pain and impotent passion. When he at length got out of the fire, half scorched, he did not think of renewing the attack, but sat down, directing savage glances at his adversary, like a turpentine punished by a mastiff.

"The Indian is right," said the master coldly, "this moccasin bears the mark of the Crow nation. My poor Carnero, you must put up with it, for though the punishment you received was severe, I am forced to allow that it was deserved."

"The dog will pay me for it with his traitor face," the capataz growled. "I am no man if I do not leave his body as food for the crows he discovers so cleverly."

"My poor lad," his master continued, with a jeer, "you had better forget this affair, which I allow might be disagreeable to your self-esteem; for I fancy you would not be the gainer by recommencing the quarrel."

The capataz did not answer, but looked round to select one on whom he could vent his spite, without incurring risk; but the peons were on their guard, and offered him no chance. He then made a signal to two men to follow him, and left the circle grumbling.

The head of the caravan remained for a few moments plunged in serious thought; he then withdrew beneath his tent, the curtain of which fell behind him; and the peons lay down on the ground, one after the other, with their feet to the fire, carefully wrapped up in their sarapes, and fell asleep.

The Indian then looked searchingly around him, and, rising negligently, went slowly to crouch at the foot of a tree, though not before he had taken the precaution of wrapping himself in his buffalo robe.

Ere long, with the exception of the sentries leaning on their guns and motionless as statues, all the travelers were plunged in deep sleep.

An hour elapsed ere anything disturbed the silence that prevailed in the camp. All at once a singular thing happened.

The buffalo robe, under which the Indian was sheltered, gently rose with an almost imperceptible movement, and the redskin's face appeared, darting glances of fire into the gloom. In a moment the guide raised himself slowly along the trunk of the tree against which he had been lying, embraced it with his feet and hands, and with undulating movements resembling those of reptiles, left the ground, and raised himself to the first branches, among which he disappeared.

This ascent was executed with such well-calculated slowness that it had not produced the slightest sound. Moreover, the buffalo robe left at the foot of the tree so well retained its primitive folds, that it was impossible to discover, without touching it, that the man it sheltered had left it.

Before selecting as his resting place the foot of the tree in which he was now concealed, the guide had assured himself that this tree, which was very high and leafy, was joined at about two-thirds of its height by other trees.

After a few minutes' hesitation, the guide drew in his belt, placed his knife between his teeth, and with a lightness of movement that would have done honor to a monkey, he commenced literally hopping from one tree to another, hanging by his arms, and clinging to the creepers, waking up, as he passed, the birds, which flew away in alarm.

This strange journey lasted about three-quarters of an hour. At length the guide stopped, looked attentively around him, and gliding down the trunk, reached the ground. The spot where he now found himself was a rather spacious clearing, in the center of which blazed an enormous fire, serving to warm forty or fifty redskins, completely armed and equipped for war.

This detachment of redskins was certainly on the war trail, or at any rate on a serious expedition, for they had with them neither dogs nor squaws. In spite of the slight care with which the Indians were wont to guard themselves at night, the free and deliberate manner in which the guide entered their encampment proved that he was expected by these warriors, who evinced no surprise at seeing him, but, on the contrary, invited him with hospitable gestures to take a seat at their fire. The guide sat down silently, the chief standing by his side. This chief was still a young man, his marked features displaying the utmost craft and boldness. After a rather lengthened interval, doubtless expressly granted the visitor to let him draw breath and warm himself, the chief bowed to him and addressed him deferentially:

"My father is welcome among his sons; they were impatiently awaiting his arrival."

The guide responded to this compliment with a grimace.

"Our scouts," the chief continued, "have carefully examined the encampment of the Yoris, and the warriors of the Jester are ready. Is my father Curumilla satisfied?"

Curumilla laid his right hand on his chest and uttered with a guttural accent, "Ugh!" which was with him a mark of the greatest joy.

The Jester and his warriors had been too long acquainted with Curumilla for his silence to seem strange; hence they yielded to his mania, and giving up the hope of getting a syllable out of his closed lips, began a conversation in signs.

The redskins have two languages, the written and the sign language. The latter which has attained high perfection, and which all understand, is usually employed when hunting, or on expeditions, when a word pronounced even in a low voice may reveal the presence of an ambuscade to the enemy, whether men or beasts.

It would have been interesting for any stranger who had been present at this interview to see with what rapidity the gestures and signs were exchanged between these men, so strangely lit up by the ruddy glow of the fire.

At length this silent council terminated. Curumilla raised his hand to heaven, and pointed to the stars, which were beginning to grow dim, and then left the circle. The redskins respectfully followed him to the foot of the tree by the aid of which he had entered their camp. When he reached it he turned round.

"May the Wacodah protect my father!" the Jester then said. "His sons have thoroughly understood his intentions, and will follow them literally. The great pale hunter will have joined his friends by this hour and he is doubtless awaiting us."

"It is good," Curumilla answered, and saluting for the last time the warriors, who bowed respectfully before him, the chief seized the creeping plants, and raising himself by the strength of his wrists, in a second he reached the branches and disappeared.

The journey the Indian had made was very important and needed to be so for him to run such great risks in order to have an interview at this hour of the night with the redskins.

The chief recommenced his aerial trip with the same lightness and the same good fortune. After a lapse of time comparatively much shorter than that which he had previously employed, he reached the camp of the white men. The same silence prevailed in its interior; the sentinels were still motionless at their post and the watch fires were beginning to expire.

The chief assured himself that no eye was fixed on him—that no spy was on the watch; and, feeling certain of not being perceived, he slid silently down the tree and resumed the place beneath the buffalo robe which he was supposed not to have left during the night.

At the moment when, after taking a final glance around, the Indian chief disappeared beneath his robe, the capataz, who was lying athwart the entrance of the hut, gently raised his head and looked with strange fixity of glance at the place occupied by the redskin.

(To be continued.)

NEWEST BREAKFAST CRAZE.

New York Society Abandons Luncheon for 12 o'clock Repast.

Because luncheon parties have grown to such complications, New York society, in its craze for more simple things, is abandoning the luncheons, in so far as possible, and substituting the breakfast, says What-To-Eat. This is an easy and economical way of honoring a special guest or paying off a social indebtedness. The breakfast is served at 12 o'clock and everything about it is simple and informal as can be made.

Children suggested this idea, which is proving such a boon to New York's social circles. The grown people adopted the style of children's luncheons, such as were recently served by the president's daughter and her chums at the White House, only they made slight modifications and changed the name of the affair to "breakfast." The luncheon in question was in honor of the children's teacher.

It was a room made sunny by an almost unlimited quantity of yellow chrysanthemums, and the table decorations were carried out in the same color. Yellow shades decked the candelabra and round these were massed more chrysanthemums, from which maidenhair ferns extended nearly to the edge of the oval table, which is the shape in favor now.

Just reading the menu suggests the young company to be served, for it included grape fruit, tomato bouillon, lamb chops and peas, chicken salad and cheese balls, vanilla ice cream, hot chocolate, bonbons and almonds. Of course, other kinds of flowers may be substituted for the chrysanthemums.

As a matter of fact more mature women are beginning to think they don't care so much for the ladies' luncheon, but it has grown to be a comfortable sort of a dinner, and served anywhere from 1 to 2 o'clock it spoils the appetite entirely for the regular 6 o'clock dinner. If it seems best to honor a special guest at a mid-day feast, or to pay off social indebtedness by a luncheon party, it is a trifle wiser to call it a breakfast and have it served an hour earlier.

ONE HEIRESS WON'T MARRY.

Romance May Have Caused Mrs. Leter's Niece to Renounce the World.

It will come as a shock to many fortune hunters in this city and Washington to hear that Miss Margaret Prettyman has decided to renounce the world and become a member of a nursing sisterhood of the episcopal church, says the New York Press. The news comes from London, where Miss Prettyman is the guest of Lady Collin Campbell, one of the lucky Leter girls. Miss Prettyman is the niece of Mrs. Levi Z. Leter and was introduced by Mrs. Leter just three years ago. The young woman is possessed of a large fortune in her own right and it has been said her aunt's interest would find practical manifestation in a comfortable legacy. No sooner had Miss Prettyman come out than she was the object of attention from those young men whose footing in society largely depends upon a profitable marriage.

The winning of Miss Prettyman would have meant more than mere mercenary gain. It would have meant an open door not only to exclusive social circles in this country, but in England and India as well. Several times the engagement of the young woman was reported, but in each instance there followed a speedy denial. Miss Prettyman always seemed attracted by the butterfly life and the few intimate friends who have been let into the secret have been busy trying to reason out the cause of her unexpected decision. The one explanation most favored is that sorrow has pulled hard on the heartstrings of the heiress. Although rumor never whispered of an engagement between her and a millionaire well known in Washington, New York and London, it is said that she received with something more than regret the word of his recent marriage. In fact, there was an inclination by many of her friends to favor the report she went to London rather suddenly to recover from shock over the news of the engagement.

His Idea of a Good Time.

The retired contractor sighed as he got into his dress suit and thought of the elaborate dinner and the opera that were to come.

"Some day," he said, "I'll get real des'prit, an' then do you know what I'll do?"

"Something terrible, no doubt," replied his ambitious wife.

"I s'pose it wouldn't look well in print," he admitted, "but I can't help that. What I'll do will be to throw away these high-priced cigars, put on some old clothes, go out an' come in by the back way an' smoke a quarter pound of cut-up chewin' tobacco in a cob pipe while I'm talkin' things over with the coachman in the barn."—The Bohemian.

A woman can usually find some fault with the way every other woman conducts her kitchen.

Science AND INVENTION

Kite control within certain prescribed limits has been accomplished in France by means of a "deviator," and this makes the kite available for life-saving purposes. A severe test was given to the device some time ago at Royan, on the east coast of France, and wonderful things were accomplished.

Skates have been invented, says the Scientific American, which will fold perfectly flat and to such small dimensions that they can be carried in the pocket. A leather wallet with two pockets is supplied with each pair, and when closed the package is three-fourths of an inch wide, 1 inch thick and the length of the skates.

Even the nursery demands automobile thrills. A French toy of recent design consists of an automobile which, with chauffeur and mechanic, dashes along at a high rate of speed for a distance and then the thing suddenly collapses. The two men are thrown out and the machine turns over and piles up like a real wreck, to the delight of the children.

Among fishes that are able to live a considerable time out of water and that habitually invade the land is the "climbing perch," which can remain for days out of water, and which is even said to climb palm trees, whence its name. The "hopping goby," which leaves the sea to skip along the shore in chase of insects and sand-haunting mollusks, has an elbow joint in its fore fin which thus serves for a leg. Its gill cavity is enlarged so that it can contain considerable air. It is believed, however, that respiration is aided by the thin skin of the tail fin. In climbing perch the gill cavity contains a special organ which seems to play the part of a lung. Landcrabs possess an analogous organ in their gill cavities.

David T. Day of the United States Geological Survey, referring to the fact that within the last four or five years the price of platinum has increased about tenfold, says that nevertheless no real famine in platinum exists. At present it is always obtained by placer mining, but it also occurs as arsenides and sulphides. The present supply of the metal is probably 100,000 ounces per year, and the probable future demand is estimated at 200,000 ounces. Systematically worked, the known placer deposits could yield 175,000 ounces per year, and it is deemed unlikely that the arsenid and sulphid deposits will be worked until after the placers are exhausted. The high prices, Doctor Day says, have mainly been produced by a combination of dealers and hoarding of the metal.

SCHOOL IS OUT.



School is over
Till September?
Did I get promoted?
Aw! I don't remember.

Bad Break.

She—What was father speaking to you about?
He—Oh, he was asking me my intentions.

"He was? Well, I declare, I think father is rather previous."

"Oh, no. You see, I borrowed \$5 from him about six months ago, and he wanted to know when he might expect it."—Youkers Statesman.

How They Manage.

"Every girl in that chorus has a lot of diamonds."

"That's so."

"I wonder how they can afford it?"

"Why, as you may see, they have scarcely any clothes to buy."—Houston Post.

Only Rarely Though.

Once in a while you meet an old college graduate who remembers what the words the initials in the name of his Greek letter society stood for were.—Somerville Journal.