

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 So soon as the abbess had withdrawn they drew closer together.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 began, her 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 Tigreño, 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 Tigreño 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 Tigreño 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 pronunciamento 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, I suppose?"

"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 pates, 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, senator," 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, senator, 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 Don Luchas. 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 pronunciamento. 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, senator. Of what use would it be to disseminate 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, Senator 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?

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

RESIO-KING THE HANDES.

Serious Problem as Viewed by State Veterinarian of Washington.

During the past few weeks Dr. S. B. Nelson, state veterinarian of Washington has spent considerable time in Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin counties, examining many bands of sheep that are kept in these counties, as to their general health, with particular reference to "scab." Recently, in discussing things of interest he had observed in going from one sheep camp to another, Dr. Nelson came to the problem of "restocking the ranges," which is now so absorbing to stockmen.

"One of the serious problems now confronting the stockmen of this state is the question of restocking the ranges with the original bunch grass," he said. "Old settlers tell us that when they came here forty years ago, the bunch grass was from two to three feet tall, and very heavy. The promiscuous grazing of the stock over the ranges has put them in their present bare, or semi-bare, condition. The reclaiming of these vast tracts of grazing land is a problem to which the agricultural departments of various institutions have given a great deal of attention."

"Some seven or eight years ago I rode over these same ranges and found the bunch grass practically all gone in many places. This condition could be observed for miles and miles as the ranges were ridden over. Recently I was very much astonished in passing through these same regions to find that thousands of acres had been fenced, while equally large tracts were not fenced, but were held as summer range by sheepmen who practically controlled them. I observed that those ranges, bare several years ago, were, at the time of my visit, covered with a luxuriant growth of bunch grass, standing from eighteen to thirty inches high. In places the grass was so heavy that it could not be mowed for hay. I was also much surprised to see that in places that had been protected for a long number of years, the heavy bunches of grass were scattered, and between the big bunches, bunches from two to three years old were well started. It was very easy to pick out a bunch of two-year-old grass from among a number of the older bunches. In looking into this question, I discovered how it was that these ranges had been restocked."

"The sheep are kept on these winter ranges from the time they come out of the mountains in the fall, during September and early October, until after lambing, and a short time the following spring. Early in the spring the sheep eat the young, tender bunch grass, but the sheep are well scattered (a good herder nearly always keeps his sheep scattered) the bunch grass as it gets older becomes tougher, and the sheep do not like it so well. By the latter part of April and early in May, the sheep prefer the many weeds, especially sunflowers, never touching bunch grass at all. Many, many times during my trips through these counties, I saw bands of from fifteen to twenty-five hundred sheep grazing in bunch grass from one foot to eighteen inches high and never touching it. They were picking out the little weeds in between the bunches of grass, and wherever there were areas of sunflowers, they would eat the flowers perfectly clean wherever they went."

"From the first to the fifteenth of June the sheep are taken into the mountains and kept until the latter part of September. Now when the sheep are brought back in September, the bunch grass has seeded, the seed being scattered over the ground. The fall rains seem to soften the bunch grass, making it tender so that the sheep eat it greedily. In this way, by eating the early shoots before the grass goes to seed, and then eating this mature, semi-cured grass after it has gone to seed, the seed is saved on the ground and reown, and the stand of bunch grass is continually increased."

"This has demonstrated to me very strongly, that if men owning large areas of grazing land expect to keep their ranges up to the present standard, or even increase the stand of bunch grass, that they must of necessity protect the bunch grass at least every other year, during its seeding time; that is, from the time the seed begins to form until the mature seeds are shattered on the ground. I am convinced that the problem of restocking the ranges may to a very large extent be solved by fencing the grazing lands, and, at intervals, resting them."

WRITES OF OREGON.

Sidelights on Beaver State by Professor of Cornell.

In his recent book on "How to Choose a Farm, With a Discussion of American Lands," Professor Thomas F. Hunt, of Cornell university, devotes several complimentary paragraphs to farming conditions of the Pacific Northwest and to the resources of Oregon in particular. Professor Hunt accompanies his descriptions with tables of statistics which throw several interesting sidelights on the conditions existing in the Beaver State.

"This region is characterized by its immense forest resources, its fishing industries, and the high production of wheat by dry farming in the eastern part of Washington and along the Co-

lumbia river in Oregon," writes Professor Hunt of Oregon, Washington and Idaho. "One-third of the area is covered by forests of immense commercial value, while at least one-fifth more is covered by trees of less importance. In Western Oregon and Washington are to be found millions of acres of the densest forests, with coniferous trees of great height, and large diameters, of which the Douglas fir and the red cedar are perhaps the most important. It is not uncommon for five acres of land to cut a million feet of lumber."

"Wheat and hay constitute about one-third the value of all crops. While general farming is somewhat more developed than in the Rocky Mountain states, the grazing of livestock is still one of the principal industries. Certain areas in Oregon, Washington and California furnish ideal conditions of soil and climate for the production of hops. These three states produce two-thirds of the product of the United States."

"The Cascade mountains divide this region, climatically and agriculturally, into two parts. Between the Cascade mountains and the Coast range are fertile, well-watered valleys, already thickly populated. Upon the western coast, owing to the Japan current, the temperature is the most equable in North America. The climate is more like England than that of any other part of the United States."

The soils are mostly of a volcanic origin and are unusually fertile and enduring. The prairies consist of an expanse of rolling hills. The layout of the farms and general aspect of the improvements are similar to those in the newer portions of the North Central states. The people are mostly native-born Americans from the older settled states. There is a general air of hopefulness and prosperity among them."

"There are still 30,000,000 acres of unappropriated and unreserved public lands ready for entry in this region. While some of this is forest land and some is arid, this region probably contains the best large body of public yet open for settlement in the United States."

Oregon, Washington and Idaho are credited with about 90,000 farms. The area in farms is about 25,000,000 acres, the improved area being about 9,000,000 acres for the three states. The average size of the farms is a trifle over 250 acres, and the average size of improved farms is nearly 100 acres. The state of Oregon alone has about 11,000,000 acres of land in farms and ranches, which is estimated to be worth about \$13 per acre.

EXPERIMENTS WITH HYBRIDS.

Pullman Station Develops New Varieties of Wheat.

The Washington State college experiment station at Pullman has brought a line of experiments with Little Club and White Track wheat to a point where definite statements concerning results can be given. These hybridization experiments were begun in 1899 by Professor E. E. Elliott. One long-banded variety which is now growing in the eighth generation produces more straw than any other hybrid heretofore grown on the station farm. Because of this and that it will withstand cold nearly as well as Jones' Five, the station staff believes it will be well adapted to the dry section included in the greater portion of the Big Bend country. A length of six inches and 100 grains to the head is not unusual in this variety.

Another hybrid is remarkable for the stiffness of the straw. On the farm a plot of Red Russian and Arcadian were cut to the ground by squirrels, while the hybrid variety was left unharmed. The stem grows too short to be suitable for dry land, but it is the most stable variety yet produced and in several instances produced 60 bushels per acre.

A long stem hybrid has the peculiarity of growing with surprising uniformity of height, and the staff say this wheat should be well adapted to threshing with a combined harvester. The evenness in length, and the fact that it shatters but little, makes it one of the most desirable hybrids brought out on the college farm.

EXCELLENT COAL PROSPECTS.

Around Ashland.

The recent work in developing the various coal prospects found in the vicinity of Ashland, Oregon, has met with so much success and has attracted such widespread attention that it promises to insure sufficient perseverance in work along this line to determine the real extent of the coal deposits which, beyond doubt, exist in this section. There is no question about the coal being found and the quality of it, but there are skeptics as to the extent of the deposits. The scarcity and high price of wood for fuel has prompted and encouraged the coal prospecting to a large extent, and the opening up of coal beds of ample extent would be a welcome solution of the fuel problem, which is a serious one and promises to be more serious before another winter is over. The inability to secure woodchoppers during the past year or two has greatly curtailed the wood output and has resulted in soaring prices.

The British soldier is now to possess three shirts instead of two.



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 told 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.

Foots Lights—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 them sootyneer post cards from me darter Maggie—the fourth this month, begorry! She sends me an every toime 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 Bazar.

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?" "No; 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 (bired for the occasion)—I play accompaniments sometimes. "Accompaniments to singing?" "Accompaniments to conversations."—Tattler.

Waiter—Mr. Brown's left his umbrella again, sir. I do believe he'd leave his head if I 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, sniffing 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 to get 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.