

THE RED TRAIL

By GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER XIX.

The newcomer walked gracefully up to Don Sebastian, still holding his hat in his right hand, bowed to him with exquisite grace, and thrusting his hand into his side, he said with an accent of cutting sarcasm, in a harsh, metallic voice:

"Do you recognize me, Don Sebastian, and do you believe I am really alive?"

At the same moment Belhumeur's knowing face could be seen peering through the doorway. With his eyes obstinately fixed on the General, he seemed to be impatiently expecting an answer, which the latter evidently hesitated to give.

"Who are you, senor?" said the General, "and by what right do you question me?"

"Well played," said Valentine, "Caballero, you are a rude adversary."

"Do you think so?" Don Sebastian asked, with a hoarse laugh.

"Certainly," the hunter continued, "and I am delighted to bear my testimony to the fact; hence you had better yield at once, for you are in a dilemma from which you cannot escape."

There was a silence lasting some minutes. At length the general seemed to make up his mind, for he turned to Belhumeur, who was still listening, and bowed to him with ironical politeness.

"Why stand half hidden by that door?" he said to him. "Pray enter, caballero."

The Canadian at once entered, and after giving the general a respectful bow he leaned over the back of Valentine's chair. The latter eagerly followed all the incidents of the strange scene that was being played before him, and in which he appeared to be a disinterested spectator rather than an actor.

"I am waiting," the general said, as he fell back in his chair with an air of weariness.

"We will bring matters to an end," Valentine said, drawing himself up with an air of resolution. "General, you will at once leave Mexico and give up Dona Anita, to whom you will not only restore her liberty, but also the right of giving her hand and fortune to whomsoever she pleases. You will sell your estates and retire to the United States, promising on oath never to return. On my side, I pledge myself to restore to you your daughter's body."

"Have you anything more to add?" the general coolly asked.

"Nothing; but take care, senor. I, too, have taken an oath, and from what I told you you must have seen how far I have detected your secrets. Accept or refuse, but come to a decision, for this is the last time we shall meet face to face under the like conditions. The game we are playing is a terrible one, and must end in the death of one of us, and I shall show you no pity, as, doubtless, you will show me none. Reflect seriously before answering yes or no, and I give you half an hour to decide."

The general rang the bell and the footman came in.

"Order the carriage," he said to him.

"Then," Valentine said as he rose, "it is war to the death between us."

"War to the death! be it so."

"We shall only meet once again, General," the hunter remarked; "and that will be on the eve of your death, when you are in Capilla."

"I accept the meeting, and will bow uncomplainingly before you if you are powerful enough to obtain that result; but, believe me, I am not there yet."

"You are nearer your fall than you perhaps suppose."

"That is possible; but enough of this. Light these gentlemen down," he said to the servant, who at this moment entered the room.

When the general entered his box at the theater, which was in the first circle, and almost facing the stage, the house presented a truly fairy-like appearance. The president's box was occupied by the first magistrate of the republic and some of his aide-de-camps. Several times Don Sebastian glanced at the president's eyes were fixed on him with a strange expression, after which he bent over and whispered some remarks to the gentlemen who accompanied him. Perhaps this was not real, and the general's pricked conscience suggested to him suspicions far from the thoughts of those against whom he had so many reasons to be on his guard; but real or not, these suspicions tortured his heart and proved to him the necessity of coming to an end at all risks.

Still the performance went on; the curtain had just fallen after the last act, and the general, devoured by anxiety, and persuaded that he had remained long enough in the theater to testify his presence, was preparing to retire, when the door of his box opened, and Col. Lupo walked in.

"Ah, is it you, colonel?" Don Sebastian said to him as he offered him his hand.

"Pray do not let me stop you, general. I have only a few words to say to you."

"Our business?"

"Goes on famously."

"No suspicion?"

"Not the shadow."

The general breathed like a man from whose chest a crushing weight has been removed.

"Can I be of any service to you?" he said, absently.

"For the present, I have only come for your sake."

"How so?"

"Well, I was accosted to-day by a leper, a villain of the worst sort, who

says he wishes to avenge himself on a certain Frenchman, whom he declares you know, and he desires to place himself under your protection, in the event of the blade of his navaja accidentally slipping into his enemy's body."

"Did this worthy gentleman tell you his name, my dear colonel?"

"Yes; but I believe that it would be better to mention it in the open air, rather than in this place."

They left the theater and proceeded toward the Portales de Mercedes, which were entirely deserted at this advanced hour of the night.

CHAPTER XX.

"Now, Senor Don Jaime," said the general, "let us speak frankly, if you please. I wish for nothing better," the colonel replied.

"And to begin," Don Sebastian continued, "tell me who this man is from whom you hinted that I could derive some benefit."

"This man is a villain of the worst sort, as I already have the honor of telling you; his antecedents are, I suppose, rather dark, and that is all I have been able to discover."

"I think I remember. Was not this villain known by the sobriquet of the Zaragate?"

"He was, general; furious at what happened to him, and attributing it to Don Valentine, he took an oath to kill him whenever he met him."

"I must not and will not see him; but do you deal with him as you think proper. You understand that it is of the utmost importance that I should be ignorant of the arrangements you may make with him, and be able to prove, if necessary, that I had no knowledge of this. Moreover, as you are aware, I am not one for extreme measures; the sight of such a villain would be repulsive to me, for I have such a horror of bloodshed."

"I understand you only too well."

"What mean you?"

"That, if we succeed, you will be president of the republic."

"Remember, you will be a general and military governor of our richest State, Sonora," the other answered.

"It is useless to remind me of your promises, general; you are well aware that I am devoted to you."

"I know it, of course, and on that account leave you. Good-night, and come and breakfast with me to-morrow."

"I will not fail, general." The general pulled his hat over his eyes, wrapped himself in his cloak and went off hastily. On being left alone, the colonel remained plunged in deep thought; the office with which he was intrusted, for he perfectly caught the meaning of the general's hints, was serious.

At the moment when the colonel mechanically raised his head and looked despairingly up to heaven, he fancied he saw several suspicious shadows prowling about him in a suggestive manner. But the colonel was brave, and the more so because he had literally nothing to lose, hence he quietly loosened his sword, opened his cloak, and at the instant when four or five fellows attacked him at once with machetes and long navajas, he was on guard according to all the rules of the art, with his left foot supported by a pillar and his cloak wrapped like a buckler round his arm.

The attack was a rude one, but the colonel withstood it manfully; besides, all went on in the Mexican way, without shout or call for help.

Still the assailants, who were armed with short and heavy weapons, had the disadvantage against the colonel's long and thin sword, which twisted like a snake, writhed round their weapons, and had already pricked two of the men sharply enough to make the others reflect and display greater prudence in their attack. The colonel felt that they were giving ground.

"Come on, villanias," he exclaimed, as he gave a terrific lunge and ran one of the bandits right through the body, who rolled on the pavement with a yell of pain.

"Stop, stop!" the man who seemed the leader of the bandits exclaimed; "we are mistaken."

As the bandits asked for nothing better than to stop, they retreated a few steps without hesitation.

"Can it possibly be you," the first speaker continued, "Senor Colonel Don Jaime Lupo?"

"Hullo!" the colonel said, falling back a step in surprise, "who mentioned my name?"

"I, excellency; a friend."

"A friend? A strange friend who has been trying to assassinate me for the last ten minutes."

"Believe me, colonel, that had we known whom we had to deal with, we should never have attacked you. All this is the result of a deplorable misunderstanding, which you will, however, excuse."

"But who are you?"

"What, excellency, do you not recognize the Zaragate?"

"The Zaragate!" the colonel exclaimed with glad surprise. "Well, acendred, are you aware that yours is a singular trade?"

"Alas! excellency, a man must do what he can," the bandit replied, in a sorrowful voice.

The colonel looked at him anxiously.

"I understand the cause of your grief," he said; "and it is the worse, because there is no remedy for it."

"Do you think so?"

"Capital! I am certain of it."

"You may be mistaken, excellency."

"Nonsense. You who so graciously place yourself at the service of those who have an insult to avenge, are forced to renounce your own vengeance."

"Oh, no, excellency, what is that you are saying?"

"I am speaking the truth. You hate the Frenchman whom you mentioned to me to-day, but you are afraid of him."

"Afraid!" he exclaimed, angrily.

"I bet you that you will not dare avenge yourself on your enemy within the next four-and-twenty hours, not even with the help of your twelve companions."

"And what will you bet, excellency?"

"Well, I am so certain of running no risk that I will bet you one hundred ounces. Does that suit you?"

"One hundred ounces!" the bandit exclaimed, his eyes sparkling with greed. "I would kill my own brother for such a sum."

CHAPTER XXI.

The house taken for Valentine by M. Rallier was, as we have already stated, situated in the Calle de Tacuba, only a few yards from the mansion belonging to General Don Sebastian Guerrero.

The hunter, therefore, would only have had a few steps to go to reach home after leaving the general. But suspecting that the latter might have given orders to have his carriage followed, he ordered his coachman to drive to the Alameda.

As the night was far advanced, the promenaders had abandoned the shady walks of the Alameda, which was now completely deserted. This doubtless was what the hunter desired, for, on reaching about the center of the drive, he ordered the coachman to stop, and got out with his companions.

Valentine, like all men accustomed to desert life, had an instinctive distrust of stone walls, behind which, in his fancy, a spy was continually listening. Hence, when he had an important affair to discuss, or a serious matter to communicate to his friends, he preferred going to the Alameda, or somewhere in the environs of Mexico, where after posing Curumilla as a sentry, he believed that he could safely confide his closest secrets to the friends he conveyed to the strange open-air council. On reaching a thick clump of trees the hunter stopped.

"We shall be comfortable here," he said.

"The trees have eyes, and the leaves ears," Belhumeur answered sardoniously.

"Yes," Valentine remarked with a smile, "if you do not take the precaution to frighten away spies;" at the same moment he imitated the soft cadenced hiss of the coral snake.

A similar hiss was heard from the center of the clump and seemed like an echo.

"That is the chief's signal," the Canadian said. "He has been watching for us there for nearly an hour. Do you now believe that we are in safety?"

"Certainly; when Curumilla watches over us we have no surprise to apprehend."

"Let us talk then," said Don Martial.

"One moment," Valentine remarked, "we must first hear the report of a friend."

"Whom are you alluding to?"

"You shall see," Valentine answered, and clapped his hands thrice softly.

Immediately a slight sound and a gentle rustling of leaves was heard in a neighboring thicket, and a man emerged, about four paces from the hunters. It was Carnero, the capataz.

"Good evening, senores," he said, with a polite bow. "I have been awaiting your coming for nearly an hour."

"We were detained longer than we expected by General Guerrero."

"Do you come from him?"

"Did I not tell you I would call on him?"

"Yes; but I hardly thought that you would have the temerity to venture into the lion's den."

"Nonsense," Valentine said with a disdainful smile, "the lion, as you call him, I assure you, was remarkably tame; he drew his claw, completely and received us with the most exquisite politeness."

"In that case take care," the capataz replied, with a shake of the head; "if he received you in that way, he is, be assured, preparing a terrible plot."

"I am of the same opinion; the question is, whether we shall allow him time to act."

"He is very clever, my dear Valentine," the capataz continued, "and seems to possess an intuition of evil. In spite of the oath I took to you when, on your entreaty, I consented to remain in his service, there are days when, although I possess a thorough knowledge of his character, he terrifies me, and I feel on the point of giving up the rude task which, through devotion to you, I have imposed on myself."

"Courage, my friend; persevere but a few days longer, and believe me, we shall all be avenged."

"May heaven grant it!" the capataz said with a sigh; "but I confess that I dare not believe it, even though it is you who assure me of the fact."

(To be continued.)

Know Neither Nurse Nor Baby.

"What a bright little thing!" exclaimed the society woman, patronizingly cooing at a baby out for an airing in the park. "Whose little one is this?"

"Yours, ma'am," replied the nurse.

"I'm the new nurse that kem yistherdy."—New York Press.

That's What Hurt.

"I don't like that there Mrs. Swellman at all," said Mrs. Nurritch.

"Well, you ain't got to take no notice of her," replied Mrs. Nurritch.

"But the trouble is she don't take no notice o' me."—Philadelphia Press.

PRESERVE THE FOREST.

Country Will Look to Northwest for Supply Before Long.

"The Northwest section, comprising Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, will witness the fullest development of its lumber industry within the next ten years," said Professor E. O. Sleske, head of the newly established school of forestry at the Washington State college, in a recent conversation. "Just now, about one-fourth of the merchantable timber of the United States is in Washington and Oregon. The 'Lake State region,' including Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, is lumbered and logged; so is the Southern belt, including northern Alabama and Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, the western parts of West Virginia and Virginia; the eastern part of Texas, Arkansas, and the southern part of Missouri. In a very few years, more than at present, the people of the United States will be looking to the Pacific Northwest for much of their lumber."

"What we must do is to learn to handle our forests with regard to the future crop; that is, cutting to a diameter limit, and not leaving the land to revert back to the state for taxes, as has been the policy of many of the lumber companies in the lake region. The high prices for lumber will make it possible to leave trees having a diameter of from twelve to twenty-four inches for the future crop. Then these developing tracts of forest land should be well cared for. Fires should be kept out, and laws should be rigorously enforced preventing the cutting down of the trees until they have grown to the right size. All this means, of course, a great need for skilled foresters, and considerable expense, but it will be to perpetuate the rich forests of the Pacific Northwest, and every dollar of such expenditure will return to the people doubled and trebled."

CRANBERRIES IN OREGON.

New Venture Proving a Success in Tillamook County.

"Cranberries raised in Oregon" is the new slogan for the commercial bodies to cry out to the world at large now that the fields of Tillamook county are producing large quantities of the berries that round out the Thanksgiving dinner. B. O. Snuffer, of Tillamook, recently exhibited a box of berries in Portland which were picked from the marsh in Tillamook county. Mr. Snuffer, in telling about the new industry, said:

"The vines from which these berries were picked have not been touched for eight years except to pick the berries. Because the berries require so little care and attention, the profits are very large. Not an acre from the patch these berries came from has ever produced less than 325 bushels and with care would yield 800 bushels. The berries sell for \$3 a bushel. W. C. King picked 1,000 bushels an acre from a tract he owned."

"I commenced the culture of cranberries in the spring of 1893, and find that the vines are well adapted to this climate. They grow vigorously and where the bogs are properly prepared they are enormously productive. While picking my crop one year I measured off some ground and picked them carefully, and found that they produced at the rate of 1,000 bushels to the acre. Allowing \$1 per bushel as net profit, I do not know of an agricultural product that will compare with it, and placing figures at a minimum."

"It costs about \$200 to prepare the ground and plant the vines, including the cost of the plants. The bog must be so situated that it can be drained off by means of ditches to the depth of at least 15 inches, and one must also have control of plenty of water for irrigation and flooding purposes. Although I have seen some marshes that were a success without any water supply, I do not consider it safe, in view of the large outlay."

"A bog once set in the proper shape will last indefinitely. The first cost, although quite large, cuts little figure in the long run."

"I find that the cranberries grown here are of a darker color than those grown in the East; those here are much superior in flavor, and also weigh more to the bushel. The size of the berry is about the same."

"According to my experience, the



PROFESSOR E. O. SLESKE
Head of the newly established school of forestry at the Washington State college.

McFarland cranberry is the best variety for the Pacific coast. It is the largest and most prolific, a splendid keeper, and by all odds the best seller. In the East this sort is considered a poor keeper, but it appears to be better adapted to this climate, and grow to perfection here.

"I have had good success with the Cherry and Bell variety. They yield well and sell well, and are of good color. Their flavor is excellent by none, and they are of good size, though not as large as the McFarland berry."

"The picking season is usually one of pleasure, for several reasons, to both picker and proprietor. The weather is generally fine—September and October—when men, women and children come for an outing in the cranberry fields. They come with a camping outfit, prepared to enjoy the pleasures of outdoor life, the health giving ocean breezes and a rest from the city and home toil."

"In picking, lines are stretched across a plot of ground three feet apart and each picker works between the lines, the vines making a carpet upon which to work. They hang on uprights about six inches high and are truly beautiful to look upon. The berries are a bright red color, and, in many cases three and four deep, touching each other, completely hide the vines and ground beneath."

"The pickers are given a six-quart measure, and are required to pick the berries clean as they go. When the measure is full it is emptied into a bushel box, and when the box is full they are given a check which is good for 75 cents. Yard men are in attendance to oversee the pickers and carry away the boxes. My best pickers picked about three bushels per day. With a scoop a picker can gather 20 bushels a day."

"In the East the vines are often infested with insect pests, and if the growers have not control of the water the whole crop is in danger. I understand the pests have been imported here at different times in shipping in plants, but they soon disappear, as they cannot live in this climate."

"There is money in the cranberry business and the many bogs of Tillamook county are waiting for men of means and energy to develop them."

ORLANDO RICH IN ORE.

Strike is Made 287 Feet From the Portal of Tunnel.

D. M. Adams, mining engineer, who has been investigating recent strikes at the Orlando mine, in Northern Idaho, has submitted his report to the board of directors. Mr. Adams expresses himself as well pleased with the appearance of the mines. He says in part:

"The lead was encountered 287 feet from the portal of the tunnel, and was crossed 10 feet on the dip of the lead, which varies from 12 inches to two feet in width. The tunnel at the intersection of the lead is about four feet wide, and in cross cutting the lead more than a ton of high grade shipping ore was taken out. This ore will average 60 per cent antimony, and as antimony ore is worth \$2 per unit, the ore is therefore worth \$120 per ton, on the cuts at Burke, Idaho. This is the main lead we have been driving for far more than 12 months. The strike shows that we have a well defined, strong and persistent lead, carrying a high percentage of first class shipping ore, proved for more than 200 feet in depth and for about 100 feet on the strike of the same."

"The tunnel is no 302 feet under cover."

England's National Color.

Why red should have been selected as the national color becomes intelligible when we look at the cross of St. George. Sir Walter Scott, when he wrote of how "their own sea hath vied with those red cross powers," was surely anticipating the phrase of today. But Oliver Cromwell, when for the first time he put the English soldier in a red coat, probably did as much as St. George to monopolize red as the national color. The aggressive color has, however, many meanings and has lent itself to many uses. In the days of the Romans when it flared on the head of a slave it stood for freedom; in the days of the French revolution it stood for freedom backed by blows, while in the streets of the city to-day the red cross stands for succor. So far back as the reign of Henry II. there was a red sock of the exchequer, a record of the names of all who held lands "per baroniam," and at this moment persons of consequence in the service of the state find their names entered in a red book.—London Chronicle.

It Blew.

When a British battleship was lying in New York harbor a lieutenant of the visiting vessel was discussing rough weather with a group of American naval officers, one of whom repeated the tale of the day that was so windy that the crows had to walk home.

"Still, that wind was nothing to one we encountered in the bay of Biscay," laughed the lieutenant. "Why, it blew so hard that it took four men to hold Prince Louis' hat on, and even then it blew the anchors off the buttons of his coat."—Woman's Home Companion.



HOUSEHOLD TALKS.

Latest in Bread Cutters.

A breadcutter of novel construction is a recent invention of a Michigan man. It provides a very simple accessory to the kitchen, by which the bread can be very quickly cut to a uniform thickness. Of course, the thickness of the slices can be regulated to suit the individual preference of the members of the family. This cutter consists of a stand formed of two upright rods containing guideways for the reception of studs which secure the knife to the cutter. Guideways are also cut in the knife. It is obvious that the knife can thus be moved up and down and to the right and left simultaneously and still remain in the same plane. The combination of guideways affords proper cutting of the bread.

Algonquin Croquettes.

Melt three tablespoonfuls of butter, add one-fourth of a cupful of flour, and stir until well blended; then pour on gradually, while stirring constantly, two-thirds of a cupful of milk. Bring to the boiling point, and add the yolks of two eggs unbeaten and one-half cup of grated Gruyere cheese. As soon as the cheese melts, remove from the fire and fold in one cupful of mild cheese cut in very small cubes. Season with salt, pepper and cayenne. Spread in a shallow pan and cool. Mold in the form of pyramids, dip in crumbs, egg and crumbs, fry in deep fat, and drain on brown paper. Arrange on a fancy plate on oblong pieces of fried bread—known as scones—first dipping the bread in crumbs, egg and crumbs before the frying.

Tomato Salad.

The most delicious tomato salad is a frozen one. Firm but ripe tomatoes are selected, peeled, chopped fine and rubbed through a sieve. Do not cook them, as this would destroy the distinctive fresh flavor of the vegetable. Soften two tablespoonfuls of gelatin in two tablespoonfuls of cold water, add a cupful of boiling water, stir, and when the gelatin is melted, strain to the tomatoes. Add two tablespoonfuls of lemon juice, a teaspoonful each of salt and paprika. Beat until it begins to thicken, then pour into a melon mold. Bind with a strip of suet-saturated muslin and bury in equal parts of ice and salt for four hours.

Washington Buns.

Break one egg into a cup, fill the cup with milk and turn into one-half yeast cake dissolved in one-quarter cup of cool water. Add one cup of sugar and one-half cup of butter creamed together; then beat all until a creamy mass is formed. Add a few gratings of nutmeg and enough flour to make a dough as soft as can be kneaded. Cover and let rise light; then turn on to the molding board, scatter one-quarter cup of currants, knead and shape into small buns. Set the buns close together in a greased pan, let rise and bake. Brush over with a little milk in which some sugar is dissolved.

Canning Fruit.

Many housekeepers are not successful in canning fruit and frequently find their jars running over or "working" a few weeks after being sealed and put away. This may be due to several causes, viz.: Imperfect fruit, unsterilized cans or tops that are imperfect and not air-tight. When caused by the latter it is easily remedied by melting paraffin or sealing wax and dipping the top of each jar, after it is tightly screwed down, in the melted wax. After allowing it to cool and harden if any air holes show, dip again.

Broiled Chopped Steak.

Put 2 pounds of lean beef from the lower part of the round through a meat chopper; add two level teaspoonfuls of salt and a saltspoonful of pepper. Mix thoroughly and form into one large steak. Broil slowly over a perfectly clear fire or in a hot pan; cook on one side, then turn and cook on the other for about ten minutes. Dish on a heated platter and put over it a tablespoonful of chopped parsley.

When Frying Fish.

When you fry fish, and the fat gets boiling hot, before you put the fish in, sprinkle a little salt on the bottom of the pan; you may then turn the fish without breaking.

FuFet.

Two cupfuls of flour, 1 cupful of sweet milk, 2 eggs, 3 teaspoonfuls of baking powder, 2 tablespoonfuls of melted butter, 1 teaspoonful of sugar. Bake in greased gun pans.