

# THE RED TRAIL

BY GUSTAVE AIMARD

## 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. Hallier 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 allied 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 desired 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 those 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 confided 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 guardian, 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, proudly; "unhappily 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 Tigero 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 Monsiignor the Archbishop of Mexico, who alone has a 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. Hallier, 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, ah," the Tigero 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 ultimate one, I foretell. Well, they 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.

"Remember 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. Hallier 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. Hallier 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, 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 shod, 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 calmer, 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 proclamation which was about to decide his fortunes. Then he remarked to him that six piestras, commanded by a resident 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.)

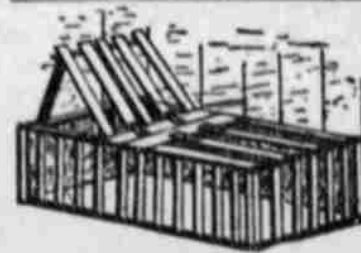
China has ten railroads in operation, with a total mileage of 1,100, or about one-tenth that of Great Britain.



## A Low Poultry Run.

A safe and secure poultry run that requires less material than a high pen can be made from laths sawed in two, which would make the sides 2 feet high, making the frame of scantlings and the top of sawed laths, box boards or similar material. The top of the run should consist almost entirely of trap doors, using bits of old harness for hinges, which will look well if cut neatly. The illustration shows one of the doors propped up to show the construction more plainly. The doors are 4 feet long, the length of a lath, and may be 8 or 10 feet the other way and still not be clumsy, being constructed of such light material.

This trap door is an important feature, as it permits the tender to enter easily for removing top soil and replacing with fresh earth, or other caring for the birds. The frame material is of 2x2-inch scantling at the corners,



A USEFUL POULTRY COOP.

while the side strips are made of inch-boards sawed 2 inches wide. The earth under this run should be slightly mounded for the sake of dryness.—Farm and Home.

## Plowing and Drought.

Subsoiling and drainage are systems that should be practiced in connection with each other. Subsoiling without drainage is more damaging than beneficial, as it allows the water to accumulate and there remain. If the system of drainage is made complete there is nothing better than deep cultivation, assisted by the subsoil plow. The great fear of those who are opposed to subsoiling is that they are compelled to turn up soil from below, which is not desirable, as it requires time for the cold under-soil to become proper plant food; but the subsoil plow does not, as many suppose, turn up the soil. It simply pulverizes it. The plan usually pursued is to plow the soil in the ordinary manner, following in the same furrows behind the first plow, with a subsoiler, to which should be harnessed three horses, in order that the work may be thoroughly done. As the first plow moves on, leaving the upper soil broken, the subsoil plow, coming after it, should go in to a depth of at least 7 inches below the plowed furrow (a foot, if possible), thus rendering the actual depth quite deep, though not mixing the upper and lower strata. The advantage is that moisture is retained when rains are not frequent, owing to the greater capacity and depth of absorption at the time of rain, and also greater moisture from capillary attraction by virtue of the porosity of the subsoil.

## Ensilage.

By the use of ensilage the ration can be greatly cheapened, but ensilage is not a balanced food, and must not, therefore, be used exclusively. A ration of 45 pounds of ensilage, 8 pounds of clover hay, 1 pound of bran and 1 of linseed meal will cost about 10 cents a day and be as nearly balanced as can be desired. This ration will be better digested than one composed mostly of dry food, and the ensilage can be grown from a silage corn at a cost below that of any other food that can be produced on the farm.

## Field Mice.

Field mice do not attack old trees, if they can get the bark of young trees, but they sometimes do much damage to orchards. Wrap the trees with tar paper, extending the paper several inches into the ground. This method not only prevents the depredations of mice, but also serves to protect against the borers. The paper need not extend over one foot above the ground.

## Your Dog.

The more you talk to a dog the better he likes you, and he times his temper to your every mood. Are you merry? He frisks and frolics and jumps up at you with wild abandon. Are you sorrowful? He will lay his head softly on your knee, looking up into your face with adoring, kindly eyes that, far more prettily than any words, begs to cheer up, and tell you that he, at all events, thinks you worthy of the utmost good fortune. The right kind of a dog never lets you forget how much he loves you.—From Paul and Fiametta.

## 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 covered, 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's down, 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. Following 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 place, cool cases.

## Fools and Trees.

Any fool can destroy trees. They can not run away; and if they could they would still be destroyed—chased and hunted down as long as fun or a dollar could be got out of their bark hides, branching horns or magnificent bowl backbones. Few that fell trees plant them; nor would planting avail much toward getting back anything like the noble primeval forest. During a man's life only saplings can be grown in place of the old trees, ten centuries old, that have been destroyed. It took more than 3,000 years to make some of the trees in these Western woods, trees that are still standing in perfect strength and beauty; waving and sighing in the forests of the Sierra. Through all the wonderful, eventful centuries since Christ's time—and long before that—God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches and a thousand distressing, leveling tempests and floods, but he can not save them from fools—only Uncle Sam can do that.—John Muir in the Atlantic.

## A Good Market Pear.

The old market favorite pear, Louise-Bonne de Jersey, is still one of the best known and most popular of the French type of pear and is highly recommended for the New England and Middle States by the official list of the department of agriculture. The name is being more and more shortened to Louise, which is enough to distinguish it from other varieties.

This pear has been in cultivation for more than a hundred years, but the original tree is still alive at its place of origin in Southern France, says American Cultivator. Although a French pear, it seems to be as hardy as any and succeeds as far north as Ontario and in parts of Northern New England where any pear will thrive.

It is a good pear to grow on quince roots, producing large specimens and annual crops. It also does well on pear roots. It is a rather large pear, choice specimens averaging about three and one-half inches long. The skin is yellowish green, with reddish brown checks and dots. The flesh is white, fine grained and buttery and the flavor pleasant and spicy. It ripens about with the Sheldon in early October. Its shipping qualities are excellent, and it ranks among the first of the general purpose pears.

If a cow gives sixteen quarts of milk per day, she must, consequently, consume an equal quantity of water. If the water is icy cold she will not drink, because she thereby becomes chilled. She will fall off in her yield of milk, because she can not produce unless she drinks a quantity sufficient for the milk and the demand of her body. She voids, usually, a larger quantity of water. The water for the cows as the weather becomes colder, therefore, should be warm, if the flow of milk is to continue.

Water for Cows.

Not Ignorant.

No, suh, Harris isn't ready for de Kingdom yet," declared Uncle Peter. "Hil 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.

## 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 clerk's 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.

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