

THE RED TRAIL

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

The capatas made a wry face. "There will be probably plenty of blows to receive, and very little profit to derive from such an expedition."

"I believed that you were devoted to me," the general remarked bitterly. "Your excellency is not mistaken; I am truly devoted to you, but I have also a fondness for my skin."

"I will give you twenty-five ounces for every slit it receives; is that enough?" "Come, I see that your excellency wishes me to be cut into mince meat!" the capatas exclaimed joyously.

"Then that is agreed?"

"I should think so, excellency, at that price a man would be a fool to refuse."

"But about horses?"

"We have at least ten or a dozen in the corral."

"That is true; I did not think of that," the general exclaimed, striking his forehead, "have seven lassoed at once."

"Where must I take the ponies?"

"Bring her to this house, for she shall not set foot in the corral again."

"Very good, when shall I start, general?"

"At once, if it is possible."

"In twenty minutes I shall have left the house."

In the meanwhile the carriage dashed along; it passed at full gallop through the San Lazaro gate, then turned suddenly to the right and entered a somewhat narrow street. At about the middle of this street it stopped before a house of rather modest appearance, the gate of which at once opened, and a man came out holding the bridles of two prairie mustangs completely harnessed, and with a rifle at each saddle-bow. The Frenchman got out and invited his companion to follow his example.

"Resume your usual dress," he said, as he led him inside the house.

The Tigrero obeyed with an eager start of joy. While he doffed his gown his companion mounted, after saying to the young ladies:

"Whatever happens, not a word—not a cry; keep the shutters up; we will gallop at the door and remember your lives are in peril."

Don Martial at this moment came out of the house attired as a caballero.

"To horse and let us be off," said M. Rallier.

The Tigrero bounded on to the mustang held in readiness for him, and the carriage, in which the mules had been changed, started again at full speed. The house at which they had stopped was the one hired by Valentine to keep his stud at.

Half an hour thus passed and the carriage disappeared in the thick cloud of dust it raised as it dashed along. Don Martial felt new born; the excitement had restored his old ardor as if by enchantment, he longed to be face to face with his foe, and at length came to a settlement with him.

All at once the Indian uttered a cry. The two men looked back with alarm and saw a body of men coming up at full speed. At this moment the carriage was following a road bounded on one side by a rather thick chaparral, which extended for some distance; on the other by a deep ravine.

At a sign from the Frenchman the carriage was drawn across the road and the ladies got out and went, under Curumilla's protection, to seek shelter behind the trees. The two men, after seeing that their friends were concealed, with their rifles to their shoulders and fingers on the triggers, stood firmly in the middle of the road, awaiting the onset of their adversaries, for, in all probability, the newcomers were enemies.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Curumilla, after concealing, with that Indian skill he so thoroughly possessed, the young ladies at a spot where they were thoroughly protected from bullets, had placed himself, rifle in hand, not by the side of the two riders, but, with characteristic redskin prudence, he ambuscaded himself behind the carriage, probably reflecting that he represented the entire infantry force, and not caring, through a point of honor, very absurd in his opinion, to expose himself to a death not only certain but useless to those he wished to defend.

The horsemen, however, on coming within range of the persons they were pursuing, stopped, and by their gestures seemed to evince a hesitation the fugitives did not at all understand, after the fashion in which they had hitherto been pursued. The motive for this hesitation, which the Frenchman and his companions could not know, and which perplexed them so greatly, was very simple.

Carnero, for it was the general's capatas who was pursuing the carriage, with his ponies, all at once perceived, with a secret pleasure, it is true, though he was careful not to let his companions notice it, that while they were pursuing the carriage other horsemen were pursuing them, and coming up at headlong speed. On seeing this, as we said, the party halted, much disappointed and greatly embarrassed as to what they had better do.

They were literally placed between two fires, and were the attacked instead of the assailants; the situation was critical, and deserved serious consideration. Carnero suggested a retreat, remarking with a certain amount of reason that the sides were no longer equal and that suc-

cess was highly problematical. The

peons, all utter ruffians, and expressly chosen by the general, but who entertained a profound respect for the integrity of their limbs, and were but very slightly inclined to have them injured in so disadvantageous a contest with people who would not recoil, were disposed to follow the advice of the capatas and retire before a retreat became impossible.

Unhappily, the Zaragate was among the peons. Believing from his conversation with the colonel that he knew better than any one the general's intentions, and attracted by the hope of a rich reward if he succeeded in delivering him of his enemy, that is to say, in killing Valentine; and moreover, probably impelled by the personal hatred he entertained for the hunter, he would not listen to any observation, and swore with horrible oaths that he would carry out the general's orders at all hazards, and that, since the persons they were ordered to stop were only a few paces before them, they ought not to retire until they had, at least, attempted to perform their duty, and that if his comrades were such cowards as to desert him, he would go on alone at his own risk, certain that the general would be satisfied with the way in which he had behaved.

After a declaration so distinct and peremptory, any hesitation became impossible, the more so as the horsemen were rapidly coming up, and if the capatas hesitated much longer he would be attacked in the rear. Thus driven out of his last intrenchment, and compelled against his will to fight, Carnero gave the signal to push on ahead.

But the peons had scarce started ere three shots were fired, and three men rolled in the dust. The newcomers, in this way, warned their friends to hold their ground and that they were bringing help. The dismounted peons were not wounded, though greatly shaken by their fall, and unable to take part in the fight; their horses alone were hit, and that so cleverly that they at once fell.

"Eh, eh!" the capatas said, as he galloped on; "these picaros have a very sure hand. What do you think of it?"

"I say that there are still four of us; that is double the number of those waiting for us down there, and we are sufficient to master them."

"Don't be too sure, my good friend, Zaragate," the capatas said with a grin; "they are men made of iron, who must be killed twice over before they fall."

The Tigrero and his companions had heard shots and seen the peons hit the dust.

"There is Valentine," said the Frenchman.

"I believe so," Don Martial replied.

"Shall we charge?"

"Yes."

And digging in their spurs, they dashed at the peons.

Valentine and his two comrades, Belhumer and Black Elk (for the Frenchman was not mistaken, it was really the hunter coming up, whom the Canadian had warned) fell on the peons simultaneously with Don Martial and his companion.

A terrible, silent and obstinate struggle went on for some minutes between these nine men; the foes had seized each other round the body, as they were too close to use firearms, and tried to stab each other. Nothing was heard but angry curses and panting, for what is the use of insulting when you can kill?

The Zaragate, so soon as he recognized the hunter, dashed at him. Valentine, although taken off his guard, offered a vigorous resistance; the two men were entwined like serpents, and, in their efforts to dismount each other, at last both fell, and rolled beneath the feet of the combatants who, without thinking of them, or perceiving their fall, continued to attack each other furiously.

The Zaragate, some years younger than Valentine, and possessed of his full bodily strength, while urged on by the love of a rich reward, made superhuman efforts to master his opponent and plunge his navaja into his heart.

Still Valentine felt that his strength was becoming exhausted, the unexpected resistance he met with from an enemy apparently so little worthy of him exasperated him and made him lose his coolness. Collecting all his remaining vigor to attempt a final and decisive effort, he succeeded in getting his enemy once again under him, and pinned him down; but, at the same moment, Valentine uttered a cry of pain and rolled on the ground—a horse's kick had broken his left arm.

The Zaragate sprang up with a tiger's bound, and bursting into a yell of delight, placed his knee on his enemy's chest, at the same time as he prepared to bury his navaja in his heart. Valentine felt that he was lost, and did not attempt to avoid the death that threatened him.

"Ah, ah!" the Zaragate said, with a ferocious grin. "I hold my vengeance as length, accursed Trail-hunter."

He did not complete the sentence; suddenly seized by his long hair, while a knee, thrust between his shoulders, forced him to bend back, he saw, as in a horrible dream, a ferocious grin appearing above his head. With a fearful groan he rolled on the ground; a knife had been buried in his heart, while his scalp, which was suddenly removed, left his denuded skull to inundate with blood the ground around.

Curumilla raised in his arms the body

of his friend, whose life he had just saved once again, and bore it to the side of the road. Valentine had fainted.

The chief, so soon as he saw his friends charge the peons, left his ambush, and while careful to remain behind them, followed to the battlefield. He had watched eagerly the long struggle between the hunter and the Zaragate; trying vainly to assist his friend, but never able to succeed. The two enemies were so entwined, their movements were so rapid, and they changed their positions so suddenly that the chief was afraid lest he might wound his friend in attempting to help him. Finally the Araucano bounded like a wild beast on the Mexican, and without hesitation scalped and stabbed him with the agility characteristic of the redskins, and which he himself possessed in so high a degree.

Almost at the same moment the horsemen also finished their fight. The peons had offered a vigorous resistance, but being badly supported by the capatas, who was disabled at the beginning of the skirmish by Don Martial, and seeing the Zaragate dead and three of their friends dismounted and incapable of coming to their assistance, they gave in.

The capatas had been wounded at his own request by Don Martial, in order to save appearances with the general; he had a wide gash on his right arm, very severe at the first glance, but insignificant in reality. A peon had been almost smashed by Belhumer, so that the field of battle remained in the hands of the hunters.

When their victory was assured, they assembled anxiously round Valentine, for they were alarmed at his condition, and most anxious to be reassured. Valentine, whose arm Curumilla had at once set, with the skill and coolness of an old practitioner, soon reopened his eyes, reassured his friends by a smile, and offered the Indian chief his right hand, which the latter laid on his heart with an expression of indescribable happiness, as he uttered his favorite exclamation of "Ugh!" the only word he permitted himself to use in joy or in sorrow, when he felt himself choking with internal emotion.

"Senores," the hunter said, "it is only an arm broken; thanks to the chief, I have had an easy escape. Let us resume our journey before other enemies come up."

"And we, senor?" the capatas cried humbly.

Valentine rose with the chief's assistance, and took a furious glance at the peons. "As for you, miserable assassins," he said with a terrible accent, "return to your master and tell him in what way you were received. But it is not sufficient to have chastised your perfidy, I must revenge for the odious snare into which my friends and I all but fell. I will learn whether in open day, and some half a dozen miles from Mexico, handits can thus attack peaceable travelers with impunity. Hecose!"

So soon as the peons, in obedience to the hunter's orders, had left the battlefield, he, on his part, gave his companions the signal to start. Don Martial had hurried to reassure the ladies, who were standing more dead than alive at the spot where the chief had concealed them. He made them get into the carriage again, without telling them anything except that the danger was past, and that there was not the slightest doubt but what the rest of the journey would be performed in safety.

Valentine's friends tried in vain to induce him to get into the carriage with the ladies. He would not consent, but insisted on mounting his horse, assuring them, in the far from probable event of their being attacked again, that he could be still of some service to his companions in spite of his broken arm. The latter were too well acquainted with his inflexible will to argue or press the point with him further, so Curumilla remounted the coach box and they started.

The rest of the journey was performed without any incident, and they reached the quinta twenty minutes later.

The skirmish had taken place scarce two miles from the country house. On reaching the gates, Valentine took leave of his friend without dismounting.

"What!" the latter said to him, "are you going, Valentine, without resting for a moment?"

"I must, my dear Rallier," he answered; "you know what imperious reasons claim my presence in Mexico."

"But you are wounded."

"Have I not Curumilla to attend to my hurt? Do not be anxious about me; besides, I intend to see you again soon. This quinta appears to me strong enough to resist a surprise. Have you a garrison?"

"I have a dozen servants and my two brothers."

"In that case I am easy in my mind; besides, there is only one night to pass, and I believe that after the lesson his people have received, the general will not venture on a second attack, for some days at least. Besides, he reckons on the success of his pronouncements. You will come to me to-morrow at daybreak, will you not?"

"I shall not fail."

"In that case I will be off."

"Will you not say good-by to the ladies?"

"They are not aware of my presence and it will be better for them not to see me; so good-by till to-morrow."

(To be continued.)

Listening for Bombs.

"What makes Bilkins jump so at every little noise?"

"He's been over in Russia a year and it's got to be a habit with him."—Detroit Free Press.

The Sahara has over one-half the area of the United States. Its population is very small for its area. The Libyan and Nubian deserts are only a continuation of it to the Red Sea.



THE FAMILY DOCTOR

Sore Eyes.

Conjunctivitis, which is the most common form of sore eyes, is an inflammation of the thin, transparent membrane covering the front surface of the eyeball and lining the lids.

Oculists distinguish several varieties of this disease, the symptoms of which vary greatly in intensity. There may be merely a bloodshot condition, due to the enlargement of the blood vessels to such a size that they become visible, accompanied by an itching and a feeling as if there were dust in the eyes, with perhaps a little sticky discharge which glues the lids together in the morning. The eyes are also sensitive to light, and sometimes ache slightly.

In more severe cases the discharge is profuse and yellowish, ulcers may form, and the inflammation may even extend to the deeper structures of the eye, and so destroy the sight.

One of the chronic forms of conjunctivitis is that known as trachoma, or granular lids. This is very difficult to cure, and often results in a permanent injury to vision. It is also quite contagious. Indeed, all forms of sore eye are probably contagious, but some are more so than others, and for this reason the most scrupulous precautions should be taken to protect the other members of the family when one has any form of conjunctivitis. The sufferer should sleep in a bed by himself, and should have his own towels, wash-rag or sponge, and handkerchiefs; and these, when soiled, should be thoroughly boiled in a separate vessel, and should not go into the common wash.

The treatment of simple conjunctivitis consists chiefly in cleanliness. The eyes should be bathed often in lukewarm water containing a pinch of salt, or in a solution of boric acid, and some of the solution should be dropped into the eye, so as to wash away the discharge.

The eyes should be shielded from the light by smoked glasses or goggles. Little squares of cloth, cut large enough to cover the eye, may be placed on a cake of ice. When cold they can be laid on the eye, and changed as soon as they become warm. This application is often very grateful to the sufferer, and is useful in subduing the inflammation.

If the trouble does not quickly subside under this simple treatment, a physician should be consulted, for the eye is a very delicate organ, and irreparable mischief may result if inflammation is allowed to run.

HAND GRENADES OF WAR OF '12.

Old-Time Ordnance Found at Fort Henry—How They Were Used.

While examining the contents of the ordnance storehouse at Fort McHenry, Lieut. J. L. Holcomb, of the 128th coast artillery, discovered several boxes of old hand grenades which are supposed to be more than 100 years old, says the Baltimore American.

The missiles are of the earliest make used by the United States government, and were probably placed at the historic old fort when it was first erected in 1812. Owing to the way in which they were packed the grenades had only the slightest trace of rust upon them.

The discovery of the weapon recalls a bit of the ancient history of the country. In explaining their use Lieut. Holcomb said that the grenades were handled only by the grenadiers of the ship, who, walking out upon the yards of the old fashioned fighting vessels, threw them into the ranks of the enemy. An explosion followed which created havoc.

They weigh about four pounds and are shaped after the fashion of the bombs used by anarchists, and are iron and loaded with gunpowder.

Several days after the discovery one of the new recruits at the fort was found trying to dry the powder in one of the missiles by roasting it on the fire. A report was made to Lieut. Watson, in command of the post, who said that he intended to write to the authorities and ask permission to dump them in the middle of Chesapeake bay, as they were so old fashioned that they would be of practically no use whatever in modern warfare.

A La Horse.

"Pa," asked the wise little boy, "how do they dock a ship?"

Mr. Wise never looked up from his paper, but answered off-hand:

"Dock a ship? Why—er—why, they cut off its rudder, of course."—Judge.

Potatoes and meat aren't the only things that should not be swallowed whole. For instance, there's compliments.

SKIN DISEASES HUMORS IN THE BLOOD

When the blood is pure, fresh and healthy, the skin will be soft, smooth and free from blemishes, but when some acid humor takes root in the circulation its presence is manifested by a skin eruption or disease. These humors get into the blood, generally because of an inactive or sluggish condition of the members of the body whose duty it is to collect and carry off the waste and refuse matter of the system. This unhealthy matter is left to sour and ferment and soon the circulation becomes charged with the acid poison. The blood begins to throw off the humors and acids through the pores and glands of the skin, producing Eczema, Acne, Tetter, Psoriasis, Salt Rheum and skin eruptions of various kinds. Eczema appears, usually with a slight redness of the skin followed by pustules from which there flows a sticky fluid that dries and forms a crust, and the itching is intense. It is generally on the back, breast, face, arms and legs, though other parts of the body may be affected. In Tetter the skin dries, cracks and bleeds; the acid in the blood dries up the natural oils of the skin, which are intended to keep it soft and pliant, causing a dry, feverish condition and giving it a hard, leathery appearance. Acne makes its appearance on the face in the form of pimples and black heads, while Psoriasis comes in scaly patches on different parts of the body. One of the worst forms of skin trouble is Salt Rheum; its favorite point of attack is the scalp, sometimes causing baldness. Poison Oak and Ivy are also disagreeable types of skin disease. The humor producing the trouble lies dormant in the blood through the winter to break out and torment the sufferer with the return of spring. The best treatment for all skin diseases is S. S. S. It neutralizes the acids and removes the humors so that the skin instead of being irritated and diseased, is nourished by a supply of fresh, healthy blood. External applications of salves, washes, lotions, etc., while they soothe the itching caused by skin affections, can never cure the trouble because they do not reach the blood. S. S. S. goes down into the circulation and forces out every particle of foreign matter and restores the blood to its normal, pure condition, thereby permanently curing every form of skin affection. Book on Skin Diseases and any medical advice desired sent free to all who write. S. S. S. is for sale at all first class drug stores.

I suffered with Eczema for forty years and could find nothing to cure me until I tried S. S. S. I suffered intensely with the itching and burning; pustules would form from which there flowed a sticky fluid; crusts would come on the skin and when scratched off the skin was left as raw as a piece of beef. I suffered agony in the long years I was afflicted, but when I used S. S. S. I found a perfect cure. There has never been any return of the trouble.

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Natural Enough. "They say that Bradley goes on like mad since he inherited his vast wealth." "What does he do?" "Oh, he acts like one possessed."—Lippincott's.

Apparent to All. "Yes," said Miss Mugley, "I always try to retire before midnight. I don't like to miss my beauty sleep." "Really," said Miss Knox, "you should try harder. You certainly don't get enough of it."—Philadelphia Press.

Showing the Furniture. "I tell you I was at my best last night while calling on the Smiths; Mrs. Smith laughed at every remark I made. I must be quite a humorist when I'm in the humor." "No, it wasn't that. Mrs. Smith got her new teeth yesterday."—Houston Post.

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