

THE RED TRAIL

By GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

The traveler looked at him fixedly for a moment or two, and then laid his hand firmly on his arm and pulled him toward the table.

"Now, look here," he said to him curtly. "I intend to pass two hours in your hotel, at all risks; I know that between this and eleven o'clock you expect a large party."

The landlord attempted to give a denial, but the traveler cut him short.

"Silence," he continued, "I wish to be present at this meeting; of course I do not mean to be seen; but I must not only see them, but hear all they say. Put me where you please, that is your concern; but as any trouble deserves payment, here are ten ounces for you, and I will give you as many more when your visitors have gone, and I assure you that what I ask of you will not in any way compromise you. Now, I will add, that if you obstinately refuse the arrangement I offer—"

"Well, suppose I do?"

"I will blow out your brains," the traveler said distinctly.

"Hang it, excellency," the poor fellow answered, with a grimace, "I think that I have no choice, and am compelled to accept."

"Good! now you are learning reason; but take three ounces as a consolation."

The landlord, forgetting that he had declared a few moments previously that he had nothing in the house, instantly covered the table with provisions, which, if not particularly delicate, were sufficiently appetizing. When their hunger was at length appeased, the traveler who seemed to speak for both thrust away his plate and addressed the landlord, who was modestly standing behind him, hat in hand.

"And now for another matter," he said; "how many lads have you to help you?"

"Two, excellency—the one who took your horses to the corral, and another."

"Very good. I presume you will not require both those lads to wait on your friends to-night?"

"Certainly not, excellency; indeed, for greater security, I shall wait on them alone."

"Better still; then, you see no inconvenience in sending one of them into the Ciudad?"

"No inconvenience at all, excellency; what is the business?"

"Simply," he said, taking a letter from his bosom, "to convey this letter to Señor Don Antonio Rallier, in the Calle Monterilla, and bring me back an answer."

"That is easy, excellency; if you will have the kindness to intrust the letter to me."

"Here it is, and four piastres for the journey."

The host bowed respectfully and immediately left the room.

"I fancy, Curumilla," the traveler then said to his companion, "that our affairs are going on well."

The other replied with a silent nod of assent. The travelers rose; in a twinkling when the landlord returned and removed all signs of supper, and then hid his guests behind an old-fashioned counter.

CHAPTER X.

The travelers had scarce time to conceal themselves ere several knocks on the door warned the landlord that the mysterious guests he expected were beginning to arrive.

The door was hardly ajar ere several men burst into the inn, thrusting each other aside in their haste, as if afraid of being followed. These men were seven or eight in number, and it was easy to see they were officers, in spite of the precaution of some among them who had put on civilian attire.

They laughed and jested loudly. The door of the rancho had been left ajar by the landlord, who probably thought it unnecessary to close it; the officers succeeded each other with great rapidity, and their number soon became so great that the room was completely filled.

As for No. Luascho, he continually prowled round the tables, watching everything with a corner of his eyes, and being careful not to serve the slightest article without receiving immediate payment. At length, one of the officers rose.

"Is Don Sirven here?"

"Yes, señor," a young man of twenty at the moment answered as he rose.

"Assure yourself that no person is absent."

The young man bowed and began walking from one table to the other, exchanging two or three words in a low voice with each of the visitors. When Don Sirven had gone round the room, he went to the person who had addressed him and said with a respectful bow:

"Señor colonel, the meeting is complete and only one person is absent; but as he did not tell us certainly whether he would do us the honor of being present to-night, I—"

"That will do," the colonel interrupted; "remain outside, watch the environs and let no one approach without challenging him, but if you know who arrives introduce him immediately."

"You can trust me, colonel," the young man answered, and, after bowing to his superior officer, he left the room and closed the door behind him.

The officers then turned round on the benches and thus found themselves face to face with the colonel, who had stationed himself in the middle of the room. The latter waited a few minutes till per-

fect silence was established, and then spoke as follows:

"Let me, in the first place, thank you, caballeros, for the punctuality with which you have responded to the meeting I had the honor of arranging with you. I am delighted at the confidence it has pleased you to display in me, and, believe me, I shall show myself worthy of it; for it proves to me once again that you are really devoted to the interests of our country and that I may freely reckon on you in the hour of danger. You understand as well as I do that we can no longer bow our necks beneath our despotic government. The man who at this moment holds our destinies in his hands has shown himself unworthy of his mandate. The hour will soon strike for the man who has deceived us to be overthrown."

The colonel had made a start, and would probably have continued his plausible speech for a long time in an emphatic voice, had not one of his audience interrupted him:

"That is all very fine, colonel," he said, "we are all aware that we are gentlemen devoted, body and soul, to our country; but devotion must be paid for. What shall we get by this after all?"

The colonel was at first slightly embarrassed by this warm apostrophe; but he recovered himself at once, and turned with a smile to his interpreter:

"I was coming to it, my dear captain, at the very moment when you cut across my speech."

"Oh, that is different," the captain answered.

"In the first place," the colonel went on, "I have news for you which I feel assured you will heartily welcome. This is the last time we shall meet."

"Very good," said the practical captain.

The colonel saw that he could no longer dally with the matter, for all his hearers openly took part with their comrades. At the moment when he resolved to tell all he knew, the door of the inn was opened, and a man wrapped in a large cloak quickly entered the room preceded by the Alferez Don Sirven, who shouted in a loud voice:

"The general, Caballeros, the general."

At this announcement silence was re-established as if by enchantment. The person called the general stopped in the middle of the room, looked around him, and then took off his hat, let his cloak fall from his shoulders, and appeared in the full dress uniform of a general officer.

"Long live Gen. Guerrero," the officers shouted as they rose enthusiastically.

"Thanks, gentlemen, thanks," the general responded with numerous bows.

"This warm feeling fills me with delight; but pray be silent, that we may properly settle the matter which has brought us here; moments are precious, and, in spite of the precautions we have taken, your presence at this inn may have been denounced. I will come at once to facts, without entering into idle speculations, which would cause us to waste valuable time. In a word, then, what is it we want? To overthrow the present government, and establish another more in conformity with our opinions, and, above all, our interests."

"Yes, yes," the officers exclaimed.

"In that case we are conspiring against the established authority, and are rebels in the eyes of the law," the general continued coolly and distinctly; "as such we stake our heads. If our attempt fails, we shall be pitilessly shot by the victor; but we shall not fail," he hastily added, "because we are resolutely playing a terrible game, and each of us knows that his fortune depends on winning."

"Yes, yes," the captain whose observations had, previous to the general's arrival, so greatly embarrassed the colonel, said, "all that is very fine; but we were promised something else in your name, excellency."

The general smiled.

"You are right, captain," he remarked; "but I intend to keep all promises—but not, as you might reasonably suppose, when our glorious enterprise has succeeded."

"When then, pray?" the captain asked, curiously.

"At once, señores," the general exclaimed.

Joy and astonishment so paralyzed his hearers that they were unable to utter a syllable. The general looked at them for a moment, and then, turning away with a mocking smile, he walked to the front door, which he opened. The officers eagerly watched his movements, and the general, after looking out coughed twice.

"Here I am, excellency," a voice said, issuing from the fog.

"Bring in the bags," Don Sebastian ordered, and then quietly returned to the middle of the room.

Almost immediately after a man entered, bearing a heavy leather saddlebag. It was Carnero. At a signal from his master he deposited his bundle and went out, but returned shortly after with another bag, which he placed by the side of the first one. Then, after bowing to his master he withdrew.

The general opened the bags, and a flood of gold poured in a trickling cascade on the table; the officers instinctively held out their quivering hands.

When all the gold had disappeared and the effervescence was beginning to subside, Don Sebastian, who, like the Angel of Evil, had looked on with a profoundly

mocking smile, slightly tapped the table to request silence.

"Señores," he said, "I have kept all my promises, and have acquired the right to count on you. We shall not meet again, but at a future day I will let you know my intentions. Still be ready to act at the first signal; in ten days is the anniversary festival of the Proclamation of Independence, and if nothing alters my plans I shall probably choose that day to try, with your assistance, to deliver the country from the tyrants who oppress it. However, I will be careful to have you warned. So now let us separate; the night is far advanced, and a longer stay at this spot might compromise the sacred interests for which we have sworn to die."

CHAPTER XI.

The Alameda of Mexico is one of the most beautiful in America. It is situated at one of the extremities of the city, and forms a long square, with a wall of circumscription bordered by a deep ditch, whose muddy, fetid waters, owing to the negligence of the government, exhale pestilential miasmas. At each corner of the promenade a gate offers admission to carriages, riders and pedestrians, who walk silently beneath a thick awning of verdure formed by willows, elms and poplars that border the principal road. These trees are selected with great tact, and are always green, for although the leaves are renewed, it takes place gradually and imperceptibly, so that the branches are never entirely stripped of their foliage.

It was evening, and, as usual, the Alameda was crowded; handsome carriages, brilliant riders and modest pedestrians were moving backward and forward, with cries, laughter and joyous calls, as they sought each other in the walks. By degrees, however, the promenaders went toward the Bucarelli; the carriages became scarcer, and by the time night had set in the Alameda was deserted.

A horseman, dressed in a rich Camperino costume and mounted on a magnificent horse, entered the Alameda along which he galloped for about twenty minutes examining the side walks the clumps of trees and the bushes; in a word he seemed to be looking for somebody or something.

At the moment when the traveler reached the Bucarelli the last carriages were leaving it and it was soon as deserted as the Alameda. He galloped up and down the promenade twice or thrice looking carefully down the side rides and at the end of his third turn a horseman, coming from the Alameda, passed on his right hand, giving him in a low voice the Mexican salute, "Santissima noche cabellero!"

Although the sentence had nothing peculiar about it the horseman started, and immediately turning his horse round, started in pursuit. Within a minute the two horsemen were side by side; the first corner, so soon as he saw that he was followed, checked his horse's pace, as if with the intention of entering into direct communication.

"A fine night for a ride, señor," the first horseman said, politely raising his hand to his hat.

"It is," the second answered, "although it is beginning to grow late."

"The moment is only the better chosen for certain private conversation."

The second horseman looked around, and bending over to the speaker, said:

"I almost despaired of meeting you."

"Did I not let you know that I should come?"

"True; but I feared that some obstacle—"

"Nothing should impede an honest man from accomplishing a sacred duty," the first horseman said.

The other bowed with an air of satisfaction. "Then," he said, "I can count on you, No—"

"No names here, señor," the other sharply interrupted him. "Caspiña, an old wood ranger like you, a man who has long been a Tigero, ought to remember that the trees have ears and the leaves eyes."

"Yes, you are right. I do remember it, but permit me to remark that if it is not possible for us to talk here where can we do so?"

"Patience, señor, I wish to serve you, as you know, for you were recommended to me by a trusty man. Be guided by me, if you wish us to succeed in this affair."

"I ask nothing better; still you must tell me what I ought to do."

"For the present very little; merely follow me at a distance to the place where I purpose taking you."

(To be continued.)

Just a Boy.

"Hold on!" said the learned chemist. "Didn't I give you a bottle of my wonderful tonic that would make you look twenty years younger?"

"You did," replied the patient, "and I took it all. I was then 39 and now I am only 19."

"Well, then will you please settle this little bill you owe for the treatment?"

"Oh, no. As I am only 19 now, I am a minor and minors are not held responsible for the bills they incur. Good-day, sir."

Made Himself So.

Naybor—I called to see Nervey last night, but he wasn't at home.

Subbubs—Oh, yes, he was.

Naybor—Not at all. I tell you—

Subbubs—But I tell you he was, and very much at home. He monopolized the Morris chair in my den all evening.—Philadelphia Press.

Every day there drops into the coffers of the New York elevated railways 27,500 nickels, to say nothing of the other coins and bills.

Help an Old Lady Across the Street



She was a sweet old lady, but afraid of the confusion of the busy street.

As she hesitated, the boy came up. He took off his cap and smiled.

"Let me help you?" he said.

With the feeble old arm in his, he led her safely over. It cost him only a minute and a little thought.

It was a tribute that youth owes to age.

It was simple kindness.

It was thoughtfulness, and, of course, politeness, because politeness is nothing but consideration and thoughtfulness of other people.

It was sympathy. The feeling that made the boy want to be of some service to the old lady was the same feeling that makes every one of us who has a heart and is not ashamed of it want to help everybody who is down or in trouble or unable to help themselves.

And it was chivalry toward woman-kind. We all possess that—some of it. It is such a tremendous pity, isn't it, that we are growing so selfish that we haven't always time to be courteous? There are still places in big, busy America where men take off their hats in public elevators when women are present. Foolish? Perhaps. But the spirit that prompts it isn't foolish. It is only a survival of that world-old feeling that every man owes all respect to every woman.

When the boy helped the old lady he not only assisted her and himself did a kind act, but he furnished a lesson to a whole world full of people.—Cincinnati Post.

WOMAN'S SENSE OF HONOR.

Her Special Code for Conduct Toward Her Husband.

A well-known American warder said to me: "I have been in prisons for men and in prisons for women. Discipline in the former is child's play compared with the latter. As soon as a man realizes there is no use in resisting he gives in. But the women, even when we put them in strait jackets, always manage to extricate at least one finger and to agitate that in a rebellious manner!"

In the matter of conduct toward husbands and consideration due to the "better half" there is an especial code of honor, says the Pall Mall Magazine. It has the stability that sanction by women of all countries gives it, but it does not resemble any code that man would observe toward another man, nor which a woman would employ toward any human except her husband. This code includes the right to search pockets, consult notebooks, open letters, read those already opened. It includes the right to confound household and personal accounts, to use on self the money intended by the master of the house for paying bills. This system is not frequently admitted, no doubt, yet we remember one newly married woman who announced as a little triumph, "When I buy for myself something I don't like I just sell it to the house!"

The peculiar indulgence which the conjugal state seems to call for as regards the weaker sex in matters of honor more or less delicate was thus strikingly summarized by a philanthropist accustomed to all sorts and conditions of people. Among the poor whom she visited there was a woman who in a fit of rage or jealousy had killed a man. In relating to me the case the philanthropist concluded sadly, "Yes, she killed him, and he wasn't even her husband!"

Too Strenuous.

"My son tells me you've discharged him," said the office boy's mother, "and I think that's strange; you advertised for a strong boy, and he's certainly—" "He's too strong, madam," interrupted the employer. "In the single day he was here he broke all the rules of this office and some of the furniture."—The Catholic Standard and Times.

After a heart has been broken a few times, the healing process becomes greatly simplified.

NORTHWEST HONORED.

Professor Elliott, of W. S. C., Contributes to Cyclopaedia.

It is well known that Prof. L. H. Bailey, of Cornell university, has been working for three years past on an extensive publication to be known as The American Cyclopaedia of Agriculture. This is to be published in several volumes and it is expected that it will be accepted by the reading public as the standard reference work on rural affairs. It has been many years since such a work has been attempted and nothing of such an extensive nature has ever been undertaken before in America. Professor Bailey has called to his aid the best known writers on agriculture throughout the entire country, who have written up the various subjects on which they were recognized as authorities. The entire work may be referred to as the combined efforts of the agricultural specialists of America and when published will no doubt find a place in the library of most progressive farmers.

It is significant that when it came to the very important subject of wheat that Professor Bailey recognized the great Northwest and its place as one of the leading wheat producing regions by calling on Professor E. E. Elliott, head of the Agricultural department at the State college of Washington, to prepare this most important article. This has been done by Prof. Elliott and the matter is now in the hands of the publishers. The article in question consists of about ten thousand words, with numerous illustrations, and would be sufficient in itself to make quite a book if published separately. It covers the entire subject of wheat production in America and at the same time attention is particularly called to the great regions of the Northwest where the production and quality of this cereal have placed it in the forefront. Our wheat growers are to be congratulated in the fact that the article in question has been prepared by one so familiar with the subject and who is doing so much to advance the industry through the work being done by his department at the state experiment station and at the various cereal stations established in the state as well as through the wheat producers organization which was initiated by him.

AID TO "DRY FARMING."

Washington State College Conducting Extensive Experiments.

The problem of "dry farming" now before the farmers of the semi-arid regions of the Pacific Northwest has been taken up by the Experiment Station of Washington, and it is hoped to work out a method of farming for these regions which will increase their crop bearing capacity. The present operations of experimentation are largely relative to the physics of soils, and are in charge of Professor H. B. Berry, soil physicist of the State college. Discussing this problem, Mr. Berry stated: "Among the questions which we must answer are: What is the best method of conserving soil moisture? What is the value of disking the summerfallow early in the spring before it can be plowed? What is the value of the sub-surface packer? If the crop suffers from drouth, is it because there is not sufficient moisture in the soil, or is it because the plants cannot take the moisture from the soil?"

In the former case we must endeavor to devise a cultural method to conserve moisture; and in the latter case, we must develop a strain of plants that can take moisture from the soil, which is a plant breeding problem."

Figs Thrive in Polk County.

Figs as large and perfectly developed as those raised in the most favored portion of California are grown at the town home of Mrs. E. F. Lucas, in Monmouth. Specimens of the fruit were brought to Dallas by Mrs. Martha Cosper, who had been visiting in the normal school town. The figs were of delicious flavor and were far superior to the California fruit usually found in the Oregon markets.

Mrs. Lucas' tree is seven years old, the cutting having been brought from California in 1900. The tree is making a luxuriant growth and has already reached a height of 12 feet. Three crops of fruit are borne each year. The specimens brought to Dallas by Mrs. Cosper included ripe and green fruit of the second crop and half grown fruit of the third crop. The tree has been in bearing four years.

Good Money in Peach Crop.

Shipments of early Crawford peaches from Roseburg this year will aggregate a total of nearly 20,000 boxes. This is the estimate given by E. P. Drew, who is handling the shipments of the local fruitgrowers' association, whose membership embraces nearly all of the peach growers in that vicinity.

Growers have realized good prices for their product. Peaches of average size and quality brought from 65 to 85 cents per box, while those of higher grade brought as high as \$1.25 per box. After deducting transportation charges, these prices left the growers a neat margin of profit. Most of the fruit was marketed in Portland.

In the southern part of California roof gardens are becoming features of all the new buildings.