

CARMEN OF THE RANCHO

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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SYNOPSIS

Don Alfredo, wealthy, Spanish owner of a Southern California rancho, refuses to heed several warnings of a raid by a band of outlaws, Sierra Indians. One day after he has finally decided to seek the protection of the nearby mission for his wife and family, the Indians strike. Don Alfredo is killed and his two young daughters are torn from the arms of the family's faithful maid, Monica, and are carried away to the hills. Padre Pasqual, missionary friend of the family, arrives at the ruins of the rancho and learns the story of the raid from Monica. After a trying and difficult trip across the plains and mountains from Texas to California, youthful Henry Bowie, a Texas adventurer, with his friends, Ben Pardaloe and Simmie, an Indian scout, sight the party of Indians who have carried off the two little girls. The three Texans attack the war party of fifty-odd Indians. The girls are saved. The group makes its way out of the hills and meets the distraught Monica, the children's maid. The girls are left with Monica and the friendly Padre at a mission, and the Texans proceed to Monterey. Here Bowie completes his business for Gen. Sam Houston of Texas, who has commissioned him to deliver an important message. Bowie decides to have a look at the wild untamed California. Bowie disappears but returns eight years later and makes the acquaintance of a friendly Spanish family at the Rancho Guadalupe. He is attracted by the lovely Carmen, daughter of Don Ramon, the rancho's owner. Bowie saves Don Ramon's life in a fierce fight with a huge grizzly bear. Don Francisco, youthful heir to the rancho's acres, is captured in a battle with Indian raiders. Bowie sets out to help his friends.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

It was a bootless search with no signs of the Indians. Daylight was well advanced by the time the four had covered the canyon and Pedro had signaled for the horses.

Riding back, the quartette found the vaqueros riding in circles over the scene of the fight of the day before. They had counted, when Bowie rejoined them, the bodies of eleven dead Indians, but there was no sign of Don Francisco. Once more Bowie ordered the party up the canyon to pick up the trail. He himself was riding slowly ahead, alone and under a driving rain, across a field of loose rock and shale when his eye was drawn from the trail by an object lying near to a clump of stunted trees. He reined toward it, looked again, hesitated, then sprang from his horse. It might be the naked body of a dead Indian. But a closer look brought a shock; it was the rain-sodden body of Don Francisco.

A saddle blanket was stretched on the ground. The dead lad was wrapped in it and slung across the back of a horse, and with every precaution against ambush the sober horsemen made their way back to open country and the rancho. At Bowie's insistence Pedro rode ahead to break the news; he himself did not feel equal to it.

Loud walls greeted the little cavalcade as it approached the rancho. Servants and children made no effort to restrain their grief. At the ranch house door Don Ramon, stern faced and bitter, stood with Dona Maria, who was supported by Carmen, the two women in tears. They suppressed their sobs as best they could while Don Francisco was awkwardly but tenderly carried in by the tall Texan and laid on the young Don's own bed and in his darkened room.

Don Ramon summoned Dr. Doane from Monterey, and under his skillful hands the features of Don Francisco, as he lay in the candlelight the next night in his rough coffin, were less terrible, more nearly natural and, in some measure, more consoling to those who gathered around him to recite the prayers of the dead. Indeed the whole night heard their voices raised to heaven in intercession for a dear one. Hour by hour groups of the household, from master and mistress to the lowliest of the servants, relieved one another in vigil beside the rude bier.

Next day, lying before the mission altar while Padre Martinez and his Franciscan assistant intoned the Mass of Requiem, the youthful victim seemed in his repose almost to speak words of consolation to those who still mourned him with unceasing sobs. Bowie had never seen just such a Catholic funeral. The solemn ritual, the marked reverence, the uplifted hands of the suppliant at the altar, joined by those uplifted at times at the altar rail—moved him beyond any spectacle he had ever witnessed.

Dr. Doane spent the night at Guadalupe and sat late with Bowie and Don Ramon. Again the master of the rancho talked with the Texan about taking over the management of the great domain.

"Now more than ever I need you, Senor Bowie," said Don Ramon quietly. "My nephew was my right arm; without him, I am helpless. And without him, well-nigh defenseless. He has handled the vaqueros, managed the matanzas, arranged the sale of the hides and tallow. These marauding Indians—from now on they will be bolder, encouraged by this partial victory. . . . Don Ricardo," he said, addressing Dr. Doane, "will you not also lend your voice to persuade our Texan friend to become, as you have, a Californiano?"

"Give me tonight to think it over, Don Ramon," said Bowie at last. "Tomorrow I will decide. In any event, I thank you. Good night."

After breakfast next morning Bowie and Don Ramon sat down in the rancho office. "If you still feel you want to go ahead, Don Ramon," said Bowie, "I'm inclined to come to stay here with you."

Don Ramon's face lighted. The details were worked out. The two scouts, Pardaloe and Simmie, were offered, and later accepted, work as vaqueros. But with the understanding that when the wanderlust seized them they were free to head for the mountains, where, in fact, they had spent most of their time in California.

After the difficulties had been ironed out Don Ramon ordered horses. Bowie was introduced to Pedro and his vaqueros as major-domo. Taking Pedro, Pancho, Pardaloe and the Creek with them, Don Ramon and Bowie spent hours riding over the valley and through the hills granted by the king of Spain to his favored retainer, Don Ramon Estrada, grandfather to the present Don Ramon.

Dona Maria had been told of the new arrangement. She was so pleased that she hastened to Carmen to tell her of the coming of Bowie. Carmen looked up with a face almost as black as a thundercloud.

"Why, Carmen," protested her mother, "don't you like it?" "Like it?" exclaimed the impetuous girl. "An Americano to come to Guadalupe? Could not Father have picked anybody but an Americano to take poor Francisco's place?"

But Carmen was at least mistress of her feelings and she kept them to herself. At dinner that night there was present a new member of the



With a face almost as black as a thunder cloud.

household, and he was received by the family with the perfect courtesy of their training and traditions. Bowie, in spite of himself, was a bit self-conscious. Perhaps that was why he talked more than was his wont. He was likewise conscious of choosing his words carefully in the new tongue because of listening ears at the lower end of the table.

Within a short time the rancho routine had already become so established that the presence of Bowie seemed a part of the considerable domain. Pedro, a full-blooded Mariposa Indian, took to Bowie from the start. Simmie told him of one fairly stiff brush in company with the Texan and how he had taken stock of his bearing when baptized by a cloud of arrows. In the estimation of an Indian one characteristic ranks above all others—steadiness under fire. Every day Pedro and his fellow Indian vaquero, Pancho, rode the valley and foothills of Guadalupe with Bowie, who gradually applied to its better management the experience and practice of a Texas cattleman.

One morning word came to the rancho that the Indians had raided the mission. Two hundred horses were missing and fifteen women and girls taken. The storeroom was robbed and emptied.

"Senor Bowie, what do you think of this raid?" Don Ramon asked the Texan at breakfast.

"Pedro thinks this is another of Yosco's jobs. Pedro knows these mountain Indians pretty well. But there's one thing certain: every time Indians make a successful raid they are bolder for the next. They need a lesson."

He spoke slowly.

"What shall we do?" asked Don Ramon, interrupting him. "I know of but one thing," continued Bowie; "that is to go after them. Anyway, that's what we used to do down on the Staked Plain when they got too troublesome. There's another angle in this for me, Don Ramon. This Yosco led the raid that resulted in the death of Don Francisco—murder I call it, for the boy was killed after he was wounded. He was my friend. I'd travel from here to hell-fire to punish his murderer."

His speech and manner were still deliberate, almost cold, but his tone carried conviction of deadly intent.

Again he was cut short. Pedro, hat in hand, had run hurriedly to the doorway. "Vaquero from the mission!" he exclaimed.

The Don with Bowie, followed closely by Dona Maria and Carmen, hastened to the portico. The messenger was bareheaded and his horse foam flecked and restive. He spoke fast. "Padre Martinez

has sent me. The Indians were led by Yosco. He has carried away twenty-five girls and women and three hundred horses. Padre Martinez begs you will send help today. He fears they will be back tonight to carry off more of the women."

Don Ramon raised his hand. "Tell Padre Martinez we will send help."

The horseman, touching his forehead, whirled away. A clatter of hoofs and a trail of dust marked his way across the valley to the southern rancho. The group on the porch watched him.

"Don Ramon looked to Bowie. 'We must act,' he said. 'The mission must be protected.'"

"What about their soldiers?" demanded Bowie of Pedro. "Hasn't this worthless government enough regard for the property to supply guards for it?" He did not wait for an answer. "Pedro," he said sharply, "fetch Pardaloe and Simmie. . . . Who is this?" he asked. A second unobtrusive vaquero had stood at Pedro's elbow, listening to every word.

"This is Sanchez, my right-hand trailer," answered Pedro. "He is frantic. Among the girls Yosco has stolen is his sweetheart, Amelita."

"He knows the mountains?" asked Bowie.

"Born and lived there. He is down here only two years."

"And Yosco has stolen his girl?" mused Pedro.

"They were to be married soon."

"You should have some idea of where this Yosco hides," said Bowie, eying Sanchez closely. "He is no doubt the same wretch that killed Don Francisco. We must get him. Where does Yosco hide?"

"Senor," muttered the stolid Mariposa, "he has three places."

"Which is the closest?"

"If he is in the closest he cannot be taken. You must wait till he goes farther up in the mountains."

Bowie was impatient. "Tell me, talk faster: where is this closest place?" he asked curtly.

"In a canyon of the Santa Maria River, high up in a cave—"

Pedro interrupted. "I know that big cave, senor. It opens on a canyon wall five hundred feet high. The cave is halfway up, reached by a ledge not three feet wide. You see, there is no chance to attack while Yosco hides there. You must wait."

"This cave—it opens out on a canyon wall. Is the opening narrow or wide?"

"Wide, senor."

"We will try for the cave, Pedro."

"But, senor!"

Bowie shook his head. "We will start tonight. What say, Sanchez?"

The Mariposa did not speak. He looked at the ground, thinking. Don Ramon, Dona Maria, Carmen, waited in suspense.

"Sanchez," asked Bowie casually, "are you afraid?"

The taunt stung the Indian into words. "For himself, Sanchez fears nothing. Yosco has stolen his Amelita. Sometime," Sanchez spoke slowly on, "sometime Sanchez will kill him."

"You speak like a man, Sanchez. But help us now to get back the horses and the mission women. Can you take us to the cave?"

Again the Mariposa paused. "I can take you to the cave, senor. But the only chance would be to surprise them. If they discover you first every man you take along will be killed. Do you want to take that chance?"

"Why not? And we must start tonight," Sanchez nodded assent.

"We must get to the cave before daybreak." The Indian nodded again. "We shall need you for a guide."

A small cloud of dust could be seen on the northern horizon. "Those are rancheros," said Bowie. "They will be here soon."

The rancheros rode up in twos and threes. Felipe and Jose Martinez from Pinole; Antonio Bernal from Santa Teresa, Francisco Soto from El Molino; Pedro Arguello from San Miguel; Sebastian Pacheco and Ignacio Alviso from Vicenti.

The sun was hot. Francisco Soto, who was pugnacious but fat, suggested moving to the shade of the portico. Bowie vetoed the suggestion. "Let us keep away from the servants' ears," he suggested. "These Indians are not all to be trusted. If we don't surprise Yosco, he will surprise us; that Indian must be a smart hombre."

The conference moved, as a compromise, to the shade of a spreading oak. Two hours went to impressing on the group the details of the plan of attack. "And I don't want anyone to ride into this without warning him of the danger," said Bowie as the meeting broke up. "It is a dash into enemy country. If our attack fails some of us will not come back, and if anyone wishes to drop out now there will be no hard feelings. We meet at eight o'clock at the mission."

That night the Spanish blood was up. Every don who had been summoned was on hand at the evening rendezvous.

Their numbers had been handsomely supplemented by rancheros from the south—in all, twenty-eight men rode from the mission that night for the stronghold of the outlaw Indians in Santa Maria Canyon. It was only a handful of men for an invasion, but they were twenty-eight men, each capable of giving an account of himself.

CHAPTER IX

At Don Ramon's suggestion Bowie was made captain of the company, and it was agreed to obey his orders.

"You all understand, I suppose, that we must depend on Sanchez to take us to the canyon?" explained Bowie. "If we fail to find the Indians in the cave our work is lost because we can't follow them into the mountains with a skeleton company. We are taking the chance of finding them. I think, a good chance. Sanchez, we are ready to start when you give word."

"A few moments, senor. When the big star shows in the east we start," said the Indian in a very low voice.

"And when the column moves, not a word is to be spoken by anyone," added Bowie to the company. "Not a whisper nor a cough nor a laugh nor a sneeze. This is no holiday ride—some of us may not come back. You are going against a chief with the reputation of being the wildest of the mountain outlaws. Sanchez says we need every precaution. Are you all in moccasins? If not, provide yourselves here. Look to your rifles, carbines, knives and your ammunition. If there is a fight there will be no time to correct our mistakes. Yosco will do that for us."

At midnight the ghostlike column had penetrated the higher mountains. Sanchez halted the party in a small grassy glade. Here they dismounted. Three men, Don Ramon and two vaqueros, were detailed to guard the horses—above the glade the trail could be followed only on foot. The advance was begun single file, and like a writhing black serpent the column of armed men wound its way, at times faintly visible in the light of the stars, and at times disappearing into the eclipse of a mountain shoulder. Not a word was spoken—the Texan knew the tricks of Indians and left nothing to chance.

The going grew rougher than that of the sierra they had crossed. Bowie halted at times to give the col-

umn a chance to close up; and an occasional cautious "Hist!" checked the movement while Sanchez felt out the rocks for further ascent. He was following a trail along which each man was cautioned in the lowest whisper to hug the face of the precipice they were mounting—where a misstep would have plunged a man hundreds of feet into the canyon below.

At long last the struggling rancheros, who had they not been men of spirit, would have sunk under the exhaustion of their long and dangerous climb, were led in the darkness to a rock chimney in the sheer face of the precipice. Within the walls of this they could stand in a group.

"We are two hundred feet from the cave," whispered Bowie to those nearest him. The splashing of a small waterfall in the canyon made it possible to speak in whispers; the news was cautiously relayed to the whole company.

"Take a last look at your carbines and rifles. Have your knives handy if we're rushed. The trail splits here. Sanchez wants six volunteers to follow him up another hundred feet. He will post them high above the cave where they can fire down at the raiders or roll boulders on their heads—who wants to go? But," he added truthfully, "you should know that if we're licked there's no possible salvation for these six."

Every man of the twenty-eight volunteered. Three rancheros and three vaqueros were chosen. Like men chosen for death, the six with their guide crept and crawled to the last difficult post. Even Bowie, with keen ears, awaiting with the main body the return of Sanchez, could hear nothing of the volunteers after they had gone fifty feet.

"Now," whispered Sanchez on his return, "you have kept quiet. Keep quiet. Try not to start a single chip of rock under your feet, for it will rattle all the way down the canyon wall. They are in the cave—that much I know now. Get on your hands and knees this time for the last climb. I think we've got them."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

FARM TOPICS

SHEEP RAISING YIELDS PROFITS

Breeding, Management and Feeding Vital Factors.

By L. I. CASE

Growers who make the most money from their sheep and who receive top prices for their lambs and wool aren't turning this trick by accident.

They have learned something about the many factors which contribute to growing a product in ready demand by the market. Chief among these factors are good breeding, feeding, and management practices.

In breeding, the successful sheepman is careful to select short-legged, compact, blocky rams rather than the long-legged, coarse, upstanding type. Then he ships to market each year his wether lambs and part of his ewe lambs but holds back the best ewe lambs for replacing old and poor-producing members of the flock.

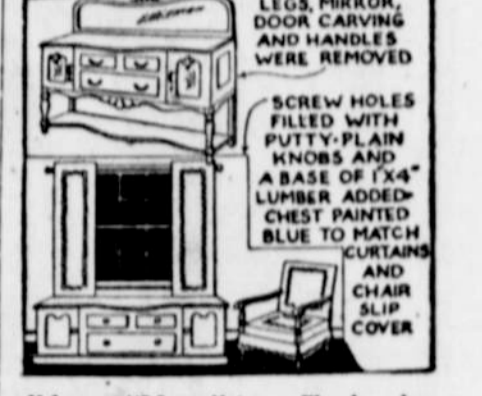
Good feeding, placed by many shepherds ahead of good breeding, is likewise highly important in the production of high-grade market animals. Plenty of milk is probably the most important feed item in producing top-notch lambs. This means that the ewes must be fed for milk production.

Many growers feed their lambs some grain in addition to the milk. This is often placed in a creep where the lambs may help themselves without being disturbed by the older sheep.

In addition to good feeding and good breeding, there are a large number of approved management practices that the most successful shepherds follow. One of the most important is a regular monthly drenching for the control of internal parasites.

Transformation of Gram's Old Buffet

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS
YOU have heard quite a good deal in these articles about Grandmother, who is just "Gram" to her family. Also about her favorite grandson, Bill, and his up-and-coming bride, Marty—the same for whom Gram made the stunning rag rug in Sewing Book 3. Then there is Bill's kid sister, Betsy, who streamlined the old iron bed illustrated in Book 3. You



all know "Mom," too. She has become almost famous because of her curtains and slip-covers and "The Rug That Grew Up With the Family." And there is "Dad" who is handy with hammer, saw and screw driver.

Well, recently the family has "ganged-up" on Gram about her fancy out-of-date buffet. They think she deserves and can afford something new. Gram decided to get rid of the buffet, then Marty said that she wanted it! This sketch shows you one of the things she and Bill did with it. Watch next week for what became of the mirror and legs.

NOTE: That is white rick-rack that trims the blue chambray curtains and slip-cover. The chair is the one made over from an old rocker described in the new Book 5. To get your copy send order to:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS
Bedford Hills New York
Enclose 10 cents for Book 5.
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'Frame' Vegetable Plots Are Proving Successful

Farm families in sections of the country subject to excessive heat and insufficient rainfall have found that they can still raise enough fresh vegetables for home use by planting frame gardens.

Though they have been used by some farmers for a number of years, it was not until the past year that their use became widespread. The Farm Security administration has sponsored the gardens as an aid to a balanced diet, especially where drouth has prevented farmers from growing many vegetables for home consumption.

Many of the farmers have used scrap lumber in constructing the frame. It is usually four or five feet wide, 12 to 18 inches high, and as long as desired. Frequently a subirrigation system is installed to improve production. This requires less water and less labor than surface irrigation—nor does the garden crust over. Homemade concrete tiles, or even tin cans are used for subirrigation. They are placed in rows two or three feet apart the length of the garden plot at a depth of 12 to 14 inches, and connected to the water supply. Over this system is laid fertile soil. Sacks can be placed around the sides to give protection from the wind and sun. A thin cloth is spread over the top to protect the green stuff from excessive heat or cold.

As soon as the soil has been cleared of one crop, it can be replanted. Thus, the same families have fresh vegetables most of the year around. These frame gardens cut down the grocery bill, but another important function is supplying food with some of the vitamins necessary for proper nutrition and good health.

Aiding Farm Migrants
"While federal agencies have been acting to help the migrants already on the road, their main efforts," Secretary Wallace recently explained to the senate civil liberties committee, "have been devoted to checking migration at its source. For every dollar which the Farm Security administration has used to aid migrants in California, for example, it has used \$20 for the rehabilitation of needy farm families in the five states from which most of the Pacific coast migrants originally came—Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Throughout the nation it has used nearly \$480,000,000 in the last five years to help low-income farm families get a new foothold in their home communities."

Candling Tests Quality

More poultrymen—particularly those who sell direct to housewives or local retailers—should candle their eggs before selling them.

Sometimes an absolutely fresh, new-laid egg will be unsuitable for food, and if delivered the reputation of the producer, because of a bloody white, a blood spot, or meat spot. On the average farm, candling will take only a few minutes daily. A length of stove pipe and a light make a good candle.



To Know Others
He that knoweth himself knoweth others; and he that is ignorant of himself could not write a very profound lecture on other men's heads.—Colton.

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