

CARMEN OF THE RANCHO

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN © Frank H. Spearman WNU Service

CHAPTER XIV—Continued

"Why so much trouble?" murmured Carmen, arranging the flowers in leisurely fashion in her lap. "Don't mind the thorns."

"Only roses for you," replied Bowie.

They walked down through the hills together. Their own group had gathered at a camp table where Don Francisco was dealing Twenty-One. Don Vicente espied the truant couple first. He lifted his voice, ostensibly to welcome them, but chiefly to attract the attention of the rest of the party.

"Ah!" he cried. "We feared you were lost!"

Then, walking toward Bowie and Carmen, Don Vicente carried Carmen's big fern book in his hand and her shawl on his arm. Bowing somewhat flippantly to Bowie, he said with marked deference, "Since you already have the fair Senorita, perhaps you would like to carry her shawl!"

"It would be an added honor," retorted Bowie. He took the laugh that went around with entire composure and, turning, asked Carmen whether she would not now go ferning. "I know where there are some rare specimens," he declared.

But Carmen had already colored rather more than she liked and declined further excursion. Riding home, Don Vicente took the post of honor at Carmen's side, but she carried in her arm, almost ostentatiously, Bowie's roses. Bowie had dropped into the cavalcade carelessly after losing Carmen, but he clung jealously to her book and shawl. He presently found himself, somewhat to his disgust, riding at the side of Tia Ysabel, and he did not escape unscathed.

"Don't they make an admirable couple?" she asked, looking ahead at Carmen and Don Vicente, whom she had managed to drag into her voluble talk. "I like Don Vicente so much. Of course, he is much older. But he is wealthy. And of such a fine family. They ought to be very happy together," she sighed.

"Do you mean to say that they are engaged to be married?" demanded her much-nettled escort.

Aunt Ysabel spoke guardedly and rather low to be the more impressive. "I don't know, actually, as to that, Senor Bowie. But I do know that Don Vicente has spoken to Don Ramon and that there is no objection there. Don Vicente is very wealthy. Well, here we are nearing home. It's really been a delightful ride, hasn't it? Thank you for your very pleasant company, senor."

The barb rankled deep, but the victim had nothing with which to save the wound. Early next morning he was on his way to New Helvetia.

CHAPTER XV

Summer passed at Guadalupe without the hoped-for improvement in Don Ramon's health. Worry contributed to his illness, Dr. Doane told Dona Maria. "When political conditions grow better, so an honest man can keep his house in peace," said the doctor, "he will improve."

But conditions did not grow better. They grew worse. The helpless women at Guadalupe gradually so resigned themselves to demands and raids that they grew almost apathetic in the face of disaster.

But marriages, births and deaths must go on even in the midst of tumults and wars. A cousin of Carmen's, Terecita de la Guerra, was married with a great celebration at Santa Clara Mission and went to Santa Barbara to live.

Carmen's old Indian nurse Monica, whom she had not seen since childhood, came up from San Diego to felicitate the young bride. Carmen was in Santa Barbara at the time, visiting her cousin. Both girls were devoted to the old woman and Carmen, after many efforts, got her to promise she would go up to Guadalupe for a visit.

Carmen, her maid, Maria, and Monica took the stage of a newly established line for the return trip. It was a three-seater wagon of a type long afterward so popular in California—with canopy top and side curtains for rain—and drawn by four spirited horses. The day was beautiful and the ride promised to be exhilarating. And to make it more interesting, Carmen discovered that the driver was none other than her ci-devant vaquero, Ben Pardaloe.

He was as proud of his captaincy of the new wagon, his four fresh horses and his pleasing Guadalupe guests as if he had been captain of a four-master. Ben talked importantly with Carmen, asking many questions and answering many. He placed her beside him on the driver's seat as the stage pulled out.

After a few minutes' ride Ben spoke to Carmen: "How are Pedro and Sanchez making it at Guadalupe?"

"As well as can be expected, with all the troubles that are going on everywhere. But they are not—what shall I say—they're too peaceable. We need a man who will stand up and fight if necessary. I wish you were back there."

"We did used to have good times on the big rancho, that's a fact. Things kind of got different after Henry went away—got kind of lonesome or something."

"When Senor Bowie went away everybody missed him."

"Kind of funny too," Pardaloe rambled on. "Looked to me as if Henry never would leave Guadalupe. He used to say there was no place on the whole earth like it. He was always talking about something around the place—seemed as if he even liked the bars. Then he turned clean over. Couldn't interest him in nothing—not a thing. Got so he wouldn't hardly open his mouth. Then all of a sudden he was hell-bent for going back to Texas. I wouldn't go back there if you'd give me the whole darned republic."

"And then back the boy comes to California after all. How some men change their minds! What do you think, senorita?"

"Senor Ben," exploded Carmen suddenly, "I don't think. I don't know what's to become of us, with all this robbing and murdering around us. First it was the Indians. Now it's everybody, white and red. Do you ever hear from Senor Bowie?"

"Seen him last trip up at Yerba Buena—though company says we've got to call it San Francisco, now."

"How is he?"

"Just fine."

"Did he say anything about Guadalupe?"

"Asked about everybody."

"How long was he staying in San Francisco?"

"Only till the next boat."

"How does he like it up the river?"

"Likes it. Who's the old Indian woman you've got back there with Marlar?"

"That's an old family nurse. Her name is Monica. She has been visiting my cousin at Santa Barbara, and I am taking her up to Guadalupe for a good long visit. I haven't seen Monica for years and years. She's the sweetest old creature in the world."

Carmen, with her maid and Monica, left the stage at Monterey. Pedro met them with horses and a carreta for the baggage for Guadalupe. They reached home late.

It was Monica's first visit to the northern rancho. She was welcome because of her long and faithful service in the Ybarra family in the South, and she was made to feel at home everywhere in the big family circle.

Carmen was especially attached to her old nurse and for a few days devoted herself to showing Monica the features of the princely domain. Only one thing troubled Monica. She was mentally alert—Carmen could detect no change in her quick apprehension of everything—but her sight was failing. Cataracts impaired her vision—but not her appetite for seeing everything and hearing everything. This was as keen as ever. Moreover, she had a fund of interesting anecdotes and reminiscences—at least, Carmen found her intensely interesting and often kept Monica in her bedroom at night to listen to her stories.

Like most old people, Monica rose early—much earlier than the household. But she had the freedom of the house as well as of the servants' quarters and wandered freely where she would.

On a morning that Carmen long remembered Monica gave her a great shock. It was so terrible to Carmen that she was prostrate for the day. It was wintertime and cold. The houseboy had a log fire in the living-room grate. Monica, looking for a place to warm herself, was on hand and promised to watch the fire after the boy had left for other duties.

Carmen, whose chamber was closest to the living room, was awakened from her sleep by a piercing scream; then followed silence. Throwing on a wrapper, the Senorita opened her door and hastened into the big room. Monica, trembling, stood looking at a portrait.

"Monica!" cried Carmen. "Was it you who screamed so?"

"Yes, little one—yes. I am sorry . . . Yes, I did scream."

"What on earth is wrong, Monica? Are you ill?"

The Indian woman was breathing hard. "Senorita," she quavered in a high-pitched voice, pointing to the painting, "who is that man?"

"That is Senor Bowie. He was our rancho manager here."

Monica threw all her little strength into her cracked voice. She was trembling with emotion and again, as she spoke, she pointed. "My little Carmen! That is the man who brought you back to me from the Indians."

"Monica! Dear!" Carmen stared at her blankly. "Surely you are mistaken—your eyes . . ."

The Indian woman calmed down a little. "No! No! I am not mistaken."

"Remember, Monica," persisted Carmen, her own senses reeling, "you do not see as well as you once did."

"I see well enough to know that face, little one. If I were blind, my little one, those eyes would stare at me. You know, dear one, for years I was forbidden to speak of that terrible day. You were ill for years afterward, and no one was allowed to speak even a word of what had happened. But I tell you, that is the man who left you with me. I have seen his eyes a thousand times. Oh, where is he, that we may know

what happened after you and Terecita were stolen so horribly?"

"Calm yourself, Monica," urged Carmen, shaking like a leaf. "Was the man alone?"

"No, senorita. Two men were with him."

"I don't think you can be right," declared Carmen, breathing swiftly. "He has never spoken of such a thing. I don't . . ."

Monica shook her head wearily. "I know only one thing. Whoever he is, that is the man."

"Until I am as sure as you are," said Carmen, "promise me you will not say one word to a living soul about this. I can find out. It will take a little time. Until then, not a word, Monica."

"No, my senorita, not a word. But find out yourself."

The almost distracted girl returned to her room to fall on her knees. Again and again she recalled every word of Monica's. Again and again she weighed them, doubting, fearing, overwhelmed with uncertainty and yet succumbing at times to the strange certainty that Monica must be right.

Dismay seized her with that conviction. The stern rule made by Don Ramon, after the breakdown resulting from her terrifying experi-

"If I kin it's yourn right off."

ence, that no word should ever be spoken of it in the family would account for a great deal. But whatever the mystery, the key to all of it must be in Bowie's hands; the thought left her prostrate.

She felt an impulse to send at once for him, to learn everything; but the sequel might be dreadfully embarrassing. Then the happier thought occurred that grizzly old Ben Pardaloe might know something, perhaps everything.

The longer she pondered, the more she felt sure that to him she must turn. Whatever there was of fact in Monica's story might be learned from him. Fired by her shock and uncertainty, unable to sleep that night, so distraught next day that Dona Maria chided her, yet tortured by her conviction that Monica was right and determined to resolve her doubts, Carmen made an excuse the second day to take Pedro and Maria and go to Monterey to waylay the old stage driver. Asking in Monterey at the stage barn, she learned that Pardaloe would be in late in the afternoon. She lunched with her Aunt Ysabel, pleading shopping to account for her trip, and in good time met the stage. Pardaloe was overjoyed to see her. She told him she wanted very much to see him. "I'm a-laying over here tonight, senorita. What do you want to see about, hm?"

"It's some information I want, senor. I think you can give it to me."

"If I kin, senorita, it's yourn, right off."

"Senor Ben," she began low and seriously, "I need some help. I know you came into California about ten or eleven years ago over the mountains from Texas with Senor Bowie—is it not so?"

Pardaloe nodded. "'Bout that long ago, I gussed, senorita, what about it?"

"Now I'll tell you what I know. About that time the Indians raided our rancho in the South, Los Alamos. They killed my father; my mother died from shock. My little sister Terecita and I were carried off by the savages into the mountains. Senor Ben, my sister and I were so nearly insane with fright that we could recall nothing of what happened except I seem to remember something about a fight. Beyond that, all memory leaves me. All I know, and this only because I was told so, is that we were brought back to the rancho—where everything had been burned—by a white man. Senor Ben, can you tell me, do you know, anything about that part of the story?"

Then the grizzled scout began to talk in his slow and deliberate manner. He retold the story of how he, Bowie and the Indian, Simmie, had rescued two tiny frightened girls from a fierce Indian band and had left them with a missionary somewhere along the Southern California coast.

Carmen pressed him for every detail and in the end she was prac-

tically convinced that Bowie was hero of her greatest childhood adventure.

In somewhat of a daze she thanked Pardaloe for all his information and the next morning she returned to the rancho.

Guadalupe did not seem quite the same to Carmen when she got home. There was too little in its present to interest her; too much in its past to think about. And despite her efforts to busy herself in things around her, Carmen faded in health and spirits. Not until Pedro came to her, hat in hand, one day in the spring with brief news did she revive. "Senorita," he said, "Sanchez and I, we were over at the valley of the pines yesterday, lookin' for cattle. Senorita, the strawberries are red."

She was sewing in the patio, her thought far from her fingers. She sprang to her feet. "Muchas gracias, Pedro, muchas gracias. We will have some. Saddle my pony."

Without an hour's delay—less than an hour—spent in a wild gallop into the hills, Carmen returned to her room and addressed a note to Senor Henry Bowie at New Helvetia.

"Strawberries are ripe."

And with a strange thrill she signed it "Carmen." She dispatched it by Sanchez. He was to take horse and deliver it only to Senor Bowie; this upon his life.

When Bowie took the dainty note in hand he was surprised. Once opened, he could read it at a glance. But what did it imply? He thrilled at the signature. Certainly Carmen could not be engaged to marry the bald Spaniard. If she were she would never write him any sort of a message, much less one so cryptic as this.

The thrill of the woman who had sealed it tingled now in the veins of the man who read and reread it over and over.

"Sanchez," exclaimed Bowie suddenly, "say only this to Senorita Carmen. Be careful—say it when she is alone. Say: I hunger for strawberries."

Sanchez stared. The message was the strangest. But the shining gold coin laid in his hand was quite comprehensible. He repeated his lesson until Bowie was satisfied he had it straight and dismissed him. "Put up your horse and go get some supper. Start tomorrow morning at two o'clock. Ride fast or I shall overtake you. Tell Senorita I said this. But do you understand? Be careful no one hears you."

Late that night, long after the house was quiet, Carmen lay dreaming when she thought she heard a low voice without her window humming her Spanish air, "Go Ask the High Stars Gleaming." A delicious feeling crept over her as the lay and listened. She scrupled even to listen—it seemed like forbidden fruit; but, like forbidden fruit, very sweet.

It was Henry Bowie, she knew for certain. None but a madman would have essayed that song on the rancho at midnight. He had ridden hard all day to sing late at night.

She sat up in bed and thought. Some acknowledgment she must make. She tiptoed stealthily to her dresser, found a candle, lighted it, and crept toward her window. All that Bowie saw was a white arm slowly extended and a lighted candle set cautiously within the pane. The singer no longer bespoke the favor of the high stars; a greater light quickened his heartbeats in that flame of the candle. And as he reached the end of a dim strain in his song the white arm once more reached forward, and the candle was put out to signify his dismissal.

There were surprises at Guadalupe next morning. Senor Bowie appeared, an unbidden guest, for breakfast. There was much laughter and joyous welcome at seeing him from all except Carmen. She was becomingly reserved. But she could not altogether control the color that heightened in her cheeks so early.

"I just thought I'd drop down and see how things were running at Guadalupe," said Bowie to Don Ramon, laughing, of course.

"It was awful of me to do what I did, senor," confessed Carmen when they were out in the sunshine together after breakfast and she was trying hard to control herself. "I just thought you'd like a merienda again. And this year I must be hostess for Guadalupe, and it's to run for several days."

"Isn't it lucky for me I'm here to help—if I may."

"It was awfully nice of you to protect me at breakfast, senor. It was a perfectly shameful thing for me to do—flying in the face of everything. No matter! Don Ramon and Dona Maria don't suspect the strawberries. Only faithful Sanchez has the secret."

"Our secret."

"I didn't say that. I am going to take Pedro and ride over to inspect the strawberries. Do you suppose I might find you over that way after a while?"

"Before you get there."

"You and I got terribly scolded that time I rode out with you early in the morning. We poor senoritas have to be so careful!" she said demurely.

"Look for me when you near the valley."

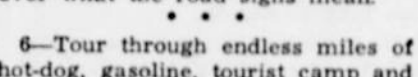
(TO BE CONTINUED)



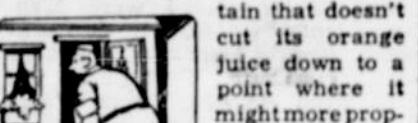
THOUGHTS AT THE CLOSE OF SUMMER

The summer season is closing, and the great American public has only a few weeks more in which to:

- 1—Get its discomforts away from home.
- 2—Sleep on a mattress stuffed with anthracite coal in a bed that is a souvenir of the metal industry at its worst.
- 3—Become accustomed to mosquitoes in bedrooms, crickets in the closets, hornets in the sun porch, ants in the table linen and spiders all over the premises.
- 4—Drive from 100 to 500 miles in an overloaded flivver with poor brakes, no sunshield, one defective headlight and a constant aroma of something burning.
- 5—Spend days at a time in heated arguments over what the road signs mean.

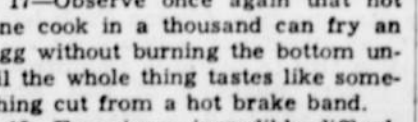


- 6—Tour through endless miles of hot-dog, gasoline, tourist camp and souvenir doggie-and-doll zones in the insane belief that it all comes under the head of enjoying scenery.
- 7—Waste hours in country barns displaying "Antiques" signs so the little woman can look at spinning wheels she doesn't want, ox yokes she can't possibly use and early American shaving mugs that don't mean a thing to her.
- 8—Learn what America's doctors are prescribing for belly-ache this summer.
- 9—Spend two or three terrible nights in those piano boxes known as tourist camp cottages.
- 10—Determine how much the human system can endure in the matter of steamed clams, fried clams, clam fritters and clam chowder, not to mention lobsters, crabs, cucumber salads and the strange fish native to stranger communities.
- 11—Pursue the search for a hotel, luncheon, drug store or drink fountain that doesn't cut its orange juice down to a point where it might more properly be labeled "Hydrant Juice."
- 12—Sample some of the world's worst coffee.
- 13—Find out where the worst chefs go in summer.
- 14—Make the annual discovery that there is no sense in trying to get any salt from a salt cellar at a shore resort.
- 15—Discover that a change in courses makes no difference in your golf game.
- 16—Find out that 97 per cent of the instantaneous hot-water systems in the rural districts are out of order.
- 17—Observe once again that not one cook in a thousand can fry an egg without burning the bottom until the whole thing tastes like something cut from a hot brake band.
- 18—Experience incredible difficulty getting a room that is not located directly over the hotel garage, a new federal project involving steam shovels on a night shift, or one flight over the ballroom where the worst orchestra in North America has been engaged for the summer season.



THE MAIN CONCERN

With problems high and mighty, To seize this world and shake it, The question day and nighty Is, "Will the Yankees make it?"



Night harness racing is to be held for 30 nights on the track built for auto speed racing on Long Island. A million dollars was sunk at this track to make it a motor speedway, and if the horses don't do so well you can attribute it to a major outbreak of what is known as the horse laugh.

Thumbnail description by R. Roelofs Jr.—"She loved beauty . . . and was never without a mirror."

Overheard by Seymour: "She must be a telephone girl; I said 'Hello' to her twice and got no answer."

TO LI HUNG GILES
Me no care what Confucius say, But still . . . me lissen, anyway! —Majorie Lederer.

Elmer Twitchell would like to see a Gallup Poll taken to see whether there should be any more Gallup Polls.

Add similes: As bored looking as a member of a night club Hawaiian orchestra singing the words of a native love song.

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

To remove a slight iron scorch mark from white clothes rub the scorched area lightly with peroxide. Then rinse it thoroughly in cold water. Peroxide removes the color from colored clothes, however.

Punches and fruit beverages improve upon standing. Place them in covered jars and store them in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours. A tart beverage is also more refreshing than a thick sirupy one.

Bake apples with only a small amount of sugar so that the characteristic flavor is not disturbed.

Add chopped parsley, minced sweet pickles or finely cut olives to mayonnaise used in summer salads.

When preparing gelatin desserts, if left-over fruit juice is used instead of water, the desserts will be much richer.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

HOTEL ASSEMBLY
NINTH & MADISON, SEATTLE
Comfortable Modern Rooms
Daily \$1.25 Weekly \$6 Up
Coffee Shop Dining Room

DENTAL PLATE REPAIR
2 HOUR SERVICE in Most Cases
Bring or Mail Your Plates for Repair—CREDIT Extended

DR. HARRY SEMLER, Dentist
315 1/2 BLDG. - 37th & BOERSON - PORTLAND, ORE.

PHOTO FINISHING
16 PRINTS 25¢
Roll Developed and 16 prints 25¢. 18 Reprints 25¢.
REX PHOTO - OGDEN, UTAH

Glorious Victory
A more glorious victory cannot be gained over another than this, that when the injury began on his part, the kindness should begin on ours.—John Tillotson.

ADVISES YOUNG GIRLS ENTERING WOMANHOOD



Thousands of young girls entering womanhood have found a "real friend" in Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to help them go "smiling thru" restlessness, moody, nervous spells, and relieve cramps, headache, backache and embarrassing fainting spells due to female functional irregularities. Famous for over 60 years. WORTH TRYING!

For the Base
Slander meets no regard from noble minds; only the base believe what the base only utter.—Beller.

DIARRHEA

DUE to dietary indiscretions, change of drinking water or sudden changes in weather can be quickly relieved by Wakefield's Blackberry Balsam. For 94 years a household remedy. Sold at all drug stores. Be sure to ask for genuine

Wakefield's BLACKBERRY BALSAM
Compound

End of Man
The end of man is an action, and not a thought, though it were the noblest.—Carlyle.

THE TRUTH SIMPLY TOLD

Today's popularity of Doan's Pills, after many years of world-wide use, surely must be accepted as evidence of satisfactory use. And favorable public opinion supports that of the able physicians who test the value of Doan's under exacting laboratory conditions. These physicians, too, approve every word of advertising you read, the objective of which is only to recommend Doan's Pills as a good, distasteful treatment for disorder of the kidney function and for relief of the pain and worry it causes. If more people were aware of how the kidneys must constantly remove waste that cannot stay in the blood without injury to health, there would be better understanding of why the whole body suffers when kidneys lag, and diuretic medication would be more often employed. Burning, scanty or too frequent urination sometimes warn of disturbed kidney function. You may suffer nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—feel weak, nervous, all played out. Use Doan's Pills. It is better to rely on a medicine that has won world-wide acclaim than on something less favorably known. Ask your neighbor!

DOAN'S PILLS