

THE RED TRAIL

By GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER XXV.

On his return to the mansion the captives did not see his master, at which he was extremely pleased, for he desired to delay as long as possible an explanation which, in spite of the wound he so complacently displayed, he feared would turn out to his disadvantage; especially when questioned by a man like the general, whose piercing glance would descend to the bottom of his heart to discover the truth, however cleverly hidden it might be behind a network of falsehoods.

As only a few hours had still to elapse before the explosion of the conspiracy, arranged with such care and mystery, the general was compelled for a while to suspend his schemes for the satisfaction of his love and hatred, and only attend to those in which his ambition was engaged. The principal conspirators had been summoned to Colonel Lupo's, and there the final arrangements had been made for the morrow, and the watchword given.

Although the government appeared plunged in the most profound ignorance of what was preparing against it, and evinced complete certainty, still the President had made certain arrangements for the morrow's ceremonies which did not fall greatly to trouble the men interested in knowing everything, and to whom the apparently most futile thing naturally created umbrage.

The general, with the curiosity that distinguished him, was anxious to know exactly the extent of the danger he had to meet, and proceeded to the palace, merely accompanied by his two aides-de-camp. He was too calm to let his feelings be seen. He pretended to be delighted, remained for some time with the President, who appeared to treat him with a friendly familiarity, complained of the rarity of his visits, and his obstinacy in not asking for a command.

Still the general remarked that all the courts were stuffed with soldiers, who were bivouacking in the open air; that several guns had been placed, accidentally, perhaps, so as to sweep completely the chief entrance gate, and, more serious still, that the troops quartered in the palace were commanded by officers who were strangers to him, and who had, moreover, the reputation of being devoted to the President of the Republic.

After this daring visit, the general mounted his horse, and under the pretext of going for a walk, went all over the city. Everywhere the preparations for the coming festival were being carried on with the greatest activity. Numerous wooden erections, raised for the occasion, filled the space usually devoted to tramway, and formed an immense hall of verdure, with pleasant clumps of trees, mysterious walks and charming retreats, prepared with the greatest care, where everybody would go on the morrow to eat the atrocious productions of the Mexican art of cookery.

Exactly in the center of the square a Neoclassical tree about twenty feet in height was planted, with its branches and leaves entirely covered with colored pocket handkerchiefs that floated in the breeze. This tree was the Monte Parnasso, intended to serve as a may pole for the lepers at the moment when the bull fights begin, and a trial bull, emballado—that is to say, with its horns terminating in balls, is let into the ring.

All the palaces near the square were filled with a hideous, ragged mob, who howled, sang, shouted and whistled their loudest.

In all the streets the procession would pass through the houses were decorated; Mexican flags were hoisted in profusion at every spot where they could be displayed; and yet, by the side of all these holiday preparations, there was, we repeat, something gloomy and menacing that struck a chill to the heart. Through all the gates fresh troops continually entered the city, and occupied admirably chosen strategic points.

When a serious event is preparing, there are in the atmosphere certain signs which never deceive the fonder of revolutions; a vague and apparently causeless anxiety seizes on the masses, and unconsciously converts their joy into a species of feverish excitement, at which they are themselves startled, as they know not to what to attribute this change in their humor.

Hence the population of Mexico, mad, merry and joyous, as usual when a festival is preparing, in the eyes of short-sighted persons, were in reality sternly and suffering from great anxiety. The general did not fail to observe these prognostics; gloomy presentiments occupied his mind, for he understood that a terrible tempest was hidden beneath this fictitious calmness. Valentine's gloomy predictions recurred to him. He trembled to see the hunter's menaces realized; and, though unable to discover when the danger would come, he foresaw that a great peril was hanging over his head; and that his ambitious projects would soon, perhaps, be drowned in floods of blood.

Unfortunately, it was too late to desist; he must, whatever might happen, go on to the end, for he had not the time to give counter orders, and urge the conspirators to defer the explosion of the plot till a more favorable moment. Hence, after ripe reflection, the general resolved to push on, and trust to accident. Ambitious men, by the way, reckon far more than is supposed on hazard and those magnificent combinations which are admired when success has crowned them, are most frequently merely the unforeseen results of fortuitous circumstances, completely beyond the will of the man whom they have profited.

The general returned to his house at about 6 in the evening, despairing, and already seeing his plans annihilated. The report of his captives added to his discouragement, for it was the drop of wormwood which makes the brimful cup run over. He withdrew to his apartments in a state of dull fury, and in his impotent rage accused himself for having ventured into this frightful situation, for he felt himself rapidly gliding down a fatal slope, where it would be impossible for him to stop.

What added to his secret agony was that he must incessantly send of couriers, receive reports, talk with his confidants, and feign in their presence not merely calmness and gaiety, but also encourage them, and impart to them an ardor and hope which he no longer possessed.

The whole night was spent thus. A terrible night, during which the general endured all the tortures that assail an ambitious man on the eve of a scandalous plot against a government which he has sworn to defend.

Sunrise surprised the general giving his final orders. Worn out by the fatigue of a long watch, with pallid brow, and eyes inflamed by fever, he tried to take a few moments of restorative rest, which he so greatly needed; but his efforts were fruitless, for he was suffering from an excitement too intense, at the decisive hour, for sleep to come and close his eyes.

Already the bells of the churches were pealing out, and filling the air with their joyous notes. In all the streets, and in all the squares, boys and lepers were letting off crackers, and uttering deafening cries, which more resembled bursts of fury than demonstrations of joy. The people, dressed in their holiday clothes, were leaving their houses in masses, and spreading like a torrent over the city.

The review was arranged for seven o'clock a. m., so that the troops might be spared the great heat of the day. They were massed on the Plaza de Bucarelli and the road connecting that promenade with the Alameda.

We have already stated that the Mexican army, 20,000 strong, has 2,400 officers. Hence, in the enormous crowd assembled to witness the review, officers were in a majority, for all the officers living on half pay in Mexico, for some reason or another, considered themselves bound to attend the review as amateurs.

At a quarter to 8 o'clock the drums beat, the troops presented arms, a deafening shout was raised by the crowd, and the President of the Republic arrived, followed by a large staff, glistening with gold and lace, and with a cloud of feathers waving in their cocked hats.

General Guerrero had joined the President's staff in his full dress uniform, as Colonel Lupo and other conspirators had also done; the rest, dispersed among the crowd.

In the meanwhile the review went on without any hitch. It is true that the President restricted himself to riding along the front, and then ordering the troops to march past, for he did not dare, owing to the notorious ignorance of the officers and soldiers, risk the execution of any maneuver, for it would not have been understood, and would have broken the charm under which the spectators were fascinated. Then the President, still followed by his staff, proceeded to the cathedral. We will not say anything about the official reception, etc., which occupied all the morning.

The hour for the bull fight arrived. Since the review, no one troubled himself about the troops, who seemed to have suddenly disappeared—not a soldier was visible in the streets; but the people did not think of them, for they were letting off fireworks, laughing and shouting, which was quite sufficient to amuse them. It was only noticed that these soldiers, though invisible about the city, had apparently passed the word to each other to be present at the bull fight. Nearly the whole of the palcos de los in the circus, that is to say, the seats exposed to the sun, were thronged with soldiers, grouped pell-mell with the lepers, and offering the most pleasant contrast with these ragged scamps, who were yelling and whistling.

The President arrived, and the circus was in a second invaded by the mob. Since an early hour the jamalca had begun, that is to say, the framework of verdure raised in the center of the arena, forming refreshment rooms, had since daybreak been filled with countless numbers of lepers, who ate with cries of ferocious delight.

Suddenly, at a given signal, the gate of the torril was opened and a bull rushed into the arena. Then began an extraordinarily indescribable scene, resembling one of those diabolical meetings so admirably designed by Calot.

The lepers, surprised by the arrival of the bull, darted, shouting, pushing and upsetting each other, over the framework, which they threw down and trampled under foot in their terror, while seeking to escape the pursuit of the emballado, who, also excited by the turmoil, hunted them vigorously. In a second the arena was deserted, the refreshment rooms swept clean, and the performers in the jamalca sought any shelter they could find on the edge of the palcos or upon the columns, from which they hung in hideous, yelling and grinning clusters.

The bull, after amusing himself for some minutes in tossing about the remains of the framework, stopped and looked cunningly around, and soon noticed the tree, the only obstacle left to remove in order to completely empty the arena.

He remained motionless for an instant, as if hesitating ere he formed a resolution, then bowed his head, made the sand fly with his fore feet, lashed his tail violently, and rushing at the tree, dealt it repeated powerful blows.

The lepers uttered a cry of despair. The tree, which was overladen and incessantly snapped at its base by the bull, swayed, and at last fell sideways, carrying down in its fall the lepers clinging to its branches. The audience clapped their hands and broke into frenzied bravo, which changed into perfect yells of delight when a poor fellow who was limping away was suddenly caught up by the bull and tossed ten feet high in the air.

All at once, and at the moment when the joy was attaining its paroxysm, several rounds of artillery were heard, followed by a well sustained musketry fire. As if by magic the bull was driven back to the torril, the soldiers scattered about the circus leaped into the ring, and be-

coming actors instead of spectators, drew up in good order and leveled their muskets at the occupants of the galleries and boxes, who remained motionless with terror, for they did not understand what was going on.

A door opened and twenty bandmen, followed by eight officers and escorted by a dozen soldiers, entered the ring and began beating the drums. It was a governmental band. So soon as silence was restored martial law was proclaimed and sentence of outlawry passed on General Don Sebastian Guerrero and his adherents, who had just raised the standard of revolt and pronounced against the established government.

Mexico was once again the prey of one of those scenes of murder and carnage which, since the proclamation of independence, has too often stained her streets and squares with blood.

The President was on horseback in the center of the arena, sending off orders, listening to messages or detaching reinforcements wherever they were wanted. The circus was converted into the headquarters of the army of order, and the spectators, although allowed to depart after some arrests had been effected among them, remained trembling in their seats, preferring not to venture into the streets, which had been converted into real battlefields.

(To be continued.)

USES OF REDWOOD.

California Coast Product a Strong Competitor of Cypress.

In searching for a substitute for ordinary woods employed in construction work, the supply of many of which is rapidly decreasing, it has been found that the coast redwood forests of California offer a product which can be put to excellent commercial use, says the Boston Transcript. California redwood is very durable and its fine working qualities make it a strong competitor of cypress, and also adaptable to many of the uses to which white and yellow pine are put. Redwood, as sold on the market, may be the product of either of the giant sequoias or "big trees," the commercial utilization of which has very properly called forth great protests, or of the coast redwood. Cutting the big trees would mean the speedy extinction of this unique and wonderful species, which is found only in isolated groves and which reproduces abundantly, so that it is a good tree for the forester to utilize for successive timber crops.

It is likely that the lumber trade will encourage the use of redwood more and more in the future, as comparatively little practical use has been made of the products of these extensive forests of California up to the present time. The use of redwood is now about 1 1/2 per cent of the total consumption of lumber. It is estimated that the forests of California have about 75,000,000,000 feet of standing redwood timber and the wise use of these products by conservative lumbering will in a degree make up for the greatly lessened supply of other useful woods.

The Redwood Association has recently requested the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture to make a complete study of the physical and mechanical properties of redwood lumber in order to obtain reliable information concerning its properties. The forest service has decided to comply with this request and will conduct a series of experiments in cooperation with the University of California at the testing laboratory at Berkeley.

Redwood timber for a long time has had extensive use in California, but not until recently has entered the eastern markets. Its use in the East, thus far, has been for shingles, finishing, flooring, siding and laths. It is probable that in the near future its usefulness as a structural material will extend because of the rising price of the commoner eastern woods, and because of its durability and strength in comparison with its weight. Its fire-resisting quality is another argument for its use which has caused it to find favor in the West. Citizens of San Francisco have always held that the fire risk in that city was less than in other cities with an equal number of wooden structures because of this quality of redwood.

Beasts That Weep.

Animals are said to weep from various causes. Grief at the loss of young ones and mates makes the dog, horse, elephant, rat, bear, deer, monkey, donkey, mule, cattle, camel and giraffe shed tears.

Sobbing has been proved in the parrot, though this may be mimicry. The stag at bay and the caged rat have been seen to weep while monkeys have wept when pitted or from terror.

The elephant has wept at the loss of its liberty, and in some cases also from vexation. The dread of punishment has caused captive chimpanzees and other apes to weep.

Joy, pain, fatigue, thirst, ill usage, sympathy, old age, approaching death and pettiness have all drawn tears from animals or at least driven them to a tearful state.—Exchange.

Humorous Divinity.

The small girl had committed some small bit of mischief quite without any wrong intention. Her mother scolded her severely and told the child that she must not only ask her forgiveness, but she must also ask God's forgiveness.

Whereupon the little girl began her prayer: "O God, can't you take a joke either?"—Milwaukee Free Press.

Squeeze in the Stock Market.

Gunner—The pretty young woman speculator seems all excited. Guyer—Yes, she is interested in a bear movement. Gunner—A bear movement? Guyer—Yes, a bug. Her fiancé is about.—Chicago News.

OPEN UP MISSISSIPPI

Text of Speech by the President at Vicksburg.

FARMERS ARE HELPED PRIMARILY

Next Session of Congress Will Be Asked to Start Improvement of This Great River.

Vicksburg, Miss., Oct. 22.—After a fortnight spent in the canebreaks, and looking bronzed and vigorous, President Roosevelt paid a flying visit to Vicksburg this afternoon.

The president was introduced by Congressman John Sharp Williams. When Mr. Williams said that Theodore Roosevelt was president of the whole country—Dixie land and Yankee land alike—the demonstration was notable. When the president arose to reply the big crowd accorded him a noisy demonstration that lasted several minutes.

In his speech here the president said: "It seems to me that no American president could spend his time better than by seeing for himself just what a rich and wonderful region the lower Mississippi valley is, so that he may go back, as I shall go back, to Washington, with the set purpose to do everything that lies in me to see that the United States does its full share in making the Mississippi river practically a part of the sea coast, in making its deep channel to the Great Lakes to the Gulf. I wish to see the levees so strongly built as to remove completely from the minds of dwellers of those lower regions all apprehensions of a possible overflow. I advocate no impossible task. No difficult task. The people of Holland, a little nation, took two-thirds of their country out from under the sea, and they live behind the dykes now and have lived behind them for centuries in safety."

"With one-tenth the effort we, a much greater nation, can take the incomparably rich bottom lands of the Lower Mississippi out of the fear of being flooded or even being overflowed by the Mississippi, and while I do not like to say in advance what I intend to do, I shall break my rule in this case and say that in my next message to congress I shall advocate as heartily as I know how, that the congress now elected shall take the first step to bring about that deep channel way and attendant high and broad levee system, which will make of these alluvial bottoms the richest and most populous and most prosperous agricultural land, not only in this nation, but on the face of the globe, and, gentlemen, here is the reason I am particularly glad to be able to advance such a policy. I think any policy which tends to the uplifting of any portion of our people in the end distributes its benefits over the whole people. But it is far easier, originally, to put into effect a policy which shall at the moment help the people concentrated in the centers of the population and wealth than it is to put into effect a policy which shall help the dwellers in the country and the tillers of the soil."

"Now here we have a policy whose first and direct benefit will come to the man on the plantation, the tiller of the soil, the man who makes his fortune from what he grows on the soil."

"Mr. Williams has said that in our day we can sink all mere party differences. Since I have been president I have tried, very much of the time, I have needed to sink them, because the differences of party are of small importance compared to the great fundamentals of good citizenship upon which all American citizens should be united."

The president said he agreed heartily that the constitution of the United States represents a fixed series of principles. Yet he said that, in the interest of the people, it must be interpreted, not as a straitjacket, not as laying the hand of death upon all developments, but as an investment designed for the life and health and growth of the nation.

More Powder for Japan.

New York, Oct. 22.—Japan is manufacturing more munitions of war at the present time than at any time during the war with Russia. Under peace Japan has one more arsenal and one more naval base than it had under the exigency of war. Both the arsenal and the naval base have been established within the last six months and at each place day and night shifts of laborers are being worked. Port Arthur or Oryoj, as the Japanese have renamed the place, is the new naval base where there is so much activity.

Stamping Out the Plague.

Seattle, Wash., Oct. 22.—At a joint meeting of the city and state health boards here last night, it was decided to ask the state board of Oregon to cooperate with Washington health authorities in the handling of the bubonic plague, which has made its appearance in this city. One case has been reported, that of a Chinese who died nearly a week ago, but the city health officers have adopted prompt measures to suppress any threatened danger.

Leak in Mare Island Dock.

San Francisco, Oct. 22.—The massive drydock which the government is having constructed at the Mare island navy yard sprung a leak Friday, and in order to save the structure from almost complete destruction it was necessary to blow out the entire front of the dock. The cost of the dock, which is being built by contract, will be \$3,000,000.

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