

# THE RED TRAIL

By GUSTAVE AIMARD

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Spanish custom—a custom which has been kept up in all the old colonies of that power—of placing persons condemned to death in a chapel, requires explanation, in order that it may be thoroughly understood and appreciated, as it deserves to be.

Frenchmen, ever when the great revolutions of '93 passed like a hurricane, and carried off most of their belief in its sanguinary cloak, may smile with pity and regard as a fanatic remainder of another age this custom of placing the condemned in chapel. Among us, it is true, matters are managed much more simply; a man, when condemned by the law, eats, drinks and remains alone in his cell. If he desire it he is visited by the chaplain, whom he is at liberty to converse with, if he likes; if not, he remains perfectly quiet, and nobody pays any attention to him, during a period more or less long, and determined by the rejection of his appeal. Then, one fine morning, when he is least thinking of it, the governor of the prison announces to him, when he wakes, as the most simple thing in the world, that he is to be executed that same day, and only an hour is granted him to recommend his soul to the divine clemency. The fatal toilet is made by the executioner and his assistant, the condemned man is placed in a close carriage, conveyed to the place of execution, and in a twinkling launched into eternity, before he has had a moment to look round him.

When a man is condemned to death from that moment he is, de facto, cut off from that society to which he no longer belongs, through the sentence passed on him; he is consequently separated from his fellow men.

He is shut up in a room, at one end of which is an altar; the walls are hung in black drapery, studded with silver tassels, and here and there mourning inscriptions, drawn from Holy Writ. Near his bed is placed the coffin in which his body is to be deposited after execution. Two priests, who relieve each other, but of whom one constantly remains in the room, may mass in turn, and exhort the criminal to repent of his crimes, and implore Divine clemency. This custom, which, if carried to an extreme, would appear in our country before all, barbarous and cruel, perfectly agrees with Spanish manners, and the thoroughly believing spirit of this impressive nation; it is intended to draw the culprit back to pious thought, and rarely fails to produce the desired effect upon him.

The general was, therefore, placed in chapel, and two monks belonging to the order of St. Francis, the most respected, and, in fact, respectable in Mexico, entered it with him.

The first hours he passed there were terrible; this proud mind, this powerful organization, revolted against adversity, and would not accept defeat. Gloomy and silent, with frowning brows, and fists clenched on his bosom, the general sought shelter like a wild beast in a corner of the room, recalling his whole life, and seeing with stark terror the bloody victims scattered along his path, and sacrificed in turn to his devouring ambition, sadly delirious before him.

Then he reverted to his early years. When residing at the Palmer, his magnificent family hacienda, his life passed away calm, pure, gentle and tranquil, without regrets, and without desires, among his faithful servants. Then he was so glad to be nothing, and to wish to be nothing.

By degrees his thoughts followed the bias of his recollections; the present was effaced; his contracted features grew softer, and two burning tears, the first perhaps this man of iron had ever shed, coursed slowly down his cheeks, which grief had hollowed. He fell into the arms open to receive him, exclaiming, with an expression of desperate grief, impossible to render:

"Have mercy, heaven; have mercy!"

The struggle had been short but terrible; faith had conquered doubt, and humanity had regained its rights.

The general then had with the monks a conversation, protracted far into the night, in which he confessed all his crimes and sins, and humbly asked pardon of God whom he had outraged, and before whom he was about to appear.

The next day, a little after sunrise, one of the monks, who had been absent about an hour, returned, bringing with him the general's capataz. It had only been with extreme reluctance that Carnero had consented to come, for he justly dreaded his old master's reproaches. His surprise was therefore extreme at being received with a smile, and kindly, and finding that the general did not make the slightest allusion to his treachery, which the evidence before the court-martial had fully revealed.

Carnero looked inquiringly at the two monks, for he did not dare put faith in his master's words, and each moment expected to hear him burst out into reproaches. But to his amazement nothing of the sort took place; the general continued the conversation as he had begun it, speaking to him gently and kindly.

At the moment when the capataz was about to withdraw, the general stopped him.

"One moment," he said to him; "you know Don Valentine, the French hunter, for whom I so long cherished an insensate hatred?"

"Yes," Carnero stammered.

"Be kind enough to ask him to grant me the favor of a short visit; he is a noble-hearted man, and I am convinced that he will not refuse to come. I should be glad if he consented to bring with him Don Martial, the Tigero, who has so much cause to complain of me, as well as my niece, Dona Anita de Torres. Will you undertake this commission, the last I shall doubtless give you?"

"Yes, general," the capataz answered, affected in spite of himself by such gentleness.

"Now go; be happy and pray for me, for we shall never meet again."

The capataz went out in a very different frame of mind from that in which

he had entered the capilla, and hastened off to Valentine.

"I will go," said Valentine simply, and he dismissed him.

Curumilla was at once sent off to M. Hallier's quinta with a letter, and during his absence Valentine had a long conversation with Thibouret and Black Elk. At about 5 in the evening a carriage entered the courtyard of Valentine's house at a gallop; it contained M. Hallier, Dona Anita and Don Martial.

"Thanks!" he said on seeing them. "You ordered me to come, so I obeyed as usual," the Tigero answered.

"You were right, my friend," said Valentine. "And now what do you want of us?"

"That you should accompany me to the place whither I am going at this moment."

"Would it be indiscreet to ask you—?"

"Where?" the hunter interrupted him with a laugh. "Not at all; I am going to lead you, Dona Anita, and the persons here present to the capataz in which General Guerrero is confined."

"The capataz?" the Tigero exclaimed in amazement, "for what purpose?"

"What does that concern you? The general has requested to see you, and you cannot refuse the request of a man who has but a few hours left to live."

The Tigero hung his head without answering.

"Oh! I will go!" Dona Anita exclaimed impulsively, as she wiped away the tears that ran down her cheeks.

"Since you insist, Don Valentine, I will go," said the Tigero.

"I do not insist, my friend; I only ask, that is all."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Valentine, Dona Anita, M. Hallier and Don Martial got into the carriage. The two Canadians and the chief followed them on horseback, and they proceeded at a gallop to the chapel where the condemned man was confined.

All along the road they found marks of the obstinate struggle which had deluged the city with blood a few days previously; the barricades had not been entirely removed, and though the distance was in reality very short, they did not reach the prison until nightfall, owing to the detours they were forced to make.

Valentine begged his friends to remain outside, and only entered with Dona Anita and the Tigero. The general was impatiently expecting them, and testified a great joy on perceiving them.

The young lady could not restrain her emotion, and threw herself into her uncle's arms with an outburst of passionate grief. The general pressed her tenderly to his bosom and kissed her on the forehead.

"I am the more affected by these marks of affection, my child," he said, with much emotion, "because I have been very harsh to you. Can you ever forgive me the sufferings I have caused you?"

"Oh, uncle, speak not so. Are you not, alas! the only relation I have remaining?"

"For a short time," he said, with a sad smile, "that is the reason why I ought, without further delay, to provide for your future."

"Do not talk about that at such a moment, uncle," she continued, bursting into tears.

"On the contrary, my child, it is at this moment, when I am going to leave you, that I am bound to insure you a protector. Don Martial, I have some you great wrong; here is my hand, accept it as that of a man who has completely recognized his faults, and sincerely repents the evil he has done."

The Tigero, more affected than he cordially pressed the hand offered him.

"General," he said, in a voice which he tried in vain to render firm, "this moment, which I never dared hope to see, fills me with joy, but at the same time with grief."

"Well, you can do something for me by proving to me that you have really forgiven me."

"Speak, general, and no matter, if it is in my power—," he exclaimed, warmly.

"I believe you, Don Martial," Don Sebastian answered, with his sad smile. "Consent to accept my niece from my hand and marry her at once in this chapel."

One of the monks had prepared everything beforehand. The French banker entered, followed by Curumilla and the officer commanding the capilla guard, who had been warned beforehand, the general walked eagerly toward them.

great and noble heart. Now let death come, and I shall accept it gladly, for I feel convinced that heaven will have pity on me on account of my sincere repentance. He happy, niece, with the husband of your choice. Senores, all accept my thanks. Don Valentine, since more I thank you. And now leave me, all, for I no longer belong to the world, so let me think of my salvation."

"But one word," Valentine said. "General, I have forgiven you, and it is now my turn to ask your pardon."

"What can you mean?"

"I have deceived you?"

"Deceived me?"

"Yes; take this paper. The President of the Republic, employing his sovereign right of mercy, has, on my pressing entreaty, revoked the sentence passed on you. You are free."

His hearers burst into a cry of admiration. The general turned pale. He tottered, and for a moment it was fancied that he was about to fall. A cold perspiration stood on his temples.

"Fathers," he said, turning to the monks, "lead me to your monastery. General Guerrero is dead, and henceforth I shall be a monk of your order."

Two days after the scene we have described Valentine and his companions left Mexico and returned to Sonora. On reaching the frontier the hunter, in spite of the pressing entreaties of his friends, separated from them and returned to the desert.

Don Martial and Dona Anita settled in Mexico near the Halliers. A month after Valentine's departure Dona Helena returned to the convent, and at the end of a year, in spite of the entreaties of her family, who were surprised at so strange a resolution, which nothing apparently explained, the young lady took the vows.

When I met Valentine Gulliois on the banks of the Rio Yaquina some time after the events recorded in this long story, he was going with Curumilla to attempt a hazardous expedition across the Rocky Mountains, which, he said to me, with the soft, melancholy smile which he generally assumed when speaking to me, he hoped never to return.

I accompanied him for several days, and then we were compelled to separate. He pressed my hand, and followed by his dumb friend, he entered the mountains. For a long time I looked after him, for I involuntarily felt my heart contracted by a sad foreboding. He turned round for the last time, waved his hand in farewell and disappeared under a bend of the track. I was fated never to see him again.

Since then nothing has been heard of him nor of Curumilla. All my endeavors to join them or even obtain news of them were vain.

Are they still living? No one can say. Darkness has settled down over these two magnificent men, and time itself will, in all probability, never remove the veil that conceals their fate. For all, unhappily, leads me to suppose that they perished in that gloomy expedition from which Valentine hoped, alas! never to return.

(The End.)

SOME JOKES ON ROYALTY.

Even the German Kaiser Cannot Overcome the Funny Man.

Rulers do not always escape the practical joker, although royalty, as a rule, is impatient of trifling and sensitive to ridicule. Even the Kaiser is jested, now and then, by an irreverent jester at his expense.

What makes these jokes the funnier to the world in general is the fact that the joker has to beware the diverse and dreadful penalties for lese majeste. The monarch himself may not notice them, but there are always obsequious officials who think to recover the royal dignity by pursuing the humorist.

A couple of years ago a German paper, presumably for a joke, published a paragraph to the effect that the favorite flower of the Kaiser was a red carnation. The paragraph was copied in almost every paper in the country, and when, a few days later, the emperor visited Aix-la-Chapelle, all those deputes to receive him wore red carnations in their buttonholes.

The Kaiser frowned angrily, but no one knew until next day, when some one, a little wiser than the rest, informed them that the flower was the emblem of his pet abominations, the Social Democrats.

One of the most extraordinary hoaxes on record is said to have been played upon the Dewan Lalla Moolraj, a native potentate of the Punjab, during the second Sikh War, in the winter of 1848-1849. The British army, commanded by Sir Hugh Gough, had shut up the Dewan and his forces in the fortified city of Mooltan. One day the besiegers were amazed by the thunderous sound of a most extraordinary cannonade followed, not by shot or shell, but by an assortment of miscellaneous provisions in a very fragmentary condition raising into the British lines.

The Sikh chieftain, it was afterward discovered, had found in the city a large store of canned meats, of the nature of which he was completely ignorant. A native spy in British pay gravely informed him, and hence, for some days the British camp was greeted with showers of Strasburg pates and other more or less mangled but perfectly edible tinned food.

Similarity of Writing.

"From my pile of autographs I take one of a statesman well known and lay it side by side with the autographs of a great author and a great ecclesiastic," writes a British publicist. "All three are very small, exquisitely neat, very little slanted, absolutely legible. Well as I knew the three writers, I doubt if I could tell which wrote which. They were Cardinal Manning, Mr. Froxide and Lord Rosebery. Will the experts tell me if in this case similarity of writing belied forth similarity of gifts or qualities?"

Only one couple in over 11,000 live to celebrate their diamond wedding.

ROADS HIT BACK

Refuse Lumber Shipments Until Further Notice.

Bellingham, Wash., Nov. 1.—No more lumber shipments will be received by the Northern Pacific railroad in the Northwest until further notice. This is the order sent out to all agents of the company last night.

This move of the Northern Pacific is expected to be followed by all the railroads affected by the injunction issued by the Federal court in Seattle Thursday night, making it compulsory on the part of the railroads to charge the old rate of 40 cents on lumber from terminal points on the Pacific Coast.

The railroads had issued a new schedule of rates that were to be effective today. This new schedule was fought by the lumbermen and resulted in the issuance of the temporary injunction.

The railroads have evidently found another method of combating the lumbermen. The latest move is the refusal to accept any shipments of lumber at any rate. The roads figure they would be taking too great a risk to allow the excess freight to accumulate until a final decision on the rate is made, as they say that litigation will ensue before the matter is settled, and many of the lumber firms may have gone out of business.

COURT SIGNS ORDER.

Grants Injunction Asked by the Oregon Lumbermen.

Portland, Nov. 1.—Following the decision rendered by the United States Circuit Court at Seattle Wednesday, Judge Wolverson, of the Federal court, granted an injunction yesterday restraining the railroads from putting in the advanced lumber rates to the East until the merits of the case can be set before the Interstate Commerce commission and a hearing be held. The restraining order was asked by the Oregon & Washington Lumber Manufacturers' association, and upon his return from Seattle yesterday morning Judge Wolverson announced that the prayer of the lumbermen would be granted.

Judge Wolverson ordered the association to put up a bond for \$250,000 that will be called for in the event the railroads finally win. This money will be used to pay the difference between the present rates and the proposed tariffs, should the railroads finally win.

Lumber companies in the state not members of the association are advised to file suits in intervention as soon as possible, in order that the railroads will not be enabled to enforce the proposed freight rates on firms not parties to the suit brought by the association.

The advanced rates, as announced by the railroads on all lumber shipments to the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, were to have gone into effect today, but the injunction will postpone them indefinitely. The increase was published some time ago and tariffs issued by the railroads. Appeals were made direct to the Interstate Commerce commission to postpone the enforcement of the rate, but as no complaint was before the commission, it could not act upon the appeal.

MONEY IS EASIER.

Acute Stage of Financial Crisis Over in East.

New York, Nov. 1.—Indications that the available supply of cash would be materially increased within a short time with imports of gold and the increase of the bank note circulation, and that the movement of cotton and grain crops would be facilitated in every way possible, with the result of increasing our credits abroad, were the salient features of today's financial situation. It seemed to be recognized everywhere that the acute stage of the crisis was over and that all that remained was to obtain sufficient currency to resume currency payments upon a broad scale and thus to restore conditions prevailing before the crisis.

The engagements of gold made in New York, Chicago and elsewhere brought up the total import movement within the past week to \$23,750,000. As the amount of gold will afford a basis of credit to four times the amount, or about \$95,000,000, it will in itself afford much relief to the existing pressure.

Calls Rivers Congress.

Cincinnati, O., Nov. 1.—The National Rivers' Harbors congress has issued a call to its members and supporters, as well as an invitation to all friends of river and harbor improvements, to assemble in convention in Washington, D. C., December 4, 5, 6 next. This in accordance with the convention assembled at Washington last year when the board of directors was authorized to call the next convention at such a time and place as deemed advisable. No special project will be advocated or considered.

Rumors of Annexation.

Seattle, Wash., Nov. 1.—Failure on the part of the Dominion government to give relief to British Columbia from the incoming hordes of Orientals may one day lead to that part of the British domain being joined to the United States. Of all the questions before the people of British Columbia, the immigration issue is by far the most important. All foreigners coming into Canada by way of the Pacific must enter through Victoria or Vancouver.

Chinese Come in Via Mexico.

Mexico City, Nov. 1.—According to a dispatch to the Record, since the first of the year there have arrived at the port of Salina Cruz 4,763 Chinese. Of this total, two-thirds have for their destination the United States. A great many of these foreigners seem to have at one time lived in the United States and are laboring under the impression that they can get in again.

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