

RAINBOW'S END A NOVEL BY RIX BLEACH

CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

"We've been talking about food," Leslie Branch advised his commanding officer.

"So?" Lopez's handsome face clouded. "You are hungry, then?"

Certain histories of the Cuban War for Independence speak of "The Battle of San Antonio de los Banos."

Lopez and his troop approached the town in the early morning. As they deployed for the attack the colonel issued private instructions to certain members of his command.

Leslie Branch, whose temper had not improved with the long night ride, inquired, caustically: "Do you expect us to buy the groceries? Well, I'm broke, and so is O'Reilly."

Lopez' attack proved a complete surprise, both to the citizens and to the garrison of the town.

O'Reilly, with Branch and Jacket close at his heels, whirled his horse into the first bodega he came to.

tunity for loot Jacket's soul flamed savagely and he swept the shelves bare as he went.

"Hey, Leslie! Get something to carry this stuff in," O'Reilly directed over his shoulder.

He had scarcely finished when Judson reined in at the door and called to O'Reilly: "We've cleaned out the drug store."

The raid was over, "retreat" was sounding, when Judson and O'Reilly ran out of the prison, remounted, and joined their comrades, who were streaming back toward the plaza.

"Yes, sir, and a lot more." "Good! But I failed. Pickles? Caramba! Nobody here ever heard of one!"



O'Reilly Whirled His Horse into the First Bodega.

ing invitations to combat. This ferocity, however, served only to terrify further the civil population and to close the shutters of San Antonio the tighter.

O'Reilly, among the last to cross the zone of fire, was just congratulating himself upon the fortunate outcome of the skirmish when he saw Colonel Lopez ride to the crest of a knoll, rise in his stirrups and, lifting his cupped hands to his lips, direct a loud shout back toward the town.

Johnnie turned to discover that Leslie Branch had lagged far behind, and now, as if to cap his fantastic performance, had dismounted and was descending the river bank to a place where a large washing had been spread upon the stones to dry.

Now this was precisely the sort of harebrained exploit which delights a Cuban audience. When Leslie rejoined his comrades, therefore, he was greeted with shouts and cheers.

Infuriated, he rode over to where Captain Judson was engaged in making a litter upon which to carry the sick prisoner he had rescued from the jail.

That's what I thought at first, but he's sick. I suppose it's that infernal diphtheria fever. We can swing him between our horses, and—

Such eagerness, such thankfulness, such passionate pity were in his friend's hoarse voice that Judson drew closer. He noticed that the faintest flame of reason flickered for an instant in the sick man's hollow eyes.

"Wait! Take hold of yourself. We'll do all that can be done to save him. Now come, we must be going, or all San Antonio will be upon us."

But Lopez shook his head, saying, gently: "It's a long march, and the litter would be better for him. Thank heaven we have an angel of mercy awaiting us, and she will know how to make him well."

When the troop resumed its retreat Esteban Varona lay suspended upon a swinging bed between O'Reilly and Judson's horses.

CHAPTER XV. Norine Takes Charge.

During the next few days O'Reilly had reason to bless the happy chance which had brought Norine Evans to Cuba. During the return journey from San Antonio de los Banos he had discovered how really ill Esteban Varona was, how weak his hold upon life.

But Norine Evans gave him new heart. She took complete charge of the sick man upon his arrival in camp; then in her brisk, matter-of-fact way she directed O'Reilly to go and get some much-needed rest.

He was up at daylight to offer his services in caring for Esteban Varona, but Norine declined them.



"Esteban! This is O'Reilly!"

ported. "That food you boys risked your silly lives for may come in handy, after all."

It was a balmy, languid morning about two weeks after O'Reilly's return to the City Among the Leaves. In a hammock swung between two trees Esteban Varona lay, listening to the admonitions of his nurse.

"She brings me new life," he told O'Reilly. "She is so strong, so healthy, so full of life herself. She is wonderful! When I first saw her bending over me I thought I was dreaming. Sometimes, even yet, I think she cannot be real. But she is, eh?"

"Don't think too much; don't permit yourself to doubt," O'Reilly said, quickly. "Take my word for it, Rosa is alive and we'll find her somewhere, somehow. General Gomez will soon have word of her. That's what I've been waiting for—that and what you might have to tell me."

"You know all that I know now and everything that has happened to me."

"It is very simple, amigo. Let me see: I had finished telling you about the fight at La Joya. I was telling you how I fainted. Some good people found me a few hours after I lost consciousness. They supposed I had been attacked by guerrillas and left for dead. Finding that I still had life in me, they took me home with them. They were old friends from Matanzas by the name of Valdes—cultured people who had fled the city and were hiding in the mangrove like the rest of us."

"The very same, Alberto Valdes and his four daughters. Heaven guided them to me. Alberto was an old man; he had hard work to provide food for his girls. Nevertheless, he refused to abandon me. Oh, they were faithful, patient people! You see, I had walked east instead of west, and now I was miles away from home, and the country between was swarming with Spaniards who were burning, destroying, killing. You wouldn't know Matanzas, O'Reilly. It is a desert."

"I finally became able to drag myself around the hut. But I had no means of sending word to Rosa, and the uncertainty nearly made me crazy. My clothes had rotted from me; my bones were just under the skin. I must have been a shocking sight. Then one day there came a fellow traveling east with messages for Gomez. He was one of Lopez' men, and he told me that Lopez had gone to the Rubi Hills with Maceo, and that there were none of our men left in the province. He told me other things, too. It was from him that I learned—"

"There, there! We know better now," O'Reilly said, soothingly.

"That is how you found me in this province. Lopez' man never delivered these dispatches, for we were taken crossing the trocha—at least I was taken, for Pablo was killed. They'd have made an end of me, too, I dare say, only I was so weak. It seems a century since that night. My memory doesn't serve me very well from that point, for they jallied me, and I grow worse. I was out of my head a good deal."

"I have. I'll agree to talk about nothing unpleasant hereafter."

"Probably. I seem to remember that somebody stole it."

"Don't Ask Personal Questions. Never presume upon your intimacy with another to ask personal questions. No matter how good friends two may be, both have certain matters which they prefer to keep to themselves. The presumption which, under the excuse of intimacy, pushes its way into the privacies of the spirit is unworthy of you. Respect your friends' reserves, and insist that they shall respect yours."

"Diseased Meat." There is a wide difference in the terms "diseased meat" and "meat from diseased animals." In fresh pork for instance, the absence of live trichinae cannot be guaranteed by the vendor from any known practical method of inspection, but if the meat is properly cooked any trichinae present are killed and hence cannot produce disease.

Mindoro. The island of Mindoro in the Philippines has about 30,700 inhabitants, and those include 18,000 Tagalogs, 7,200 Mangaynes and 2,000 Visayans.

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Talkative people seldom say much, but as long as they think they do they are happy.

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The eyes of a South American fish are divided into two parts, the upper being adapted for vision in the air, the lower for use under the water.

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Danger to Ojibway Finger. An Ojibway Indian would not point his finger at the moon, as fair Luna would consider it a great insult and instantly bite off the offending member.

Diary of a Gardener. Monday—Spaded up garden, leveled seed beds. Tuesday—Leveled up seed beds, planted radishes. Wednesday—Made new beds, planted radishes. Thursday—Killed Jones' hen, blacked his eye. Friday—Jones' dog bit me, broke hoe on him. Saturday—Made new seed beds, planted radishes. Sunday—Rain, snow and sleet.—Judge.

Power Plant Planned. The largest hydraulic power system in Europe is to be built in Bavaria and operated as a public utility, according to plans completed recently. The power is to be obtained from Walchen lake in South Bavaria, and will be transmitted by cable from Koelchell to all towns and villages throughout Bavaria. A commission, which has been studying the undertaking for two years, has submitted a detailed memorial to the Bavarian diet estimating the cost of the enterprise at 78,000,000 marks. The cost of the system is to be borne proportionately by the Bavarian government and the municipalities benefiting by this great electrical plant.

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