

THE WILD GEESE

BY Stanley J. Weyman.

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CHAPTER III.—Continued.

Colonel John had risen. He watched her go with deep feeling; he turned to his seat again with a sigh. He was a shade paler than before, and the eyes which he bent on the board were dark with thought. He was unconscious of all that passed around him, and, if aware, he was heedless of the strength of the passions which she had unbridled—until a hand fell on his arm.

He glanced up then and saw that all the men had been looking at him—even Uncle Sullivan—with dark faces. A passion of anger clouded their gaze. Without a word spoken they were of one mind. The hand that touched him trembled, the voice that broke the silence throbbed under the weight of the speaker's feelings.

"You'll be leaving her this day," the man muttered.

"I?" the colonel said, taken by surprise.

"Not at all."

"We wish you no harm, but to see your back."

The colonel, his first wonder subdued, looked from one to another. "I am sure you wish me no harm," he said.

"None, but to see your back," the man repeated, while his companions looked down at the colonel with a strange fixedness.

"But I cannot go," the colonel answered as gently as before.

"And why?" the man returned. The McMurrugh was one of the speakers, but stood behind them, glowing at him with a dark face.

"Because," the colonel answered, "I am in my duty here, my friends; and the man who is in his duty can suffer nothing."

"He can die," the man replied, breathing hard. The men who were on the colonel's side of the table leaned more closely toward him.

But he seemed unmoved. "That," he replied cheerfully, "is nothing. To die is but an accident. Who dies in his duty suffers no harm. And were that enough—and it is all," he continued slowly, "that man should happen to me, a Sullivan among Sullivans? Because I have fared far and seen much, am I so changed that, coming back, I shall find no welcome on the hearth of my race and no shelter where my fathers lie?"

"And are not our hearts cold over many a league? And the graves—"

"Whisht!" a voice broke in sternly, as Uncle Ulick thrust his way through the group. "The man says well!" he continued.

"He's a Protestant!"

"He is a Sullivan, I say!" Uncle Ulick retorted, "were he the blackest heretic on the sod! And you, would you do the foul deed for a woman's eyes?"

Are the hearts of Kerry turned as hard as its rocks? Make an end of this prating and foolishness! One finger! the man answered jerkily.

"Next week—same. Third Week?"

"Third week?" she murmured, shuddering.

"Exchanged."

She lifted her eyes with an effort from his mained hand. "How many were you?" she inquired.

"We know one another when we meet," he said. He drew his waxed thread between his finger and thumb, held it up to the light, then looking askance at the gossamers about him, to whom he was a legend, he said:

"And I will be hanged if I do!" Asgill cried. There was a change in his tone and the reason was not far to seek.

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"I'm wondering? The garcon Morty's riding is none of ours."

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(Continued Next Week.)

CHAPTER IV.

"STOP THIEF!"

A candid Englishman must own and deplore the fact that Flavia McMurrugh's tears were due to the wrongs of her country. Broken by three great wars waged by three successive generations, defeated in the last of three desperate struggles for liberty, Ireland at this period lay like a woman swooning at the feet of her captors. Nor were these minded that she should rise again quickly or in her natural force. The mastery which they had won by the sword the English were resolved to keep by the law.

They were determined that the Irishman of the old faith should cease to exist; or, if he endured, should be nemo, no enemy. Counted a hell or Naught, he must not even in the latter possess the ordinary rights. He must not will his own lands or buy new lands. If his son, more sensible than he, "went over," the father sank into a mere tenant, bound to furnish a handsome allowance, and to leave all to the protestant heir. He might not marry a protestant, he might not keep a school, nor follow the liberal professions. The priest who confessed him was banished, if known, and hanged if he returned. In a country of sportsmen he might not own a fowling piece, nor a horse worth more than five pounds; and in days when every gentleman carried a sword at his side he must not wear one. Finally, his country grew but one article of great value—wool; and that he must not make into cloth, but he must sell to England at England's price—which was one-fifth of the continental price. Was it wonderful that such being Ireland's status, every Roman Catholic of spirit sought fortune abroad, that the wild geese, as they were called, went and came unchecked, or that every inlet, Bannay, Clare and Kerry swarmed with smugglers, and who ran in under the green flag with brandy and claret, and running out again with wool, laughed to scorn England's boast that she ruled the waves.

Nor was it surprising that, spent and helpless as the land lay, some sanguine spirits still clung to visions of a change and of revenge. The Sullivans of Morristown and Skull were of these, as were some of their neighbors. And Flavia was especially of these. As she looked from her window a day or two after the Colonel's arrival, she sniffed the peat reek and plumed the soft distances beyond the lake, she was lost in such a dream; until her eyes fell on a man seated under a tree, and between herself and the shore. And she frowned. The man sorted ill with her dream.

It was Bale, Colonel John's servant.

He was musing some article taken from his master's wardrobe. His elbow went busily to and fro as he piled the needle, while sprawling on the sod about him half a dozen gossamers watched him inquisitively.

"Perhaps it was the suggestive contrast between his diligence and their idleness which irritated Flavia; but she sat down her annoyance to another cause. The man was an Englishman, and therefore an enemy. And what did he there? Had the Colonel left him on guard?"

Flavia's heart swelled at the thought. Here, at least, she and hers were masters. Colonel John had awakened mixed feelings in her. At times she admired feelings in her. At times she should rue his insolence if he had it in his mind to push his authority or interfere with her plans.

In the meantime she stood watching William Bale, and a desire to know more of the man, and through him of the master, rose within her. The house was quiet. The McMurrugh and his following had gone to a cocking match and race meeting at Joyce's Corner. She went down the stairs, took her hood, and crossed the courtyard. Bale did not look up at her approach, but he saw her out of the corner of his eye, and when she paused before him he laid down his work and made as if he would rise.

She looked at him with a superciliousness not natural to her. "Are all the men tailors where you come from?" she asked. "There, you need not rise."

"Where I came from last," he replied, "we were all trades, my lady."

"Have you been a soldier long?" she asked, feeling herself rebuffed.

"Of one year, my lady."

"And now you have done with it?"

"It is as his honor pleases."

She frowned. He had a way of speaking that sounded uncivil to ears attuned to the soft Irish accent and the whining tone. Yet the man interested her, and after a moment's silence she fixed her eyes more intently on his work. "Did you lose your fingers in battle?" she asked. His right hand was maimed.

"No," he answered, grudgingly, as he seemed to answer all her questions, "in prison."

"In prison!" she replied. "Where?"

"He cast an upward look at his questioner.

"In the Grand Turk's land," he said. "Nearer than that I can't say. I'm no scholar, my lady."

"But why?" she asked, puzzled. "I don't understand."

"Cut off," he said, stooping over his work.

Flavia turned a shade paler. "Why?" she repeated.

"One God, and Mohammed His prophet—couldn't swallow it. One finger! the man answered jerkily.

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(Continued Next Week.)

Convincing Evidence.

From the Pittsburg Press.

Colonel Plummer, of New York, who hates the sight of an automobile, bought the other day, a handsome brown mare to match Barbary Belle.

A day or two later he asked his groom what he bought of the new arrival. John replied:

"She's certainly a fine lookin' 'oss, sir, but I'm afraid her temper's a bit too touchy."

"What makes you think so?" asked the colonel.

"She don't appear to take kindly to nobody, sir; she don't like me to go into the box to feed her."

"Oh, she'll settle down in a day or two. The surroundings are strange you know. I do not think there is anything wrong with her temper."

"I didn't at first, sir," said John, "but you see she kicked me out o' the box twice, and when you comes to think about it—that's sort o' convincin'."

Why They Didn't Like It.

From the Tatler.

A story is told of a well known actor-manager when on tour last year. On the first night of his stay in a certain border town there were cries for a speech, and at last the genial actor stepped before the curtain. He thanked the audience for its gratifying demonstration, and let fall in conclusion some pleasant remarks about the beauties of the town, but the speech was received in frozen silence. When he got behind the curtain he remarked to the local manager that the good people of the town seemed singularly unresponsive.

"Yes," replied the manager, "you see, your speech was all right except in one particular. You kept mentioning the name of the town where you were playing last week."

Greatness is Normal.

Great men are the real men, the men in whom greatness has been fortunate. There are not extraordinary—they are in the true order. It is the little men who are not what they ought to be.

The estimated population of England and Wales is 33,350,000, as against 31,517,000 10 years ago.

"Gone out of the way, eh?" Asgill replied with a deprecatory grin. "And the whole cargo, was it, Captain?"

"All the tubs, perfectly."

"You'd paid your dues, of course?"

"Dues, mon Dieu! But they take the goods."

"Had you paid your dues?"

"Not already, because—"

"That's unfortunate," Asgill answered in a tone of mock condolence. "Mighty unfortunate!" He winked at Uncle Ulick. "But, you know, Captain, must be paid before the ship slips her moorings."

"But—"

"Mighty unfortunate!"

"But what are the dues?" the poor Augustin cried, dimly aware that he was being baited.

"Ah, you're talking now," the Magistrate answered glibly. "Unluckily, that's not in my province. I'm made aware that the goods are held under lien for dues, and I can do nothing. Upon payment of, of course, you know, must be paid before the ship slips her moorings."

"But how much? Eh, sir? How much? How much?"

Luke Asgill, who had two faces, and for once was minded to let both be seen, enjoyed the Frenchman's perplexity. The Magistrate, who was with Flavia, and who was a rare opportunity of exhibiting at once his friendliness and his powers of drollery. He was therefore taken back when a grave voice cut short his enjoyment.

"Still, if Captain Augustin," the voice interrupted, "is willing to pay a reasonable sum on account of dues?"

The Magistrate turned about abruptly. "Eh?" he said. "Oh, Colonel Sullivan, is it?"

"Then, doubtless, the goods will be released so that he may perform his duty to his customer."

Asgill had only known the Colonel a few minutes, and aware that he was one of the family, he did not see how to take it. It was as if reason lifted its head in the camp. He coughed.

"I'd not be denying it," he said, "but until the McMurrugh returns—"

"Such a matter is doubtless within Mr. Sullivan's authority," the colonel said, turning from him to Uncle Ulick.

Uncle Ulick showed his embarrassment. "Faith, I don't know that it is," he said.

"If Captain Augustin paid, say 20 per cent on his bills of lading—"

"Ma foi, 20 per cent!" the captain exclaimed in astonishment. "Twenty—but yes, I will pay it. I will pay even that. Of what use to throw the handle after the hatchet?"

Luke Asgill thought the colonel very simple. "Well, I've nothing to say to this, at all," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "It's not within my province."

Colonel John looked at the girl in a way in which he had not looked at her before, and she found herself speaking before she knew it. "Yes," she cried impulsively, "let that be done, and the goods be given up."

"But the McMurrugh?" Asgill began.

"I will answer for him," she said impulsively. "Uncle Ulick, go, I beg, and see it done."

"I will go with you," Colonel Sullivan said. "And doubtless Mr. Asgill will accompany us, to lend the weight of his authority in the event of any difficulty arising."

Asgill's countenance fell. He was between two stools, for he had no mind to displease Flavia, or thwart her brother. At length, "No," he said, "I'm not doing anything in the McMurrugh's absence."

Colonel John looked in the same strange fashion at Flavia. "I have no legal power to act, sir," he said, "as I am not a lawyer. And that is the case of being so, I must certainly ask you to lend me the weight of your authority."

"And I will be hanged if I do!" Asgill cried. There was a change in his tone and the reason was not far to seek.

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(Continued Next Week.)

El Toreador

BY CARRIE ELIZABETH LOGAN

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"And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire at the altar, and cast it into the earth." Over the sacred spot where a golden censer had rested in the ground arose one of the most magnificent cathedrals in northern Mexico. Though rich in adornment, with priceless altar treasures and valuable paintings, its most prized possession was the golden censer discovered by its founder. The blessings that had enriched the great stone church and the small community were credited to the angel gift. It was carefully guarded by an aged priest.

Night descended upon the vast, empty vault of the cathedral. Great patches of moonlight fell from windows far above the ground upon the white marble slabs of the flooring. In a square of unearthly blue light shone the golden censer. A veil of fleecy cloud swept lightly across the face of the moon, and when the blue light again rested on the golden and gemmed articles of the altar the censer had disappeared.

The wildest consternation prevailed when morning light discovered the theft. Only the old priest remained calm and unmoved. There was a strange woman in town. She had come in advance of the party of El Toreador. People had noticed her as an unusually tall woman for one of Spanish race, dressed in black and heavily veiled. She was a devout worshiper, daily polishing with her knees the marble floor of the cathedral from the

Mexico.

A bull fight is the usual Sunday afternoon amusement in Mexico. People flocked to the large, stone amphitheater, the arena being open to the sky, but the tiers of seats covered. A stone wall five feet high protected the people from a mad rush of el toro.

This Sunday an unusual interest drew the crowd because of El Toreador, with whom none could compare. Some inferior fighters tried a little bull baiting with mock-spirited bulls. The crowd grew impatient, and a number arose, drowning the cry of the venders of dulces and pulque.

The vast amphitheater was ringing with vivas and bravos when the priest and his party arrived. El Toreador was giving exhibitions of throwing the lasso on horseback and on foot. His dress glistened with reals and pesos as he cast the lasso with a wrist of steel.

The crowd grew breathless as the door at the side of the arena was flung open, and a Texas bull, with flaming eyes and hoofs that spurned the ground, rushed in charging upon the toreador. The young man sprang aside, presenting his crimson cloak to the bull. The animal was borne past by the impetus of his charge, but turned as on a pivot, and made another pass at the calm toreador.

Suddenly arose the gaunt priest, known as "El Padre." "Die, thief of the golden censer!" he shouted.

The attention of El Toreador was directed, and the bull impaled him on his death dealing horns, tossing him high in the air. Mastadors swarmed over the barricade and bailed the bull away from his victim. El Padre was lassoed and dragged out to be butchered.

There lay upon the yellow sand a slight figure with a coil of black hair rippling from under a jaunty cap.

"A woman!" the crowd shouted. "The silence" commanded the priest. "The angel of death hovers near."

Kind hands succored the dying woman in the arena, while the priest drew Manuel and three others into the office.

El Padre placed Manuel in a chair and made a few passes over his face. "Child, where are you?"

"I am in a room with a stone floor. A double door opens on a court. Through the gratings in the door, the setting sun streams blood red. A man who appears to be ill lies on a bed. His lips move in prayer. While smoke curls from under the bed where the golden censer stands."

The party, staring with fixed eyeballs at the hypnotized lad, moved with one accord.

"Go on."

"He sits up, staring wildly. Now he falls back, motionless."

"The man is dead," said the priest. "His sister is also dead."

"Is the woman in the arena the man's sister?" inquired the lawyer, as he moved to the door.

"She is," answered the priest, arousing Manuel from his mesmeric sleep.

"Yesterday," continued the priest, "through Manuel's eyes I saw El Toreador and his twin sister. He was instructing her in the art of bull fighting. El Toreador accepted the challenge to fight the Texas bull. He hoped the wounds from the last encounter would heal in time. His courageous and well-trained sister offered to save his honor and secure the prize. She knew the virtues of the golden censer—how does not—and she planned to obtain it, believing a miracle would be worked in her favor. She came here and accomplished her sacrilegious purpose. This morning the twins exchanged clothes and arrived in town."

The lawyer announced, "The woman is dead."

"The story ends at the hotel," said El Padre.

"O la fonda!" the party shouted. "To the hotel!"



great carved door to the golden altar rail. The day of the great loss she did not attend service, and it was found that she had left town.

You're responsible for the censer. Your punishment shall fit the crime for neglect of duty," pronounced the judge when the aged priest was arraigned before him.

The priest tapped his forehead strangely. Then he spoke slowly. "This will surely die. He who fills a holy vessel with a strange fire shall perish by violence."

The wise men listened to the priest pityingly. Had he gone mad and hidden the censer? They would keep him under strict surveillance. On his way to the monastery he asked for Manuel, a pretty choir boy. An hour afterward Manuel left the priest's room. He was immediately questioned by priests and persons in authority.

"El Padre has found the thief."

"Who is he?"

"I do not know, though El Padre says I told him."

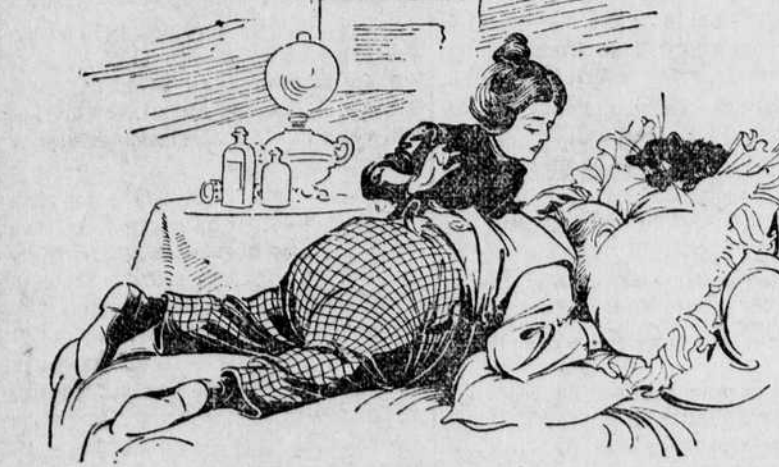
"El Padre is himself the guilty one," remarked the lawyer.

The door opened and El Padre approached the suddenly silent group. "Come with me tomorrow afternoon. I shall point out the thief."

The priest returned to his stone cell. With his gaze riveted on the damp, dreary wall, he fell into a deep reverie. The wall lost its solidity, becoming a gauzy curtain between him and a cheerless chamber. The curtain thickened and became the rising, swaying smoke from the golden censer, resting on the stone floor. In the midst of a white, curling cloud stood a woman of wonderful beauty of face and form. She was thrusting a long sword at an imaginary enemy. In the background a gaunt, emaciated man smiled approvingly. There was a strange resemblance between the cloud-veiled faces, but the ravishment of disease had marred the beauty of the man in the gaudy, striped serenade.

The cloud thickened, and the dreamy eyes of the priest rested on the white wall. "Manana," he smiled. "Tomorrow we may expect a surprise."

The town forgot its grief in the arrival of El Toreador, the hero of the arena. It seemed scarcely creditable that this slightly built young man possessed sufficient strength to repel the fierce onslaught of bulls, maddened by the torture of banderillas; yet his fame had spread through



"Mercy on me!" exclaimed the wife. "Raise your head. You will smother with your mouth hidden in your collar this way."

"My mouth ain't in my collar," came in muffled tones. "It is in this pillow."

"For the husband, by reason of his business and his embonpoint, was one of these coming-or-going men, as to looks."

Twenty-first Century Logic.

Philadelphia Inquirer: Johnnie had been arguing with his mother and had got rather the worst of the interview, which landed with a sound of "smack, smack."

Johnnie," said his father, "I'm surprised to hear that you have dared to dispute with your mother."

"But she was wrong, pa," replied Johnnie.

"That has nothing to do with it," said the old man. "You might just as well profit by my experience and learn once for all that when a woman says a thing is so, it is so, whether it is so or not."

Misunderstood Sympathy.

From the New York Tribune.

"Paul Morton, at a banquet of insurance men, said of a rival company: