



CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)
"Antonio St. Marc," said Tudel, at this juncture, "since these people fall in, you perhaps you might tell what your knowledge about it."

This was spoken in a half-threatening tone, and before St. Marc answered, he directed the servants to withdraw. As soon as they were gone he turned to Tudel and in a low, decided tone he said: "Senior, you seem to hint that I have had some hand in getting Irene away from here."

"Upon my soul, you hit the mark most wondrous well," returned the pirate, decidedly.

"I should think I might hit that part of it, since you have given me so good directions which way to look. But let this as once he settled. I know nothing of the girl's whereabouts, and as true as heaven, I am as much surprised to find her gone as you can be."

Tudel looked his host in the face for some moments, and the expression which passed there plainly told what his feelings were.

"St. Marc," he said at length, with a positive shake of the head, "you made not the least inquiry for Irene this morning."

"I did not, for I went out as soon as I had eaten my breakfast."

"But you have always been in the habit of doing so. Until this morning, as I can prove by your servants, you have never gone out without first inquiring for Irene. You saw her last night?"

"Yes—I did."

"Ah—you change color, Antonio St. Marc. You change color! Now, what occurred at your meeting with her last evening?"

"Nothing more than usual," returned St. Marc, overcoming by a powerful effort, the emotion which had manifested itself upon his face.

"By my soul, St. Marc, I believe you are lying to me."

"Ha! He careful, Jilok Tudel. I am not to be insulted in my own house," said the host, for the first time showing his anger.

"Bah! Do you think to bluff me off by that way?" retorted the pirate, warmly. "By the saints, you can't smooth this thing over so. You have planned Irene's escape. Stop! I have marked your manner ever since I came back from the Yankee, and I have doubted you. Just remember, Antonio St. Marc, that you are in my power. Our mutual pledge, made years ago, has been most secretly kept by me. Now give me the girl—give her to me!"

"I say, I know no more where she is than you do."

"Give me the girl!"

"Fool! Will you not—"

"Hold, St. Marc. I know you."

"So do I know you; and though I know nothing of the girl, yet, for her sake, I am almost glad she is gone."

"You are, are you?" hissed Tudel, starting from his seat with his hands clenched.

"Then you've played me false! You have, you lying traitor!"

"Jilok Tudel, leave my house! Leave it before I strike you!"

The pirate's eyes flashed fire. Natural, reckless and impetuous, this provocation started the last lingering irritation into action; the loss of Irene had irritated him enough to make him angry; and now, believing as he did that the man before him had used some effort to get the girl away, he could contain himself no longer. And he was not very far out of the way in most of his suspicion. St. Marc had hoped that Tudel might never get the maiden's hand, and he had shown his feelings so plainly that a man with less wit than the pirate possessed might have read them. A few moments Tudel gazed his companion steadily in the face. He was very pale, and his lip quivered with passion.

"Antonio St. Marc," he said, in a low, hoarse whisper, "now mark me—since I have been in the city this last time, you have shown plainly that you hoped I should not gain possession of Irene's hand; you were sorry that the Yankees did not keep and hang me; you cannot deny this."

"I shall not deny it," interposed St. Marc.

"And," resumed Tudel, seeming not to have noticed the remark, "this morning you arose and ate your breakfast, and went out without inquiring for her as you had always done before. And you had a good reason for so doing. You knew she was gone, and you meant not that pursuit should be instituted too soon. Now, senior—where is she?"

St. Marc's only reply was an oath of defiance.

"That's your game, eh?" uttered Tudel, advancing a step. "Miserable traitor, try that and see—"

The concluding part of the sentence was swallowed up in a fierce gasp of rage. St. Marc raised his arm, but he could not defend his face from the blow. The pirate's clenched fist came down upon his temple and felled him to the floor.

"There, St. Marc—that's but a beginning of what you'll get if you don't bring Irene back!"

And with these words Jilok Tudel strode from the apartment. It was some moments after the pirate had gone that St. Marc arose to his feet—and then his first impulse was to rush after the man who had struck him; but he checked himself, and paced up and down the apartment. His head felt dizzy, and a dull pain followed a full return of consciousness. He had just concluded to go to his chamber and lie down for awhile, when one of his servants announced that a man wishing to see him, at the same time landing him a card.

"Show him in," said the host, after he had held the card up towards the window and looked at it.

It was nearly dark now, and St. Marc drew the curtains before the servant came back. He had just returned to his room when the door was opened. The newcomer was a gaudily dressed man, in the middle age of life, and bore himself with easy grace.

"Ah, St. Marc—found you at home,

"Ay, my dear San Benito; and I'm glad to see you, too."

"Thank you. I was down this way, and I thought I'd just drop in. I've got a proposition for you."

San Benito cast his eyes furtively about him as he spoke, and his every look showed that he had something of importance to communicate.

"I'm open to a proposition from you, San Ben, at any time; so out with it."

"But this must be as secret as the grave," returned the visitor, gazing around again as before.

"You may trust me, I think," said St. Marc, curiously.

"O, I know I may; only I wanted it understood."

Here the man hesitated for some moments, and he had just made his lips up for a speech, when he discovered the livid appearance of his host's right temple, and he asked what had caused it.

"O—nothing—nothing but a mere accident. But I'll explain it after you have stated your case. Come, go on."

"Well, St. Marc—in the first place, I think you have no very great love for Jilok Tudel."

The host started, and his hands were involuntarily clenched.

"Go on," he uttered. "I'll tell you about that villain anon."

"Well," resumed San Benito, rather nervously, "I must speak plainly; and so I'll come to the point at once. I have seen Donna Irene, and I love her. I have gone crazy with the very thoughts of her. Give me the promise of her hand I'll put Tudel out of your way. Mind you—I am serious in this. I'll have him under the lap of his mother earth before another sun can rise and set, if you'll but give me the occasion."

Antonio St. Marc started to his feet; twice he attempted to speak, but both times he stopped and thought. At length, however, he said:

"San Benito, you asked me what made that mark upon my temple. It was Jilok Tudel did it! Irene has fled, and he charged me with aiding her off. He struck me when I was unprepared, and then left. Where Irene has gone I know not, but she may be found. I shall have a shot at Tudel—stand as my second; if I shoot him, come to me again, and we will talk of this. Will you take a note to him?"

"A challenge?"

"Yes."

"With pleasure."

St. Marc sat down at once and wrote the challenge—brief, pointed and fiery—and having sealed it he gave it to San Benito, who promised to deliver it that very evening.

"Wait, wait," said the host, as his visitor attempted to speak of Irene again. "Let this affair come off first. I am not apt to miss my mark!"

CHAPTER XV.

It was early morning, and Antonio St. Marc sat alone in his large private room. He sunk into a seat, and with his head bowed he pondered upon the incidents of his last interview with Irene. He was far from being a happy man; and yet there was no contriteness in his soul. There was disappointment there, and much anger. Thus he sat when the door of his apartment was suddenly thrown open, and Jilok Tudel entered. St. Marc started up and faced him. Both the men were pale, and both stood for a few moments like fixed statues. Tudel was the first to speak. He drew a note from his pocket, and showing it to the host, he said: "Did you write that, senior?"

"I did," returned St. Marc, without moving a muscle, save such as were necessary to the formation of speech.

"And you sent it?"

"If you dare."

"And you mean to fight me?"

"If you dare."

"Dare? Dare to stand before you?"

You—Antonio St. Marc! I only wondered if you were not out of your senses when you wrote it. I doubted your courage to face me in such a work."

"Say you hoped I would not meet you and I shall believe you."

"Ah—you can use your tongue. But we are to have no more of that. Come, senior. If you are ready, let us be on our way, for I have business to attend to, and should like to get through with this affair as soon as possible."

"I am at your service immediately. We will meet on the marsh at the angle of the great road. I will be there as soon as you."

"San Benito is below," said Tudel, and with these words he turned away.

As soon as the pirate was gone San Benito came up, and St. Marc ordered two horses to be brought to the court.

"I have engaged a surgeon," said the second.

"That is proper," returned St. Marc.

"I thought so," resumed San Benito. "You are both good shots, and it will hardly happen that both, if either, can escape untouched."

"You are right," answered the host, thoughtfully; and as he thus spoke he bowed his head and leaned his brow upon his hand.

"Senior," spoke the second, after a few moments of silence, "have you not some directions you would like to leave?"

"My dear friend," uttered St. Marc, starting up, "that is just what I have been thinking of. I cannot hide from myself the simple fact that Tudel is a good shot. He may get his first fire. If he does—but never mind. There is one thing Tudel longer than I promised; and I must write it now. Sit you down here, and I will write all I have to write as quickly as possible."

St. Marc opened a small scribbler and sat down before it; and having rung for a servant and ordered a lighted candle, he drew out a sheet of paper and commenced to write. He wrote very rapidly, but he was longer at it than he anticipated. However, it was finished at length, and having reviewed it he folded it carefully, and then sealed it with wax. Then he superscribed it as follows: "For Martin San Benito—if I fall!" He then placed it in the inner pocket of his velvet doublet, and turning to his companion, he said:

"If I fall—if I die—you will take this packet from my bosom. But be sure that I am dead before you open it. Will you be faithful in this?"

"I will," returned San Benito. "But," he added, anxiously, "suppose you fall, and in time to come I should fall in with Irene—"

"I have written all there," St. Marc returned. "It is all concerning Irene. And now let us go; we have no more time to spare. Tudel is on the ground even now, waiting for us, and I promised to be there as soon as he."

St. Marc went to his cabinet and took out a richly ornamented case in which he kept his pistols, and having secured these he went down to the court where the horses were in waiting, and where they found the surgeon ready to accompany them. St. Marc's horses were fleet ones, and they were not many minutes in reaching the ground, which was only a mile and a half distant from the city.

"How now, senior?" cried Tudel, in a half-mocking tone, "were you doubtful about coming?"

"Never mind about that," was St. Marc's reply.

"He had business to keep him, senior," interposed San Benito.

"Ah—been preparing for his death, eh?"

These words grated harshly upon Antonio's ears, but he made no reply. At this moment two priests were seen approaching the spot—they were coming toward the city.

"Shall we wait until they have passed?" asked San Benito.

"No," returned Miguel, the man who had come out with Tudel, "let them come, for there may be some shiving to do. Their coming is most opportune."

In a few minutes the priests came up. Their features were dark from apparent exposure. One of them seemed quite young, though not younger than many others who have friends of influence in the church.

"How now, my children?" spoke the elder of the priests, gazing around upon the party.

"We are about to settle a difficulty, good father," returned St. Marc, "and in case either of us fall, you may give us consolation."

"Perhaps, if I did my duty," answered the priest, "I should try to stop this work, for there is a better and more noble method of settling—"

"Peace, good father," interrupted Tudel. "We must fight; and you can stop if you please, but you must not interfere."

Then turning to San Benito, he added: "Come, senior—we wait your motions."

St. Marc opened his case and took out his pistols, and asked his antagonist if he would like one of them. But Tudel had his own weapons, and he chose to use them. The seconds proposed that lots should be drawn for the fire, and that the distance should be fifteen paces. These propositions were agreed to; so two blades of coarse grass were obtained, one longer than the other, and the lower ends hidden in the surgeon's pocketbook.

—the one who drew the longest piece was to fire first. St. Marc had the first draw—and he drew the shortest piece.

"Will you continue?" asked Tudel.

"Take your place?" thundered the other, made mad by the taunt thus thrown out.

Jilok Tudel took his stand without further remark, and his antagonist boldly faced him, with his arms by his side.

"Are you ready?" asked Miguel.

"I am."

"Then—ready! One—two—three!"

Tudel fired—but St. Marc moved not. There was a perceptible tremor of frame for a single instant, and a twitching of the nether lip; but that was all.

"Are you hit?" asked Benito, hurrying to his side.

"Never mind. Count—quick!"

"One—two—three!"

As the last word sounded upon the air St. Marc fired. Tudel uttered a quick, low groan, and instinctively placed his hands to his left breast.

"You are hit!" Miguel cried, springing towards him.

"Back! back!" the pirate cried, furiously. "Give me the other pistol! Stand, St. Marc! I have one more shot!"

He caught the second pistol as he spoke and without a word St. Marc took his place.

"Quick—quick! count!"

"One—two—"

But ere the other word could be spoken the pirate's right arm sunk, and the pistol exploded, sending the ball into the ground close by his feet. His second sprang to his side, and almost at the same instant Antonio St. Marc staggered back and would have fallen, had not the younger of the two priests caught him and eased him back upon the ground.

(To be continued.)

Had to Leave.

A lady had a cook who gave her every satisfaction, and she was under the impression that the cook was equally satisfied with her place. But one morning, to the lady's surprise, the cook gave her the usual month's notice.

"What do you want to leave for, Jane?" asked her mistress. "I am very much pleased with you, and I thought you were quite comfortable here."

"Yes, mum. I'm comfortable enough in a way, but—"

The cook hesitated and fidgeted about.

"But what?" queried her mistress.

"Well, mum," she blurted out, "the fact is the master doesn't seem to prelate my cookery, and I can't stop in a place where my efforts to please are wasted; so I'd rather go, mum."

"But what makes you think that your master doesn't appreciate your cookery? Has he ever complained to you?" asked the lady.

"No, mum, but my late master was always laid up through overeating—he said he couldn't help doing so because my cookery was so delicious—but master here hasn't been laid up once all the three months I've been with you, and that's just what bothers me so, mum!"—Boston Traveler.

Women Hunting the Kangaroo.

Among the black hunters of kangaroos in western Australia are 27 women. It is a professional business and there are about 125 persons who make it their regular business to hunt and capture the animals.

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Letters From Women.

Every day we receive letters from women like the following: Women who have tried doctors and failed; women who have tried Peruna and were cured.

Miss Katie Klein, 6125 Bartmer avenue, St. Louis, Mo., writes:

"Peruna has done me more good for catarrh than the best doctors could. I had catarrh so bad, but after taking Peruna it is entirely gone, and I feel like a different person."

Miss Anna Prescott's Letter.

Miss Anna Prescott, in a letter from 216 South Seventh street, Minneapolis, Minn., writes:

"I am sincerely grateful for the relief I have found from the use of Peruna. I was completely used up last fall, my appetite had failed and I felt weak and tired all the time. My druggist advised me to try Peruna, and the relief I experienced after taking one bottle was truly wonderful."

"I continued its use for five weeks, and am glad to say that my complete restoration to health was a happy surprise to myself as well as to my friends."—Anna Prescott.

A constant drain of nervous vitality depleting the who nervous system causes the mucous membrane surfaces to suffer accordingly. This is the condition called sys-

The Savage Bachelor.

"I do believe the young pair have come to an understanding at last," said the landlady.

"If they have, they are the first couple in love that ever exhibited any signs of possessing understanding," said the Savage Bachelor.—Indianapolis Press.

A telephone will be one of the equipments of every public school in Cincinnati.

Then He Hurried Up.

He was too modest to be a successful lover, and he had left forty years of his life go by without ever coming to an emotional point.

He was in love with a fair being of suitable age, but he would not tell her so, and though she knew it she could not very well give him a hint on the situation.

She was willing because she had arrived at that time of life when a woman is not nearly so hard to please as she might have been at some other time, but he was stupid and went away without a word.

He was gone a long, long time, and when he came back he found her still ready.

"I have come back after many years," he said to her, as he took her hand in greeting.

She had learned something in the years since she had seen him last.

"Well, for goodness sake, Henry," she exclaimed fervidly, why don't you take them? I'm 35 now. How many more years do you want?"

Then a great light shone upon him and he did not wait for any more.—London Tit-Bits.

Circumstantial Evidence.

"This won't do," exclaimed Mr. Phamllman. "Here it's after midnight and that young man and Maude are still in the parlor."

"How do you know?" inquired Mrs. Phamllman.

"Because I don't hear a sound down there."—Philadelphia Press.

Leather grows in many parts of South Africa.

Worms in Angoras.

It has been discovered in Oregon that Angora goats—in fact, all goats—hitherto believed to be immune, are subject to attacks of the stomach worm just as sheep are. The same remedies may be administered with as much profit as with sheep.

It is believed that electric power, generated at Niagra Falls, will be supplied to Toronto on and after Jan. 1, 1903.

Contracted Quarters.

Flat Agent—"Madam, I told you distinctly that no children were allowed here."

Tenant—"We have none."

Agent—"Then how did these walls get all banged up?"

Tenant—"That comes from our elbows."

His Name.

Stranger—What is your name, little boy?

Little boy—Willie.

Stranger—Willie what?

Little Boy—Willie Don't, I guess.

That's what mamma always calls me.—Chicago News.

No Mistake.

Egyptologist—"They had newspapers in ancient Egypt."

Host—"Well! well! Did you find one?"

Egyptologist—"No, but we found a fossil roach and a petrified office towel."

In a day one workman can cut by hand 6,000 watch-glasses

"I am glad to call the attention of my friends to Peruna. When that languid, tired feeling comes over you, and your food no longer tastes good, and small annoyances irritate you, Peruna will make you feel like another person inside of a week."

"I have now used it for three seasons, and find it very valuable and efficacious."—Miss Marie Coats.

Diseased nerves are traceable directly to poor digestion, and poor digestion is directly traceable to catarrh. With the slightest catarrh of the stomach no one can have good digestion.

Very few of the many women who have catarrh of the stomach suspect what their real trouble is. They know they feel after meals, have sour stomach, a sensation of weight or heaviness, a fullness, irregular appetite, drowsiness, gnawing, empty sensations, occasional pain—they all know this; but they do not know that their trouble is catarrh of the stomach. If they did they would take Peruna.

Peruna cures catarrh wherever located. As soon as Peruna removes catarrh from the stomach the digestion becomes good, appetite regular, nerves strong, and troubles vanish. Peruna strengthens weak nerves, not by temporarily stimulating them, but by removing the cause of weak nerves—poor digestion. This is the only cure that lasts. Remove the cause: Nature will do the rest. Peruna removes the cause.

If you do not derive prompt and satisfactory results from the use of Peruna, write at once to Dr. Hartman, giving a full statement of your case and he will be pleased to give you his valuable advice gratis.

Address Dr. Hartman, President of The Hartman Sanitarium, Columbus, O.

Writes for Cash.

Church—"You say your boy at college writes for the magazines?"

Gotham—"Yes; he's written several articles for them."

"I don't suppose he's a professional writer?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, he doesn't write for money."

"Doesn't he? You ought to see some of the letters he writes to me!"—Yorkers Statesman.

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