



CHAPTER XVII.

Slowly and drearily dragged the days away to Clarence and his boy companions. The dungeon in which they were confined was in the stout castle of San Juan de Ulloa. It was not damp as most of the cells were, but very strong and dark, there being barely sufficient light to read by at noonday. It was about a month after his confinement that Clarence was informed that a priest wished to see him. It was in the afternoon, and the day had been very bright and clear.

"What does he want?" the prisoner asked.

"It is one of our good priests who knows of your heresy, and who would save your soul," replied the jailer.

Clarence bade the jailer to let the priest come in. In a few minutes after the keeper returned, and a Catholic priest followed him in. The former simply nodded an introduction, and then withdrew.

"Well, my son," commenced Father Rondo—it was Gonzales—"how does your confinement agree with you?"

"As well as the same would agree with any man who preferred his liberty," answered the youth.

"But I suppose you find some consolation in your loneliness?"

"Yes, señor," returned Clarence. "I am consoled by the belief that the arms of my countrymen will ere long open my prison door."

"Is there not something unmentioned that occupies your thoughts at times?" asked the priest.

"Séñor!" spoke the youth, starting to his feet, "you may speak plainly."

"I will. Would you like to hear from Irene St. Marie?"

"More than from any other living soul!" answered Clarence, quickly and eagerly.

"Well—I have a message from her to you. I have had it in keeping for a month, and this is the first opportunity I have had to see you. I told her you had been put in prison. She would have come to you then if I would have permitted. No consideration of self could deter her; but when I made her understand that you would suffer equally with her if she fell into her father's hands again, she consented to be governed by my advice. You have seen the old woman, Calypso?"

"Yes, señor," the youth replied, anxiously.

"Well, the maiden went away with her. I promised that I would see you, and tell you all. Donna Irene loves you almost too well. At all events, her whole undivided heart is yours; and not until I had promised her that I would see you, would she consent to leave the vicinity of this city."

"Oh!" cried Clarence, clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, "heaven bless and protect her! But have you heard from her since?"

"Yes—this very morning. She was in the city of Mexico a week ago, and was going from there to Valladolid."

"And was she well?"

"Yes—perfectly so."

"O, I bless you, good señor, for this. Henceforth my bondage will be light in comparison with the past month. Of course, I shall know where she is when I am free?"

"Yes. You shall see me. If I do not find you, you must seek me. But I may see you occasionally. If you will help me make the officers of the prison think I am your confessor I can gain access here often."

"I will. O, I'd confess a thousand sins for one word from Irene. But you will come as often as you hear from her?"

"If I can, of course; for I only hear for you. She needs no word for me alone, she needs the warm friendship she feels for all who have been kind to her."

A while longer they communed upon the subject of Irene and her father, and then the good priest took his leave.

From that time forth Father Rondo visited the prison as often as convenient. In another month he brought further word from Irene. She was in Valladolid, and there she meant to stop through the winter, as she had found a comfortable home and was safe from danger.

Thus the months wore away, and Clarence began to wonder if he should ever be free. A strong hope had thus far sustained him, but he began now to falter. He often asked his jailers how the war was progressing, but they lied to him. He knew this from the statements of the priest. March came, with its winds and storms, and yet the prison doors were not opened. But in a few days from that time the officers who sometimes visited the cells wore strange expressions upon their countenances. Clarence kept a calendar upon the wall of his dungeon with an old nail which he had begged of his jailer for that purpose. One morning after eating his breakfast he went to the wall to make his mark for that day. It was the ninth mark for March.

"Hark!" uttered Peter, as his master turned from the wall. "What is that?"

"Perhaps the troops are turning out for drill," answered Clarence.

"No, no. Do you not hear that distant sound? That hum, as though a vast concourse of people were shouting?"

"Ay—I do," said the captain, bowing his head and listening.

"And did you not notice how pale and agitated the soldier looked who brought in our breakfast?"

"I did not look at him."

"But I did—and I noticed that he was much moved, too."

After this the two prisoners listened attentively, and while they were thus listening Gonzales Rondo was admitted to their cell.

"Have you heard anything?" the priest asked.

"Yes, good father; and we were listening as you came in. What is it?"

"A large army of United States troops is landing opposite the city, and a heavy fleet of warships is moored here."

"How?" cried the youth, leaping up and clasping his hands. "My tolerance is high at hand."

"Do not sound too much hope upon that, my son," returned the priest, with a dubious shake of the head. "When peace is declared, then you may come forth

from your prison, but I fancy this investment will not bring such an event about, unless after defeat here the Americans choose to capitulate."

"Who commands the American forces?"

"Gen. Winfield Scott, so I have heard."

"Then your city is gone," pronounced Clarence, in a calm, positive tone. "I know Vera Cruz is a strong place, but it cannot withstand the power of your enemy. Mark me—I know this."

"I cannot agree with you, señor," the priest replied, full as confidently. "Why—even this castle is invulnerable to such a force. No, no—your hope lies not in that direction."

"Very well," returned Clarence, with a smile, "we will not dispute this point now. Only let me say—and I say it with a full knowledge of all the circumstances—if Landero is here, he will capitulate. If he does not—he will not only lose his city, but a most dreadful carnage must be the result. You know what dreadful scenes must necessarily accompany the besieging of a large and densely populated city."

"I know—I know," said the priest, solemnly. "But 'tis the fate of war. O, why will men in their national capacity do that for which they would hang each other as individuals?"

When the prisoners were left alone again they passed the time in listening to the hum of the distant army. When noon came, Clarence noticed the appearance of the man who brought his dinner. He was pale and trembling.

"What is all this noise we hear in the distance?" asked Clarence, as the soldier was upon the point of turning away.

The man turned and looked the speaker in the face, but he was not used to the dim light, and he could not see the prisoner's face plainly.

"It is an army come to be cut up and driven into the sea," he at length replied, blusteringly.

"Have the Americans come?" the captain asked, honestly.

"Yes. They're fools—or else they're blind."

"They must be," rejoined Clarence, "if they imagine the people here will surrender without fighting. I suppose you are prepared to fight to the death?"

"Yes," answered the Mexican, with a ghastly effort to appear bold and determined.

And in a moment more he was gone. And so the day wore away, and when Clarence laid his head upon his hard pillow at night, he could still hear the busy hum that came up from the camp of his countrymen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Night followed day, and day came again, until Clarence had made seventeen marks for the days that had dawned in March. On the morning of the eighteenth he arose as usual, and when the soldier came with the breakfast he noticed that he was more tremulous than usual. At length there came a strange stillness over the city. It seemed an oppressive, deathly silence. But it lasted not long. Soon there came a thunder crash, and the old castle trembled to its very foundations. Anon the thundering commenced in the city, and ere long the air of the dungeon held the odor of exploding powder.

"The bombardment has commenced," shouted Clarence. "Ho, my noble boy, our people have opened the ball. As sure as fate this place must fall."

"I hope so," returned Peter.

"But I know it. If the Mexicans are stubborn they may hold out some time, but they must come to it after a while."

And now the booming of the heavy artillery was incessant. One continuous roar filled the air, and the old castle shook like a reed but in a gale. And there came the sound of that sharper, harsher crashing, as the huge shells burst about the place. So passed the long day away, and even into the night the earth shook with the bursting of the shells and rockets.

Thus passed six days, during which the roar of cannon and mortars was almost incessant. On the morning of the seventh day Father Rondo made his appearance. He was pale and wan, and his step was tremulous. He extended his hand, but the salutation was performed in silence.

"Good father," said our hero, "I am glad you have come, for now I can know what is going on. How goes the siege?"

"Alas, my son, it is a fearful work that is being done," the priest replied, with a shudder. "I have read of wars, and I know they were dreadful, but I never dreamed of such scenes of horror as have presented themselves to my gaze during the past few days."

"Then the execution in the city is considerable?"

"Oh! dreadful—dreadful!"

"But how goes it now?" asked Clarence, who had more interest in the probable result than in the mere work that was going on.

"Our city is one vast slaughter house!" uttered Rondo, with his hands clasped upon his bosom. "Houses are torn in pieces; the ground plowed up by bursting shells, and the whole city running with the blood of its people! In every street the dead and dying are lying helpless and hopeless, and the agonizing groans sound above the roar of the cannon. One moment I beheld a family—a father and mother, whose heads were white with years, and some half dozen of children who clung to them for safety. On the next moment I saw a huge shell fall directly in their midst, and in a second of time the poor creatures were torn in pieces as if by the fangs and claws of some ravenous monster! O, it is too dreadful, even for thought!"

"But will not the city surrender?" asked Clarence.

"They must—they must," the priest replied. "Day before yesterday, many of the most wealthy citizens waited upon Landero, and begged of him to capitulate; but he refused. And again last night the general was waited upon by many people; but he would not listen. Yet he must come to it. O, he is much to blame now, for if he has sense he must see that he cannot hold out many days more. Some have told me that they can

hold out four days; but this morning one who ought to know told me that two days after this would be the longest. Our people are not only falling fast, but our means are failing; while the besiegers seem as fresh and strong as ever."

Night and day came again—and Clarence placed another mark upon his calendar. It was the twenty-sixth one for March. He had hardly fixed his mark when the firing ceased, and ere long a death-like stillness reigned over the place.

"Hark!" whispered Peter.

"Ay—hark!" shouted Howard, springing back and clasping his hands. "Isn't that a glorious sound?"

It was a shout—a prolonged, thundering shout of victory, that saluted the ears of the prisoners; and it came from the distant army, where the Americans were.

Now the youthful captain was nervous and anxious. Each hour seemed an age, and he longed to greet his brave companions. But time was not moved aside at his prayer, nor could his longings expedite the transactions that were going on without. But the time came at length. When the dungeon had become dark and drear once more, and just as the prisoners had made up their minds that they were to spend another night in the prison, the tramp of heavy feet was heard in the long, arched corridor, and shortly afterwards the heavy door was opened.

"Number one hundred and seven, 'prisoner of war,'" read an officer, who held an open book in his hand. "Now, whom have we here?"

"Great heaven, I thank thee!" ejaculated Clarence, raising his clasped hands. "Charley—don't you know me?"

"Eh? What? Whose voice is that?" "Clarence Howard owned it once."

"Clar—what? Clarence Howard? Heaven bless you, my dear fellow!"

Half a dozen American officers crowded about the spot, and when they knew that the prisoner was in reality the noble commander of the Lone Star, their joy knew no bounds.

The sun was just sinking when Howard emerged into the wide court of the castle, and for a moment a sensation of horror pervaded his soul, for the ghastly evidence of the death work that had been going on were to be seen upon all sides.

On the following morning Clarence received a visit from one of the general's orderlies, who bade him wait upon the commander-in-chief at once. Our hero had eaten his breakfast, so he was ready to set out, and he accompanied the messenger back. He found the stout old general with numbers of his staff about him. He arose as the young captain was introduced, and extended his hand.

"Am I right, sir, in looking upon you as the commander of the Texas schooner of war which has done so much execution against the enemy?" asked Scott, gazing admiringly into the handsome face of the visitor.

"I am the man, general," replied Clarence, modestly.

"And how came you here?" the old commander asked.

The youth told his story in as few words as possible.

"And besides all this," he added, after he had told of the message he had received from Irene, "I know that I should gain from the maiden some information of the privateers that had fitted out at this port, as her father knew them all, and had some interest in one or more of them. But I gained nothing, as you already know, save pretty snug winter quarters."

"Well," returned Scott, "you haven't lost much, for there's been nothing of much consequence going on since you were imprisoned until we commenced this bombardment. And now what do you wish to do?"

"I should like to work, but—what are your movements?"

"I am for the Mexican capital, captain."

"Then let me go with you. Give me a musket, and let me go."

"We'll do better than that," said the general, with a look of pleasure. "You shall keep me company, and we'll find a commission and a pair of epaulettes for you; by the powers, my dear sir, we need such good heads and arms as yours."

It was soon settled that the young officer should go with the army, and take his station near the commander-in-chief, until some vacancy should occur where his presence should be more needed. During the remainder of the time that the army remained at Vera Cruz, Clarence spent the time very pleasantly with his brother officers. Scott opened the port to the commerce which had been languishing under the blockade, and placed the gallant Worth in command of the city.

(To be continued.)

Honesty in Small Things.

"Put that back!" exclaimed President John Quincy Adams, when his son took a sheet of paper from a pigeon hole to write a letter. "That belongs to the government. Here is my own stationery, at the other end of the desk. I always use it for letters on private business."

This conscientiousness in regard to what many would consider a mere trifle may appear excessive. But the dividing line between vice and virtue is so fine that the boundary is often unconsciously crossed, and it is just as dangerous for a young person to dally with conscience as it is for a child to toy with a dagger, or to play with fire. He who is honest in small things can always be trusted in great.

There is truth not to be ignored in the old-fashioned rhyme:

Much more to steal a greater thing.
It is a sin to steal a pin.

No matter how little value the thing we appropriate from another may possess, the fact that it does not belong to us should make it sacred.—Success.

Gingerbread as a Barometer.

In the rural regions of Maine the people waste no money in buying barometers. They put a piece of gingerbread out at the door and know when the gingerbread is moist and pliable that rain may be expected, and when it becomes crisp that a dry spell is coming. As for thermometers, they say: "What's the good of them—any fool knows when it's hot or cold."

Surface Pressure of a Hurricane.

In a hurricane blowing at eighty miles an hour the pressure on each square foot of surface is thirty-one and one-half pounds.

LUCK IN DETECTIVE WORK.

News of the Sort That Lead to Some-thing Once in a Lifetime.

"It's very strange how a detective will be put on the right track by some trivial incident, apparently disassociated altogether from the case in hand," remarked an old government official to New Orleans Times-Democrat man.

"A dozen years ago, when I was doing some special work in the secret-service department under Chief Bell, I undertook to run down a fellow who had been making some remarkably perfect counterfeit silver dollars, and who had slipped through the fingers of the officers when they raided his place and captured his plant. The man had taken his meals for several months at a restaurant I patronized now and then, and I noticed him, casually, sitting at the table, but the only thing I could remember about him was that he ate a great many oysters, and always called for raspberry vinegar and white pepper to use on them as condiments. The combination was rather peculiar, and had fixed itself on my mind, but it could hardly be regarded as much of a clue. I hunted high and low for the fugitive, and, after putting in four or five weeks of the hardest kind of work without discovering anything that would give the slightest lead to his whereabouts, I gave up in despair, and for the time being put the case in the pigeonhole.

"Fully six months afterward another affair of an entirely different character took me to a city in a distant state, and one afternoon I dropped in at a good-sized fancy grocery to make some inquiries about an address. While I was waiting to speak to the proprietor I heard an unusually fat man giving a clerk an order for a gallon of raspberry vinegar and impressing him particularly to send the best quality. Naturally, the staff reminded me of my missing counterfeiter, and after the fat gentleman went out I asked the clerk carelessly who he was. 'He keeps a restaurant at No. —,' replied the young man. 'I wonder if he is as particular about his white pepper also.' I remarked on the impulse of the moment. The clerk looked astonished.

"Why, that's funny," he said, 'I sold him some extra strong imported white pepper only yesterday. It seemed hardly possible that it could be anything more than a mere coincidence, but on the bare chance that I had struck a trail I strolled around to the restaurant that evening, and the first man I laid eyes on was my long-lost silver-dollar expert. He was eating raw oysters with vinegar and pepper, and I was so pleased with myself that I let him get through before I tapped him on the shoulder and told him he was under arrest. It turned out that he had struck town only a week before, and had called for his favorite condiments at this particular cafe. They weren't on hand in the place, but the proprietor promised to get them for him, and the result was that the epicurean counterfeiter did seven years in the United States prison at Columbus.

"But those are rare strokes of chance," added the old officer. "Once in a lifetime is about their average."

Little Perry's Awful Threat.

I won't ever live in this house no more, and I'm goin' away, 'way off somewhere.

In the dark woods! And mabby a bear Or something nobody ever saw before Might come and eat me up! And then, I bet you, when My pa has no little boy, he'll be Sorry he punished me!

And I'm goin' to starve and not Ever eat anything again at all. And when I'm up with God and got Wings and can look at my pa, and he Comes home and sees my coat in the hall And looks all arou' 'erywhere, And I ain't there, I bet he'll be sorry he punished me!

And when I'm far away And nearly starved and can hardly stand, They might be a big, bad man come along and say He'd take me off to some strange land! And then, when the people told my pa How cruel he was, I bet he'd be The saddest person you ever saw. And sorry he punished me!

And when they had no little boy no more Mamma would cry all day, And when no little boy would open the door For pa, at night, and say: "Hello," I bet That's when he'd be The saddest yet— And I'll stay this time, but he B-b-b-better quit punishin' me! —Chicago Times-Herald.

Victoria's Stores of Gold.

The colony of Victoria, the smallest division of the continent of Australia, has produced, during the last half century, more gold than any other country in the world, with the exception of California, says the Youth's Companion. James Stirling recently informed an audience at the Imperial Institute in London that there is a gold mine at Bendigo in Victoria which has reached a depth of 3,434 feet, and that deep leads of gold exist over an area of about 400 miles. Victoria also possesses extensive coal fields.

Beds Scarce in Russia.

Beds are comparatively scarce in Russia, and many well-to-do houses are still unprovided with them. Peasants sleep on the tops of their ovens; middle-class people and servants roll themselves up in sheepskins and lie down near the stoves; soldiers rest upon wooden cots without bedding and it is only within the last few years that students in schools have been allowed beds.

Gold in Ireland.

A prospector has discovered what is supposed to be alluvial gold in several of the creeks of Ireland.

CONGRESSMAN BOTKIN

The Well-Known Kansas Statesman, Cured of Catarrh of the Stomach by Pe-ru-na, AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' SUFFERING

More Evidence of Interest to the Millions of Catarrh Sufferers in the United States.

HON. J. D. BOTKIN, CONGRESSMAN-AT-LARGE FROM KANSAS.

In a recent letter to Dr. Hartman, Congressman Botkin, of Winfield, Kan., whose fame is a national one, says of Peru-na:

My Dear Doctor:—"It gives me pleasure to certify to the excellent curative qualities of your medicines—Peru-na and Manalin. I have been afflicted more or less for a quarter of a century with catarrh of the stomach and constipation. A residence in Washington has increased these troubles. A few bottles of your medicine have given me almost complete relief, and I am sure that a continuation of them will effect a permanent cure. Peru-na is surely a wonderful remedy for catarrhal affections."—J. D. Botkin, Congressman-at-Large.

CONGRESSMAN BOTKIN is one of the most influential and best known men in the State of Kansas. Whatever he may say on any subject will be accepted by the people as the truth. So famous a remedy as Peru-na could not have well escaped the attention of so famous a man. He not only has heard of the remedy, but he has used it and was relieved of an affliction of twenty-five years' standing. Peru-na is the one internal remedy that cures chronic catarrh. It cures catarrh wherever located. This is a fact that the people are rapidly finding out, but there are still a large multitude who need to know it.

Mr. Frank Richter, of Winona, Minn., says in a letter to The Peru-na Medicine Company:—"As a remedy for catarrh I take pleasure in recommending Peru-na for cural of the stomach. I know what it is to be afflicted with this awful disease and consider it my duty to say a word in behalf of the remedy which gave me such relief. Peru-na cured me, and I know it will cure any one else who suffers from this disease. It gives me great pleasure to testify to the curative effects of this medicine. Peru-na is a well tested and frequently used remedy, and for catarrh of the stomach it is unsurpassed."

"My catarrh was principally located in my head and stomach. I tried many remedies without success. I tried several doctors, but they were unable to cure me. I read of Peru-na in the papers and five bottles cured me."—Frank Richter.

The gastric juice is secreted by the mucous follicles of the stomach. When this juice is normal it digests (dissolves) the food without producing any disturbance whatever. If, however, the gastric juice is not normal, digestion causes many disagreeable symptoms. This condition is known as indigestion. Peru-na will cure this.

Mrs. Selma Tanner, Athens, Ga., writes: "I cannot find words to express my thanks for your kind advice. I never even thought I had catarrh of the stomach. I commenced taking Peru-na as you directed. My stomach continued to hurt me for about two weeks after I began the medicine and then it stopped. I now have a good appetite while before I was nearly starved."—Mrs. Selma Tanner, Athens, Ga.

Mr. L. O. Marble, of Govern, Neb., writes: "I do believe that my catarrh is entirely cured. I have not had any trouble with my stomach for a long time. I am as well as one of my age could expect (seventy years). I have had the catarrh ever since I was a young man, and have doctored for it for years and got very little better, but thanks to you and your Peru-na and Manalin I believe I am well of it. I can eat anything now and it doesn't hurt me, and Peru-na is the only thing I believe ever found that will cure the catarrh. I have it is the only cure for catarrh, and I hope every one troubled with catarrh will try Peru-na and be cured."—L. O. Marble.

Do not derive prompt and satisfactory results from the use of Peru-na, 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, Ohio.

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Write to F. Pechey, Supt. Immigration, Ottawa, Canada, or the undersigned, who will mail you catalogues, pamphlets, etc., free of cost. W. V. Hendon, 801 New York Life Building, Omaha, Nebraska, Agent for the Government of Canada.

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