CARMEN OF THE RANCHO

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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CHAPTER X—Continued

—10—

"I welcome the chance, senor, to lay your honorable words before Carmen and—I shall dare to say"—Dona Maria spoke the words with gracious charm—"I trust the matter may have a happy ending. Carmen is going to Monterey tomorrow to do some shopping. She means to ask you to take her. It will be best now to send Pedro with her. So, senor, for two or three days—patience!"

Bowie remained with some of his vaqueros along the river nearly all that day. Then, to kill time through the rancho supper hour, he rode over to Santa Clara and visited with Padre Martinez, who, poor man, had more trouble to face than his young visitor had—though it did not so seem to Bowie.

"This government," exclaimed the padre mildly, "they want to confiscate—secularize, they call it—every mission in California. What, Senor Bowie, becomes of my poor Indians?"

Bowie had little use for any Mexican government. "It is too bad, Padre. But no honest man ever came in contact with that bunch of grafters without getting robbed. I only wish it were in my power to help you. But I am a foreigner—an Americano, they call me. I insist I am a Tejano."

He supped with the padre and rode home later. He escaped seeing Carmen in this way and next morning took his saddle very early, after giving Pedro particular instructions for insuring the safety of his charge for the trip to Monterey. In the end Bowie told Pedro to take Sanchez along with him.

"But I can't find Sanchez," said Pedro. "He has been missing for a day."

"Missing? What do you mean?"

Pedro could offer no explanation. "He rode into the hills yesterday morning. He has not returned."

"No matter," said Bowie. "Take one of the other boys. The Senorita must be carefully escorted."

Of what had taken place at Guadalupe the day before, Bowie knew nothing, though its events concerned him vitally.

Carmen was caught wholly by surprise. She listened carefully, but her cheeks mantled and her eyes revealed that she was startled. She caught her breath imperceptibly. For a moment she could not speak.

"Of course, dearest, it is a surprise," continued her mother. "Though not perhaps as great a one to us as it is to you."

As her first surprise died away Carmen's expression grew grave. "You no doubt will want time to think this over, my child," her mother went on. "Sleep over it tonight."

"Oh, my Mother," exclaimed Carmen, "that is not necessary."

"Not necessary? Is your mind so soon made up?"

The girl's face set in a fixed resolve. "What Senor Bowie asks is quite impossible, Mother dear. I will never under any circumstances marry an Americano. I do not wish to wound him unnecessarily. Say to him that Carmen has no thought of marriage; that she thanks him for his offer; that she feels honored by it, but as to marriage—no."

She spoke rapidly and as if determined to brook no discussion, yet her mother, who perhaps unconsciously inclined toward the bronzed frontiersman, persisted.

"Far be it from me, dearest, to seek to influence your decision—yet the ground of it does surprise me. Such unions not infrequently occur among us."

"Perhaps it is so, and perhaps they turn out well," admitted Carmen. "But with my feelings against them as brutal interlopers; their cold-blooded murder of the only man I would have married had he lived—Oh, these people are intolerable! Though I have nothing personally against Senor Bowie, yet he, too, is brutal. I saw it the other day where he would have dragged that drunken Fremont marauder to death."

Dona Maria perceived it was useless to argue. "As you will, Carmen dear. It is your future and you are well able to decide the question. Kiss me good night."

In the morning Bowie was in the saddle early. Carmen was on her way to Monterey when he got back to the ranch house. And Dona Maria sent for him.

"Oh, Senor Bowie," she began, "Carmen will not think of marriage. She insists she is too young. I remind her that her mother was married younger than she. Where do girls nowadays get their ideas? I can't understand it. But she seems determined not to marry. Believe me, dear Senor Bowie, I did my best, for both Don Ramon and I hold you in high esteem. Her decision was so hasty. I told her so. But she has grieved deeply over the murder of her sweetheart, Senor de Haro, at the hands of Americanos—she feels bitterly toward all Americanos. But give her a little time, senor. Young girls change their minds so easily. Do not lose courage."

Try as the kindly Dona Maria would to soften the verdict, she saw how bitter a blow it was to the Texan.

He made no comment. But as he rose, hat in hand, and in a few words thanked Dona Maria for her kindness, she thought there was in his demeanor, despite his rough garb, a silent dignity that would move any woman to the respect from which affection must stem.

CHAPTER XI

About a week later Carmen's Aunt Ysabel appeared at the rancho for a visit. One evening just before dinner she, Carmen and Bowie became involved in a rather sharp conversation. Ysabel's sharp tongue had pricked the Texan's sensibilities. She said exactly what she pleased and had positive opinions. Some of these Bowie disliked but made little effort to oppose—his mind was filled with other reflections. Once or twice, indeed, he did openly disagree with her.

His objections precipitated a lively discussion between the two. Once, when this seemed to threaten the peace of the trio, Carmen intervened on Bowie's side. This resulted in a pointed reprimand from Tia Ysabel, who objected to a callow girl's expressing views on any subject.

Both Carmen and Bowie laughed this off. He noticed how pleasant it was to be laughing with her—then he hardened his heart. Carmen, too, found something agreeable in siding with her rejected suitor. After all—it was just a thought—perhaps she had decided rather quickly.

Following dinner, the embers of the fires of the conversation flamed in the living room. After mild efforts on the part of the peaceable host and hostess to check the heat of Auntie, they gave up, and Tia Ysabel held forth.

"Senor Bowie and I were talking about Mexico and Texas this afternoon," said Ysabel to Don Ramon.

"I hope you agreed on everything," responded her brother peacefully.

"If you said 'disagreed,' Senor Bowie and I could agree on one point at least. He is a very courteous antagonist, and I admire his sincerity. But I tell him—he is so much younger than I—that he has some things to learn. This republic of Texas, do you know what is behind it all, Don Ramon?"

"No, and to tell the truth, dear sister, I am not vitally interested to know."

"But you should be!" bristled Tia Ysabel. "I have been told that that republic has even sent emissaries to California to suggest that we join the insurrectos. Can you imagine?"

Bowie, who had lighted a cigarette, gazed innocently and thoughtfully into the fire. "What's behind that Texas rebellion is this," continued the fast-tongued spinster. "A junta of proslavery American politicians cooked up a scheme to set up a slavery empire in the South, taking in Texas and Cuba, mind you, and splitting away from the United States. Spanish laws are so old fashioned and degrading that they forbid human slavery: hence these high-minded Texas patriots struck off the base shackles of Mexico and Spanish law so they could have a nice little slavery empire of their own! Well, Senor Bowie knew nothing of all this, but it is the truth. His heroes have clay feet."

Bowie sat unmoved. "Most heroes have," he said calmly. "Dona Ysabel states the Mexican side well; but it is only one side. The Americans could say something too."

"But would anybody believe them? Look at their record. Haven't they robbed everyone they could lay their hands on?" she exclaimed, biting off her words. "The poor Indians—how haven't they been plundered! Look at poor Mexico! Robbed of Texas. Now they try to lay hands on Mexican California! Heaven forbid! They will currupt our people and ruin our civilization!"

"Ysabel!" protested Don Ramon with dignity. "Spare us. You seem to forget the presence of our own Americano."

Bowie raised his hand. "Pardon, Don Ramon," he interposed lazily, "if you refer by chance to me, I am not an American." A restrained but growing emphasis marked his words as he added, "I am a Tejano, a citizen of the republic of Texas—something quite different."

"Different," snapped Tia Ysabel, "but no better. A land of rebels—Texas!" she exclaimed contemptuously.

Bowie was hard to ruffle—outwardly. "Rebels, if you will," he retorted evenly. "But at the worst, rebels against a vile government. Our Tejanos should have marched on Mexico City and horsewhipped every member of the disreputable junta. I would except only Santa Ana. He shouldn't be horsewhipped. He should be torn to pieces by wild horses. I beg, Don Ramon, that I may be excused," he added coolly. "I have orders to give for the roundup tomorrow."

His withdrawal left Dona Ysabel somewhat nonplused. But her resourcefulness did not desert her. "Certainly," she observed magisterially, "the young Tejano has spirit."

"You have hurt him, Ysabel," remonstrated Don Ramon.

"Hurt him," echoed his sister. "No more than he has hurt me. He is positively abusive. He certainly does not need anyone to salve his wounds. I should say he is quite able to take care of himself!"

A fortnight later, with a good part of the tallow and hides marketed and normal days resumed at Guadalupe, Bowie spoke to Don Ramon in the office. "I've wanted for some time to take a trip up to Sutter's Fort. I have some old friends up there. I met a couple of them once at Yerba Buena, and I promised before I came to Guadalupe to pay them a visit."

"Of course, senor—whenever you like and stay as long as you like. Though we shall be very glad, indeed, to welcome you back."

"My stay will be indefinite, Don Ramon. I do not plan to come back."

"Not come back!"

Bowie shuffled a bit; there was a tone of amazement and reproach in Don Ramon's words that made it hard for him to proceed.

"Not, at least, for the present, Don Ramon."

Don Ramon pleaded, but without effect. He sought his wife in consternation. Dona Maria listened but explained all before Don Ramon had done. "It is Carmen," she said, nodding regretfully. "No man—most of all, a man like Senor Bowie—could sit at the table day after day with a senorita he loved, after she had refused him, Ramon. You

"Carmen will not think of marriage."

couldn't expect it. It is too bad for us. But you argue with him in vain."

The final words somehow or other held themselves back until Bowie halted at the door, ready to ride away. Don Ramon with cordial protestations had said good-by; Dona Maria came out on the porch and down the steps toward Bowie. He slipped instantly from his saddle and stood before her, hat in hand.

"I know why you go, senor," Dona Maria said simply. "I regret it more than I am saying. Wherever you go you will have warm hearts at Guadalupe, interested in your welfare. And prayers will go up here a long time for your safety."

"You are much too kind, dear Dona Maria," replied Bowie steadily. "The happiest days of my life have been spent under your gracious roof. And if you ever feel a dire need—which God forbid—for my presence here, I shall come if I am alive."

Bowie left Guadalupe stonyhearted. His impulse was to put as many miles as possible between himself and the scene of his one great failure.

With his three ponies, that being as many as Don Ramon could persuade him to take, he rode to Monterey to talk to Larkin. The latter was in Yerba Buena. Bowie rode on up the peninsula to find him. The town was not so large as to make it difficult to happen on the American. He encountered him at Vioget's, and with him was a nervous and active young man who spoke with a foreign accent—Captain John A. Sutter.

Sutter looked at Bowie with the interest with which old Frederick William of Prussia would regard a likely recruit for his regiment of phenomenally tall grenadiers. In Bowie he saw precisely the type of frontiersman he wanted for his grandiose enterprise up the Sacramento River—youth, strength and a poise that promised resource under pressure.

The three men adjourned to a rear room where Sutter ordered Heidsieck, and the three sipped and chatted nearly the whole afternoon. Bowie tried two or three times to break away but could not. Larkin, despite Bowie's efforts to shut him off, told Sutter about Bowie's Indian affairs—the stories of which had long ago reached Monterey.

After this disclosure Sutter clung to Bowie like Mustard to a stot; nothing would do but that Bowie must come up to the fort. The Texan refused all offers of an immediate contract but, unable to escape otherwise, gave the magnetic adventurer a promise that he would visit him upriver within a few weeks.

Sutter had in his mind the apprehension that Bowie, in passing Fremont's camp which lay enroute, might be coaxed into joining his scouts; but Larkin later assured him that his alarm was groundless since Bowie had no love either for Fremont or his expedition.

It did, in fact, come about that Bowie visited the Fremont camp on his way to the fort. Sutter had ingeniously made as sure as he could of Bowie's visit by taking the extra ponies up the river on his supply boat.

When Bowie appeared at Fremont's quarters he was promptly arrested as a spy, which did not increase his affection for the sensational adventurer. The guard that detained him attempted to disarm him. This proving embarrassing to his captors, they led him to Fremont's quarter. Fremont, busy, as usual, about nothing of importance, had no time to interview the spy. But while Bowie stood outside the tent, an armed guard on each side, two of the general's scouts came up.

One of these was stopped by the sergeant of the guard, who poured a story into his ear about the captive.

"Who is he?" asked the scout, looking at the prisoner.

"That's what I don't know, but I suspect he's one of General Castro's spies; the country's full of 'em. He says he's from Texas. He gave up his rifle, but when I tried to take his pistol and his knife he got ugly. I didn't want no shooting round headquarters so I let him keep 'em."

The scout eyed the spy closely. "Well, if he's the man I think he is, I wouldn't want any shooting with him either."

He stepped forward and put out his hand for the spy to take. "Henry Bowie, what you doin' here?"

"You'd better tell me, Kit Carson, what you're doing here with this fool outfit."

"Shake hands, you old desert rat. This man," explained Carson to the crestfallen sergeant, "is a Texan. Why, man, he's from the Staked Plain. He's no spy. Get him his rifle, you bum . . . Henry," he ran on, "I heard you was out this way—kind of lookin' to run into you sometime, somewhere. Well, what you doin' for yourself? Huntin', I reckon. No matter what you're doin', Henry, I got a better job for you. And say, I heard you're toting one of them new-fangled six-shootin' pistols."

"Where'd you hear that, Kit?"

"On the trail som'mers — don't know where. Let's see the contraption, Henry."

It was the first revolver Carson had ever seen. He looked, listened and examined the new firearm while men crowded around the two scouts, wild to see the new gun and get it actually in their own hands.

The upshot of the meeting was that Carson insisted on Bowie's waiting to meet Fremont; he had already gone into the tent with a word for the general's ear to acquaint him with the newcomer.

"I knowed that scout when he was a little shaver—everybody in Texas knows the Bowies. My brother Mose and this boy grew up together, you might say. Hates Injuns and greasers like pizen. If you can get him to trail South with us, he's worth a troop o' cavalry—knows the country, the folks, well liked and fights like a wildcat."

"Hold him," growled Fremont. "I'll get him."

Outside, when Carson rejoined Bowie, the talk went on. Carson talked eloquently of the importance of Fremont's campaign to California and its people and of the determination of every man in his ranks to fight to the death against any attempt of England to take possession of this prize of the Pacific coast. He promised fat pay.

Bowie smiled. "Kit, do you mean the kind of promises to pay he gives Californians every time he steals their horses and cattle?"

"Steals?" echoed Carson indignantly. "What do you mean?"

"That's what honest men call it. He took three hundred head of horses a few weeks ago from the Guadalupe Rancho. Nat Spear says the paper he gave Don Ramon ain't worth the ink on it. I heard all about it at Yerba Buena last week."

"To the devil with Nat Spear. I know he pays us boys and pays us well. And no soldiering, no camp work, Henry. We're scouts, and soldier boys wait on us."

Bowie listened with simulated patience; yet his tempter seemed to feel he was holding something back. Finally Bowie spoke. "That all sounds fine, Kit. But I'd like to ask you just one thing before I say more. Why did you shoot the unarmed De Haro boys when they were crossing the river to visit your camp?"

The blunt question took Carson aback. He seemed to color even under the bronze of his fine features. The two men were sitting frontier-fashion astride a fallen log. Bowie was looking straight into Carson's eyes.

"Henry, did you hear about that too? Darned sorry it happened, but we was in a box. The old man's orders was to take no prisoners. When I seen the boys and Berreyesa acoming I asked him flat out, Henry, what I should do. He come straight back with, 'Take no prisoners. We got no room for prisoners.' He'd been crowded pretty hard for two months. Everything had gone wrong. I had to obey orders, Henry, didn't I?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Washington MERRY-GO-ROUND

By DREW PEARSON & ROBERT ALLEN

Washington, D. C.

OPPOSITION COOLS OFF JAPANESE

When Cordell Hull wants to turn on his Tennessee mountain wrath he can do a magnificent job, and the word which leaked out of his inner sanctum is that this was the kind of a job he did when Japanese Ambassador Horinouchi called on him just after the United States had decided to recall its citizens from China.

The Hull dressing down, together with internal reactions in Japan, seems to have cooled off the Japanese somewhat. Intelligence reports reaching Washington indicate that danger of a Japanese declaration of war against Britain, over the opening of the Burma road, is ebbing. What the Japanese are expected to do is to subject the Burma road, with its incoming supplies of munitions for the Chinese army, to as intensive a bombing as is possible from air bases in south China and adjacent French Indo-China.

As far as any attack upon the United States is concerned, all the reports received in army and navy circles—and they have been studying the situation as carefully as they know how—are that Japan cannot and will not risk war with the United States.

In the first place, her navy has fuel oil for only 2½ months. Her army has gasoline for only three months. And perhaps even more important, there is reported to be considerable division of opinion inside the Japanese government.

One group, headed by Prince Konoye, feels that Japan is merely being used by Hitler and the Axis to scare the United States away from more aid to the British. In fact, Konoye vigorously opposed signing the alliance, but finally had to yield to more aggressive Foreign Minister Matsuoka and the war minister. In addition, American observers detect an uneasy feeling among the Japanese people and increasing rumblings of unrest.

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GERMAN OCCUPATION

Intelligence reports from Europe indicate that it is not the German army but German civilians in France who are causing trouble. These reports state that the Nazis already have begun to create their vaunted unification of Europe and their reduction of France to a mere agricultural state.

Following the conquering Nazi armies, there came German civilians in numbers almost as great. They settled down in evacuated French homes and began to operate abandoned French shops and factories—and to take over others which had not been abandoned. All this in the vital industrial area of north France.

Reports about the conduct of Germans in France make a sharp distinction between the German military and civilian elements. Little complaint was heard of the conduct of the German military, but when the Gestapo and the Brown Shirts followed, together with civilian groups for the management of industry, real friction developed.

British victory over Germany would require not only success in staving off invasion but also driving the Germans out of the Low Countries and France—and this means not only the German soldiers, but the hordes of civilians who have taken over management of French industry as if it were their own.

* * *

ABSENTEE SENATE

If the Congressional Record told the whole story, it would reveal that congress, during the past month, has been fed up with its own sessions. Interest has been low, attendance slack, and members who haven't gone home show lack of interest.

When the senate convenes, the clerk has to run through the roll call several times before he can get a quorum. This does not appear in the Congressional Record, where the roll calls are consolidated into one.

Sometimes, in desperation, the clerk counts as present some members who have called up by telephone from their offices, and announces that 49 members have answered to their names. But Senator Vandenberg objects. "We don't legislate by telephone," he says. "Where do you get 49? I only see 25." So roll is called again.

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CAPITAL CHAFF

TVA is proud of the fact that the state of Tennessee led the nation in sales of electric ranges during the first six months of this year.

Super-sleuth J. Edgar Hoover, who has solved many a thorny crime problem, is a collector of cactus plants. Several of them decorate his office, also his home.

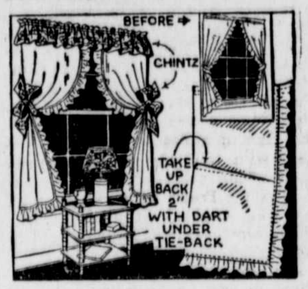
When Big Bill Knudsen was asked to explain the difference between his work and that of Stettinius in the defense commission, Knudsen said: "Stettinius gets the stuff; I make the pieces."

To learn what effect U. S. shortwave broadcasting really has in Latin America, NBC has sent expert Guy C. Hickok to make a survey in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Bolivia . . . At the rate of 350 a day, state department receives applications for exportation of arms, gasoline, iron and steel scrap, chemicals, metals, and machine tools.

Frilled Curtains Give Glamour to Windows

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

THE newest frilled curtains give a full, lavish effect. If they make your old curtains look a bit dejected, like those shown here at the right, don't be discouraged. The window at the left uses those same curtains with a dash of glamour added. This economy trick saved a certain young matron enough money to buy a num-



ber of smart new accessories for her living room.

She discovered that a diagonal dart, which took up the curtains at the back, threw more fullness to the front, thus giving the new high drape a smart line. Tiebacks and valance were made of flowered chintz in rose and plum tones, lined with plain plum colored chintz. One yard of each kind of chintz was required for each window.

* * *

NOTE: The chintz covered lamp shade and the spool table also add interest to this window. Full directions for making a shade like the one illustrated are in SEWING, Book 1. Directions for the spool table are in Book 5; also descriptions of the first four booklets in this series. There are 32 homemaking projects in each number; for which there is a service charge of 10c each to cover cost and mailing. Send order to:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS
Drawer 10
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Enclose 10 cents for each book ordered.

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To Fit the Crime

A magistrate was so delighted recently in finding before him a schoolteacher who had broken the speeding law that he ordered her to sit down and write "I must not break the speed limit" one thousand times. In Woburn, Mass., a number of habitual drunks who were haled before the judge were not imprisoned. He ordered them to be placed in an aluminum lion's cage and trundled through the town behind a decrepit horse. That cured them.

In a prison unruly convicts recently were clothed in pink rayon panties and paraded before their fellow convicts, and after that they obeyed all prison laws.

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First Duty

The first business of a philosopher is to part with self-conceit.—Epictetus.

Children's Colds . . .

Temporary Constipation may increase the discomfort of symptoms of Feverishness, Headache, Upset Stomach which frequently accompany early stages of colds.

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