CARMEN OF THE RANCHO

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

© Frank H. Spearman WNU Service

CHAPTER XII—Continued

—12—

"Well—if you say so, Padre—so be it," replied Bowie.

The priest rose. "I will give you absolution. I will perform your penance for you. And whatever happens, you will be ready. Good-by, my son. You now truly are my son." He raised his wrinkled hand, expressed the symbol of eternity above him, and spoke low and rapidly the serious words of absolution.

Again the lumbering footstep was heard in the corridor. "Come!" shouted the guard, unlocking and opening the door. It would have been so easy, thought Bowie, to have knocked him down.

"I am ready, amigo." Speaking placatingly, the padre stepped into the corridor and walked away.

As darkness fell Bowie stood close to the peephole, watching for the padre to pass in the corridor. He was no longer anxious to finish the tunnel, feeling sure that he could take Sanchez with him.

A hooded figure passed Bowie's cell and, without pausing, walked down the corridor. The Texan tiptoed back to his stool and sat down to listen.

Hour after hour passed in the cell, with Bowie straining his ears and senses to hear the whistle which should tell him the horses had come. Sanchez stealthily appeared at the cell door and unlocked it. Bowie drew him in for a whispered confidence.

"Two horses will soon be left behind the guardhouse. I wait for them."

"Why two?"

"You are going with me."

"Me?"

"Yes, you. Do you want to be shot? When you hear the whistle, come back and we will start."

Sanchez hesitated. . "Hark! the signal," whispered Bowie. "I will wait for you at the horses. Work fast."

The Texan curbed his nervous apprehension as well as he could. Slinking around to the rear of the jail, he found the horses, their heads roped together. They stood quiet and Bowie, after patting them, walked back to the guardroom.

"Sanchez," whispered Bowie in the dark, "can you find me a knife or a pistol?"

"Here are both, senor. And I have one each for myself; and powder and lead."

"Then you are ready?"

"Ready, senor."

"Listen. Before I go back to the horses I will leave my compliments to Pico. Take your keys and unlock every door along the corridor."

"Senor!"

"Exactly—every door. Give every man his chance to get away from this Mexican scoundrel. Make haste."

Bowie returned to the horses. He loosed them and awaited Sanchez, who lost no time in rejoining him. The horses' feet were muffled, and the two mounted men, riding with extreme care and with Sanchez for guide, made their escape without an alarm being sounded. Working east by north, daybreak found them well into the first range of mountains to the east of the presidio.

"We are well out of that rascal's reach, Sanchez," said Bowie. "The question now is: what do we want to do? I am on my way to Texas. Do you want to come along?"

"Texas, senor? Where is that?"

"A long way—six, seven sleeps if no trouble on the way. If trouble, no one can say how many sleeps. Sometimes bad Indians; sometimes lose the way. Wide deserts, high mountains, deep rivers. But I crossed them once. I can do it again. While we rest, think it over. If you want to come with me, I will take the best care I can of you."

Warmed by the sun, breakfasted, and fatigued by the excitement and strain of the escape, Bowie stretched before the dying fire and fell asleep. While he napped Sanchez sat drawing figures in the sandy soil with bits of sticks.

Bowie woke and rose to his feet. "Sanchez," he asked, "what do you say? What do you want to do?"

The Indian's mind was made up. "Senor," he said respectfully, "I think it better for me to stay in my own country. I will go back to Rancho Guadalupe."

Bowie could hardly have believed, until he heard them, how sharply the words would cut him. Guadalupe! What that meant to him! What moments of sheer happiness, what dreams buoyant with life, what memories of snow-capped peaks, challenging storms, delectable sunshine! What peace at an evening fireside, with a presence near, while he hoarded, miserlike, within his breast the silent treasure of his dreams!

Then the rude awakening! The stinging wound, the crushing realization that his castle dreams had vanished. Guadalupe indeed!

He nodded slowly in response to Sanchez' decision. "Perhaps it is better so. Yes. I am sure it is. These are your friends. They will welcome you, Sanchez. You are wise."

In parting, Sanchez gave to Bowie the flint and tinder and the salt.

"But what will you do?"

"I will stop at Mission San Gabriel. The padres will give me these. Take, senor, the powder and ball."

"Sanchez, I will not forget you."

"But you will come back?"

Bowie looked at the land he loved, the fair land to which he was saying good-by. He looked at Sanchez. "Quien sabe?"

He watched the Indian ride silently away.

Away, mused Bowie, to the scene of his bitterest tragedy and his deadly revenge. Why is it that, like the wounded animal, we crawl back to die where the arrow struck us down? And I, he mused on, back to the desert, back to the torment of hunger and thirst; leaving this land flowing with milk and honey and licking my wound—perhaps, who knows, to die. Well—let Sanchez go to Guadalupe. I won't go back."

In Texas the adventurer found everything changed. And, to his taste, changed for the worse.

Bowie had left the sturdy little republic imbued with some feeling of enthusiasm for a country he could

"And whatever happens, you will be ready."

call his own, hoping as he did to unite with its fortunes the grandiose domain of the Pacific Coast.

In California itself he had been forced to realize how futile any such effort must be. Much greater nations—the ambitious Americans, the perennially grasping British, the Black-bearded Russians, the easy-going Spaniards and the thrice-stupid Mexicans—were all striving to land in their laps the prize of the world—California.

And now after ten years the republic of Texas was no more. A new crop of politicians had sprung up. The warriors of Texas were gone, or their counsels were sneered at. The slaveholders of the United States were plotting to add the vast territory of the little republic to the slaveholding states, and they now controlled the sentiment of Texas. Ysabel was right!

It took some time for Bowie to get all this clear in his head. But the clearer the intrigue became, the deeper grew his disgust for the annexationists who were seated in the political saddles.

He realized that, after all, politics held no abiding interest for him. The thing that pleased him most was the wild longhorns of the great prairies. The longhorn of his youth had not changed; the vast sweep of the Staked Plain had not changed.

And then there was a sense of the comradeship of these men that rode with him through fair sunshine and foul northers, men who had no ambition but to serve, no instinct but of loyalty, in whose lexicons there was no such word as fear—most of them had fought in the battles of Texas for freedom—men who hated the greaser politicos with a righteous hatred and owed no fealty to any but their leader.

To Bowie such men were all in all. His concerns were their concerns, his feuds, their feuds; his enemies, their enemies. Bowie loved his cowboys; they loved him—proved it through storm and stress.

Yet something, somewhere in his thoughts, would never quite disappear. Banished, it would always come back. Those other nights, those nights glorified by the same stars—it was the thought of those that stole in on his wakeful hours. With everything to invite sleep—peace in the silent camp, peace in the stilled winds, a hard day's ride behind, a hard day's ride ahead—sleep would not come. The stars of the vast plains to look up at . . . but these same stars lighted the night in California. The cattle—with their death-dealing horns, were full brother warriors of those longhorns of California.

Everything seemed to say California. Before he had left it they had told him it would be so. No one, they told him, could forget California. He would, they said, always hear the soft wild call of the oriole, the plaintive note of the meadow lark, the distant coo of the ruddy-throated dove. If he had to think of California, these were the thoughts he tried to dwell on. One he doggedly tried to shun—the music of one voice, a voice that he strove so hard not to hear when sleep shunned him.

CHAPTER XIII

—

Rancho Guadalupe was not quiet during the year following Bowie's departure. Political disturbances marked the period throughout California. Rival Mexican factions were in motion most of the time. Fremont, increasingly bold, had enlarged the scope of his depredations. Commodore Stockton had not as yet told him bluntly where he belonged.

Pardaloe and Simmie, deserted by Bowie, felt the wanderlust and resigned at Guadalupe to betake themselves to Sutter's where, as hunters and riflemen, they were welcomed by the energetic Swiss.

If there had been lingering, after Bowie's departure from Guadalupe, a penumbra of the reputation that his presence had established at the rancho, it faded completely when his scouts left. Minor marauders had heretofore steered clear of the noted hacienda, since the Tejanos were known to visit swift and severe punishment on any who ran off horses or cattle. The wild Tulares, the Mexican rovers and the wandering Americanos had long been content to do their pillaging elsewhere.

Seemingly everything united in that year to make the situation of Don Ramon and Guadalupe unpleasant. And at the dinners many were the regretful expressions that Bowie had deserted the rancho—for so his going was mildly characterized by his Spanish friends.

One morning after an especially exasperating report had come in from Pedro, about a caballeria of horses that had been run off during the night by thieving Americanos, Carmen spoke up with spirit.

"But why," she asked of no one in particular, "why, instead of talking so much about it, don't we do something about getting Senor Bowie back?"

What could be done, even to get track of him, let alone getting him back to Guadalupe? Inquiry followed inquiry concerning him. Carmen especially took up the subject with energy. It was quite in vain. His friends were besought to hunt him up. Dr. Doane was enlisted; he worked at the task. He had a friendly interest in bringing him back to what appeared to his vision an altered situation.

At Mission Santa Clara Padre Martinez was appealed to. He, too, was very ready to do what he could, which was little, but he wrote to fellow missioners in the South to ask that they be on the lookout. In Yerba Buena Nathan Spear, Dr. Doane's friend, told the doctor that he had in his safe a considerable sum of money belonging to Bowie but had no clue as to where the owner might be. He could write, and did write, to his Los Angeles correspondent. Beyond this, that a man of the same surname, Bowie, had been in prison at San Diego on a charge of treason and had made his escape, nothing further could be learned as to his whereabouts.

At Sutter's neither of Bowie's men, Pardaloe or Simmie, had any track of him. They were told at Sutter's that he had packed up, resisting all inducements to remain, and left the fort.

A ray of light on the fate of the missing man came, after a year or more, from a least expected quarter. Pedro, one morning, brought in word that the missing Sanchez had come back; that he had found the rascal, Yosco and killed him and he was hiding somewhere near Mission Santa Clara and had mentioned to Indians there news of Bowie.

Pedro was dispatched to the mission Indians at once with instructions to bring Sanchez back by fair means or foul, to assure him that his old job was open for him and that, while he had not been forgiven for killing the man who had taken his sweetheart, his conduct would be overlooked. After two days of suspense at Guadalupe Pedro, early the third morning, walked into the office of Don Ramon to say he had Sanchez with him.

Dona Maria and Carmen joined Don Ramon and waited to hear Sanchez' story. It was vivid and absorbing, for Sanchez told everything. But in the end the question mark of mystery still remained. The two men had parted in the mountains, Sanchez to go north, Bowie to work his way over the inhospitable Sierras and across the trackless desert and the Staked Plain into faraway Texas.

It was a recital so convincing that none thought to question it. Surmise fixed only on the possibilities of the outcome. To undertake such a feat, even in a stout company of frontiersmen, at that early period of California travel, was enough to give the hardy pause; to attempt it alone was a challenge to the most reckless adventurer. Spanish thought would dismiss such an attempt as insanity. Yet the men who were to make California into a frontier empire did attempt the hazards of such endeavor and sometimes, though by no means always, got through.

Much talk followed Sanchez' news. Don Ramon gave up at once all expectations of ever seeing Bowie again. The Indians were divided in opinion. Sanchez doubted whether Bowie could survive the perils and hardships that lay ahead of him. Pedro could not argue or express himself eloquently on any subject. But he knew Bowie better than any other person at Guadalupe. He had seen him in many tight places; he had seen him meet emergency and knew his resourcefulness. He could only say, and did say, that he thought Bowie would make it and return.

Many moons passed at the rancho before anyone knew whether Pedro's prophecy or Don Ramon's foreboding would prove right. Guadalupe affairs did not improve in the long interval; rather, they grew worse.

To make matters worse at Guadalupe, Don Ramon, never robust, a man of peace, unfitted to cope with such conditions, fell ill, and the troubled management of the rancho fell on Dona Maria.

This, in turn, meant that Carmen would have to assume a share of the burden, and she did so. Pedro gradually came to look to her first for her mother's orders and at length for her own. Carmen of necessity became active in the saddle and, under the wing of Pedro and his husky vaqueros, full of fight at the thought of marauders. Her mother's chief worry was that the burning-eyed girl would become embroiled, to her undoing, in resisting minor raids on the rancho.

None of this round of anxieties and excitement diminished the interest of Dona Maria or her daughter in the affairs of Mission Santa Clara. Its now rapid spoliation by the greedy Mexican government served to sharpen the sympathies of Dona Maria and Carmen for the patient padres who submitted without resistance to the outrageous pillage of their corrupt oppressors.

"It is not for ourselves, dear senorita," said Padre Martinez to Carmen, "that we mourn, but for these poor neophytes, our Indian men and Indian women whom we are forced to turn away to drift back, so many of them, into savagery. With our

The wheat is almost cut.

cattle taken and our horses sold how can we buy grain to feed these poor people? And it would break your heart, senorita, to see them plead with us for food. They look to us as children to their mother. They do not understand. They only say, 'We are hungry.' What can we do?"

Carmen's eyes flashed. "I know what we can do, Padre. We have at Guadalupe every promise of a bountiful harvest. The wheat is almost ready to cut. There is a granary full of last year's wheat. You shall have every bushel above our own needs for your poor Indians. This wretched robber Mexican government! What greedy beasts! Talk about Americanos! They couldn't be worse!"

"Such is our lot, my child," said Padre Martinez, thanking her. "Cease not to pray. Only to heaven can we turn for help."

In Monterey Dr. Doane's office was not far from the water front. The doctor himself, in the inner office, was engaged one morning in reading when the outer door opened and a bearded man looked in on him.

The doctor glanced up. "Bowie!" he exclaimed. "Where in Texas did you come from? Sit down."

"I hardly expected to see you again in California," said the doctor, when the men had seated themselves, "so tell me all about it."

"Not much to tell," countered Bowie. "I got a letter from Captain Sutter while I was in San Antonio, making me a pretty good offer to join him as a partner. So I'm on my way to San Francisco, as they call it now, to get some money from Nat Spear and take a boat Wednesday with my horses up the river. It's three months now since the captain wrote, so he may have made different arrangements. We'll see."

There was a natural bond of sympathy between the Irish doctor and the gaunt Texan. They talked some time before the conversation turned to what Bowie wanted to hear about. But since both were pretty good at masking their inner thoughts and each waited on the other, it took time to bring the talk around to Rancho Guadalupe.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

GENERAL HUGH S. JOHNSON Says:

United Features WNU Service

Washington, D. C.

DEPRESSION FIGURES

In the campaign now closed Mr. Roosevelt's first "political" speech was forced, he said, against his intention to be "drafted" as an unwilling candidate—forced by the "misrepresentation" of his opponents.

Hugh Johnson

The chief "misrepresentation" of which he complained was their assertion that this depression is still with us.

Mr. Roosevelt said that times are better than in 1929. And he further stated, "The output of our factories and mines is now about 13 per cent greater than the peak of 1929; 1929, mind you, not 1932. It is at the highest level ever recorded."

Col. Leonard Ayres, a national authority on production, writing in the Cleveland Trust company bulletin, says: "There has recently been published a perplexing revision of the Federal Reserve index of the volume of industrial production. According to the new index, our industrial production has been much greater in recent years than the old index led us to believe."

"This seems hard to reconcile with the fact that on a per capita basis our national income last year was only 82 per cent as large as it was in 1926. Freight loadings per capita were 58 per cent as large. Automobiles made were 67 per cent as many. Bank checks drawn were 50 per cent as much. All construction was 64 per cent as great in value. Industrial employment was 84 per cent as large. Department store sales were 75 per cent as great. There are many more similar discrepancies which appear irreconcilable with the claim of the new index that we produced last year as large volumes of industrial goods per person in our population as we did in the boom years of 1926 and 1928. This bank will regretfully refrain from reliance on the new index and will substitute for it an index computed in its own offices and compiled from component sources making up the Federal Reserve index."

Colonel Ayres, who made these computations, was this government's World war statistician. He has just been recalled to that service by the war department. He is a leading authority on this subject. He made these remarks long before the President spoke.

The figures he quotes are not synthetic deductions such as overall indexes of production must be. They are actual counts.

• • •

NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Now that the numbers have been drawn for America's first peacetime conscription, an incident which arose during the draft lottery of 1917 can finally be told. At that time a young lady with oversized shoes almost upset the entire draft mechanism.

Great ceremony and close inspection accompanied the drawing of the first few numbers by various high officials. But the numbers were picked out of the bowl for hours after the "novelty" had worn off, and lesser lights performed the tedious work for 16 more hours.

One of the employees was a girl with shoes too large for her. The historic work she performed was also very tiring, so she was glad when she could return to her room that night.

She kicked off her shoes with a sigh of relief, and—horrors—a draft capsule rolled out.

Almost frantic, she rushed to a telephone and explained the whole story to an unnamed general who promptly told her to rush back to headquarters.

The authorities held a short, secret conference and selected the only course that seemed open to them: They palmed the capsule and dexterously slipped it back into the bowl. And no one was the wiser.

• • •

German overlords apparently are trying to use America's sympathy for the French as a lever to break the British blockade. At least this is the opinion held by some government officials who are watching the efforts of M. Gaston Henri-Haye, French ambassador to America, to release frozen French assets in this country.

They note that any advantage secured for the Vichy government could be utilized by the dominating Germans. The prestige and experience of the French consular and diplomatic forces in Washington place them in a far more favorable position than the German legation.

• • •

The federal government will probably control more than $1,500,000,000 worth of food and fiber supplies by midwinter as farmers continue to store millions of bushels of wheat and thousands of bales of 1940 cotton.

Government loan programs which encouraged the storage will be made available on corn and possibly several other crops in the near future.

Originally designed to bolster farm prices, the loan program is being fitted into the national defense program, according to agricultural department officials.

Transforming a Box Into Smart Ottoman

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

PAD the top of a box and slip-cover it; then add a separate cushion three inches thick. The result will be a smart ottoman that either may match or contrast with the cover of your favorite chair. The little feet made of drawer pulls keep the ottoman from looking like a box. A corded

seam where the skirt of the slip cover joins the top, and an inverted pleat at each corner of the skirt also give a professional touch. I suggest tacking the slip cover firmly in place as shown in the sketch.

If down or feathers are used to fill the separate cushion, make an inner cushion of ticking with a top and a bottom piece the size of the box top; and a straight three-inch piece around the sides. If kapok is used for filling, this inner cushion may be made of muslin. The cover of the separate cushion has corded seams to match the box slip cover.

• • •

NOTE: These directions should be clipped from the paper as they are not available in booklet form. However, complete directions for making slip covers and for making corded seams are in SEWING, Book No. 1. No. 3 also contains valuable slip cover suggestions. These 32-page booklets are 10c each. Send order to:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS
Drawer 10
Bedford Hills New York

Enclose 10 cents for each book ordered.

Name .....

Address .....

$2 CASH PRIZE!

NOW WRITE YOUR "JINGLE." WINNERS NOTIFIED BY MAIL. READ HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS BELOW.

RED CLOUD BERRIES RELIEVE CONSTIPATION, BILIOUSNESS AND SLUGGISHNESS DUE TO CONSTIPATION.

IF YOUR DEALER CANNOT SUPPLY YOU SEND 15c TO H. CLARKE & SONS, BALTO., MD.

RED CLOUD BERRIES

ALL VEGETABLE LAXATIVE PREPARATION

Power to Do

When there's a log to lift, an old man will grunt and a young man pick it up.

TO RELIEVE MISERY OF COLDS quickly use 666 LIQUID TABLETS SALVE NOSE DROPS COUGH DROPS

As You Walk

Religion lies more in walk than in talk.

ADVISES YOUNG GIRLS ENTERING WOMANHOOD

Thousands of young girls entering womanhood have found a "real friend" in Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to help them go "smiling thru" restless, moody, nervous spells, and relieve cramps, headache, backache and embarrassing fainting spells due to female functional irregularities. Famous for over 60 years. WORTH TRYING!

Facts of ADVERTISING

• ADVERTISING represents the leadership of a nation. It points the way. We merely follow—follow to new heights of comfort, of convenience, of happiness.

As time goes on advertising is used more and more, and as it is used more we all profit more. It's the way advertising has—

of bringing a profit to everybody concerned, the consumer included