

The VALE OF ARAGON

By FRED McLAUGHLIN
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Romance here holds sway; romance in the spirit of Dumas, his dashing guardsmen, titled adventures, intriguing plots and exciting episodes. Loren Garde, of Norse and French ancestry, big and blond as a Viking, nimble of movement and with the sword thrust of D'Artagnan, is a hero of breath-taking interest. He tells his own enthralling story.

CHAPTER I Moon-Madness

I sat, one night, upon an iron bench and studied the Cabildo—to me the most imposing building in that historic city which lies, crescent-like, within the curving sweep of the Mississippi. Musing, I watched the scroll of history unroll before me. I saw De Blenville and those hardy followers of his who had erected the first house of the Crescent city; I saw the Spaniards pass—moving to the west and south—the Frenchmen come and go, and the Spaniards come again; and I heard the thunderous shouts from a thousand throats as Claiborne unfurled from the iron balcony of the old Cabildo the Stars and Stripes, emblem of the new republic.

a hard and, I think, efficient fist; for a year of campaigning in that tattered-mallion army under General Jackson had given me many things, not the least of which was the healthy American knack of rough-and-tumble fighting. Under a blow that found his whiskered jaw his majesty went to his hands and knees, then he came swiftly to his feet, right hand seeking his hip, and the slim blade of a small-sword gleamed in the moonlight.

"Not so hasty, Adolfo," said the graceful courtier, whose face, I noticed, possessed so much of the high beauty of the face of the lady that I knew him for her brother; "you must—"

"A dog," Adolfo gasped. "Why should I not run him through? Did he not accost us; did he not stare at Carlisma; did not the stupid clod lay violent hands upon a Fuentes?"

With a Frenzied Burst of Charges He Built Up a Gleaming Wall of Steel in Front of Me.

"Give him thy blade, Polito; must I waste the evening on a stupid ladron?"

Polito, reading my face, found acquiescence there. He drew his sword, grasped the point with thumb and forefinger and, resting the gleaming steel across his left forearm, extended the hilt to me. I caught it in eager fingers, for she had called him "mío"; and that proprietary "Carissima" of his had kindled a fire of senseless jealousy within me. Polito's weapon balanced like a feather in my hand; a Toledo blade, in truth. I swung it in a tentative arc, and the air sang beneath that blow.

His majesty shrugged out of the long cape and, point raised, advanced upon me. "Guard," he said.

I think the hissing cadence of my sword touched a cord of cowardice in his majesty; I think he must have realized that it was not a stupid clod who stood before him, and I'm sure such realization added nothing to his confidence.

"Not so fast, Senor," I cried; "do you not know that the road to hell is traveled in haste, while heaven is reached more slowly?" He swore in his beard, and I continued: "If I should hazard a guess as to your masquerade I would say that you are Charles the Fifth of Spain, a noble king who lived three hundred years ago; but your actions and your words belie your regal trappings."

Now a devil of impudence perched upon my tongue: "And your lady will be the gracious Eleanor, yet loverlier by far than the consort of your ancient namesake; aye, infinitely more beautiful than Spain's great queen herself, the splendid Isabella, whose charm has furnished through the centuries the motif for song and story."

My moon-madness disappeared, my brain cleared, confidence was mine. And, as I laughed aloud from the sheer joy of the thing, our blades came together with a rasping whisper.

I felt of his wrist, and found an iron rigidity there; I tried a tentative tierce, and met a swift, efficient parry. No mean adversary, this powerful Spaniard in his regal raiment. We swept back and forth, our blades whipping the air in whirling arcs, or hissing together in venomous slitherings, our labored breathing coming and going through set teeth, our feet tapping and sliding along the pavement, every muscle of our bodies tensed, every nerve alert, every glance searching—searching for an opening, and every fleeting thought building plans of attack and parry.

As we contended thus a circle of curious gathered—gathered silently from nowhere. They spoke in awed whispers, as though the spell of this night of madness lay upon them also.

Polito came within my view as we circled and parried and offered riposte and swift counter-riposte. I smiled at him, for Polito had too much of the beauty and grace of her majesty to gain any enmity from me. I was happy to find a friendly light in his eyes. Now I caught a glimpse of the lady, upon whose exquisite face lay the pallor of fear. A fear, no doubt, for the sturdy Spaniard who had called her Carlisma . . . and she had called him mio. And here was I, mad with an inexplicable and overwhelming love, a love that was—because of its utter hopelessness—nothing short of sheer insanity. Whereupon I laughed wildly, and charging with reckless abandon, beat my adversary down with a furious attack that carried me near to victory.

"Nearly," I cried, "nearly. Your Majesty!"

"Nearly," he answered, and his deep voice came almost in a gasping sob, "is never quite enough."

Now, when I heard the labored effort of his voice I knew that I had won. With the realization that I was his master my youthful pride offered a jibe or two: "Cannot a lonely being dream in the moonlight, Your Majesty, and conjure up the figures of the past, or look with favor upon a lady without the charge of madness being placed against him?"

With a frenzied burst of charges he built up a gleaming wall of steel in front of me. I moved back before that last attack, listening with fine satisfaction to the labored breath that whistled through his teeth, for he had nearly reached the end—and knew it. And when I felt a weakening of that iron wrist of his, and noted the diminishing power of his lunges, and saw the look of animal terror that leaped into his eyes, a deep disgust for the man entered my soul. I would let her see the terror in his eyes, I would have her know the craven that he was, and if she chose to love him then.

I advanced in attack now with all the reserve force that I possessed. Parrying wildly, he retreated before this final offensive. I think the fear of imminent death had touched his brain, for when I thrust, and felt the steel take hold, I heard him offer up a sigh almost of contentment.

His sword, falling from nerveless fingers, clattered upon the cobbles; with a soft cry of "Carissima" he went to his knees, and then like a man who is very tired he crumpled slowly to the pavement. A passion of resentment, of disgust, still burned within me. "Charles the Fifth indeed," I said, casting my sword to the ground beside him; "bah—you should be called Charles the Last!"

News Review of Current Events the World Over

Hoover Moratorium Plan, With French Modifications, in Effect—Great Britain Calls Conference to Work Out Details.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD



Julius Curtius

MUTUAL concessions by the United States and France, obtained by clever negotiation, resulted in the acceptance of the Hoover moratorium plan in principle by the French government.

All other important nations already had accepted, so President Hoover announced that the plan might be considered as in effect as of date of July 1.

Briefly summarized, the agreement provides that debtor governments shall be relieved of payments due between July 1, 1931, and July 1, 1932, aggregating approximately 800 millions of dollars.

Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, and other debtors will be relieved of war debt payments approximately 400 millions.

The greatest sacrifice will be made by the United States, which will forego war debt receipts totaling 200 millions.

Beginning July 1, 1933, the deferred reparations and war debt payments will be paid in installments during a ten-year period, in addition to the regular current payments.

Payment by Germany of conditional reparations totaling 243 millions will be unreservedly suspended. Germany will be required, however, to pay the unconditional reparations, amounting to \$130,000,000, with the understanding that this amount in full will be loaned back to Germany.

A loan of about 25 millions will be made to Central European countries if necessary by the federal reserve banks of the United States and European central banks.

The accord reached was entirely satisfactory to both the Americans and the French. President Hoover gained his chief point, the gist of the whole plan, for Germany does not have to pay any international debts for one year. The French statesmen congratulate themselves because the signatories in getting a private loan for France's central European friends, and lays upon Germany moral responsibility for not using her moratorium saving for armaments.

Foreign Secretary Julius Curtius and Chancellor Bruening of Germany, of course, are pleased beyond expression, and the former paid warm tribute to the work accomplished in Paris by Secretary Mellon. The German press, however, professes to be disgusted with the compromise, several influential papers declaring that it wrecks the plan entirely.

In concluding his announcement of the agreement, President Hoover touched on the question of world disarmament, which he considers the second feature of his program for restoring economic prosperity.

HAVING ably seconded Mr. Hoover's effort to bring about the moratorium, the British government called a conference of the powers to work out the details of the plan. The premiers and foreign ministers are to meet in London, and it is expected Secretary Stimson will participate as an official observer when he reaches England.

This conference will meet from time to time for several months, it is understood, and may continue to function for several years. Before this body, toward the end of the one year Hoover moratorium, will come the question of the capacity of Germany to continue paying the Young plan reparations, the question of extending the Hoover debt holiday another year, and the question of revising reparations and war debts downward.

VICE PRESIDENT Curtis came out in the open in earnest opposition to the policies of the federal farm board, and, in company with Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas, went before Chairman Stone and Carl Williams of the board to urge that it change its stand concerning its wheat holdings. The two Kansans argued for hours that this wheat should not be put on the market until the price reached 85 cents, but Mr. Stone refused to make any such pledge. He did state, however, that the board would not offer any of its wheat at the present low prices. But he made it plain that the board would abide by its policy enacted July 1, which was that it would feel free to sell up to a cumulative maximum of five million bushels a month for the next year.



Charles Curtis

characterized by the Italian press as a return to the medieval conceptions about the respective authority of the church and state. Copies of the document were not only distributed in the churches of Rome, but also were sent out of the country by special couriers—which action drew Fascist ridicule.

MAYBE there will be another war in South America before long. Dispatches from Asuncion, Paraguay, said that Senor Guaschalla, minister from Bolivia, sent a note to the foreign office declaring he had been ordered by his government to suspend diplomatic relations between the two nations. The Paraguayan government replied with the announcement that it had ordered its minister to Bolivia to return home. Don't ask what it's all about.

Peru has been having a little war of its own—government versus revolutionists. The other day the rebels were defeated at Huambulo and the city of Cuzco, their headquarters, was taken. The revolutionists thereupon fled to the jungle, and probably little more will be heard of them.



Bishop Valencia

MEXICO'S quarrel with the Church of Rome is now centered in the state of Vera Cruz and the prospects of a peaceful settlement are growing more and more remote. In protest against the recently enacted law of the state limiting the number of priests, Rt. Rev. Rafael Guizar Valencia, bishop of Vera Cruz, has instructed all Catholics of the state to abstain from attending dances theaters and other festivities until the conflict between the church and government is ended. The bishop also has instructed his priests to keep their churches open, even if the state forbids services conducted by priests.

JOSEF STALIN has made public the new policy of Soviet Russia in dealing with the bourgeoisie and the kulaks of well-to-do farmers. These classes, hitherto suppressed, persecuted and exiled, are now to be conciliated to an extent if they will consent to co-operate with and labor for the Soviet regime. The rulers of Russia have discovered that the brains and skill of the old order are needed to meet the growing demands of agricultural and industrial development.

As part of the new order of things Stalin also presented a program entailing radical changes in the government's policy toward labor and industry to insure the success of the five-year plan.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER celebrated his ninety-second birthday quietly at his home in Tarrytown, N. Y. The only event of the day was a family dinner attended by Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., their married daughter, Abbie, and her husband, David Milton, together with four other Rockefeller children. To the press Mr. Rockefeller said: "These occasions offer me a very welcome opportunity: first, to express my gratitude to the many, many friends who not only at this time but throughout the year have shown their kindly regard for me; and second, to wish them and theirs and all the world a large measure of health and contentment, which are the basis of real happiness."

BILLY BURKE of Greenwich, Conn., professional golfer whose real name is Burkowski—he is a Pole—is the new open golf champion of the United States, wearing the crown which Bobby Jones laid aside. In the tournament on the Inverness course at Toledo, Burke and George von Elm of Detroit tied for first place with cards of 292. Next day they undertook to play off the tie at 36 holes, and again tied. So on Monday the second play-off was staged and Burke won by a margin of one stroke, finishing the longest tourney in golf history. Burke had a total of 589 strokes for the 144 holes played in the five days of their battle, and Von Elm had 590. This was slightly over an average of 4 for each hole.



Billy Burke

THOUGH Max Schmeling of Germany may win a clean-cut victory over Willie Stribling in their battle in Cleveland, defending his heavyweight title, he is still out of favor with the New York state boxing commission. Chairman J. A. Farley of that body is quoted as saying: "Schmeling will never meet another boxer in New York as long as he refuses to meet Jack Sharkey again." The New York commission gave Schmeling the title when Sharkey fouled him, but, according to Farley, it does not consider him the champion.

NOTABLE among the deaths of the week was that of John Brisben Walker in Brooklyn. For many years he was often in the public eye as a soldier, business man, writer and editor and crusader for world peace. The duke of Aosta, cousin of the king of Italy, also passed away, to the great sorrow of the Italian people. He won considerable fame in the World War.

The pope's latest encyclical dealt severely with the Fascist position on the education of youth, and was

Mr. Curtis' activity in the contro-