

THE VALE OF ARAGON

By FRED McLAUGHLIN

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THE STORY

At nightfall in the old city of New Orleans, in the year 1821, Loren Garde, recently an officer under General Jackson, is surprised by the appearance of three figures...

CHAPTER I—Continued

The gathering circle had closed in to attend the wounded man, who—so I judged from the volume of his groans—had not received a mortal thrust. "Who is his majesty, Senor?" I asked.

"Adolfo de Fuentes, colonel in the Spanish army under La Torre, who is governor of Venezuela." "Then you go," I asked, "to Venezuela?"

Before he could answer my question a huge mulatto to my elbow voiced a warning bellow: "De Charlies—heah dey come!" And a narrow-shouldered, pasty-faced wharf rat amplified it with a shrill: "Les gens d'armes!"

"If they should capture you, Senor?" Polito said. "Yet I have only offered a man's defense."

"True, but the least, Senor, will be an awkward and infinite process-verbal, time and trials and an unfortunate wait, while the Senorita—"

I found his hand and gave it a warm clasp. "You will convey my regrets to the Senorita?" "Assuredly, Senor."

his eye, a rich resonance in the commanding tones of his voice. The suave host filled four glasses with an amber fluid and, proffering one to each of his guests with a light laugh, said: "This garden is ours, Senores, where flowers of intrigue may bloom in safety. Therefore, Francisco mio—"

Whereupon Francisco raised his glass. "To Simon Bolivar," he said, his deep vibrant voice intoning a sort of benediction, "the Liberator of our people!"

They drank slowly, standing, and after a reverent silence, murmured, "Viva, viva," and again, "Viva!" Simon Bolivar? I had heard of him; who hadn't. Already they were calling him the George Washington of South America; this amazing soldier, statesman and patriot who, when only a youth, had plumbed the depths of despair in the loss of a young and beautiful bride, and had devoted his life thereafter to the service of his mother country, Venezuela.

So I continued the imitation of a saint while the men finished three bottles of Latour's best. It loosened their tongues so that the purpose of this midnight meeting stood revealed to me. I was aghast, for, although this new republic of the United States might have a very tender feeling and a definite sympathy for the struggling South American colonies, I knew it would not countenance a revolutionary junta within its boundaries.

"It was all too easy, Senores," Diego, the complacent merchant, was speaking. "Within the long, carefully twisted coils of tobacco are guns; ground tobacco in the kegs that we have loaded on the ship will burn with greater readiness than tobacco ever burned before—it will explode!"

Now I put my feet to the pavement and gave myself over to the business of silent running while the chase roared behind me. I directed my steps eastward, went north and east again into Rue Royal, and on and on, ever deeper into the French quarter. I passed vine-blanked walls which, I knew, concealed quaint mansions and beautiful courtyards.

I found, finally, a grilled gate which, opening to my touch, led under a graceful stone arch so low I had to bend my head to enter. I waited in the gloom of the arway as sounds of the battue went by.

Silent, I crouched in the shadows long after the noises of the futile chase had died away, and waiting, I had a chance to view again the amazing events of this mad night. In fancy I heard again the music of the woman's laugh, and I saw the slim hands that pressed upon her bosom; that despairing cry of "Dolfo mio" beat into my consciousness, and a fit of foolish trembling took possession of me.

I started for the oval of light that showed me the way to the street, but stopped when figures, turning in from the paved walk, blocked the passage. I heard the rasping scratch of a key in the lock of the iron gate and retreated warily, seeking the friendly shades as four men advanced upon me along the gloomy passage.

apse. The figure is taller by a shoulder than San Isidro, and he is garbed as the modern dandy of New Orleans. His hair, too, is not the dark hair of the Mexican patron, but light." He laughed shortly, and came to his feet. "He is an American saint, Diego, which is strange, for I had always believed that the pagan Americano had no saints."

He must have had the eyes of a lynx, and in his voice lay murder. As the swarthy sailor came toward my hiding place, the soldier drew a gleaming pistol. "Not here—not in here!" Diego cried. "You cannot kill a man in my garden. Take him—take him alive and move him to the river. Drown him, but do not shoot him in my garden!"

Senor Sailor, his bloodshot eyes staring stupidly, thrust his dark face within range of my fist, and I swung swiftly. It caught him fair upon the point of a heavy chin. Tumbling backward, he fell with sharp violence against the table, which overturned with a resounding crash of glass, catching the soldier in its fall, precipitating him to his hands and knees.

The fighting blood of my sturdy Norse father raced through my veins filling me with the lust for battle. I shot out of my retreat and, striking wildly, found the soft face of Diego, into which my fist sank sufficiently. He went down heavily to the pavement of the courtyard. Madness seized me again, and I laughed aloud. The soldier was up again. I took his glancing blow upon the shoulder and gave him all I had with one straight right, then I turned to face the last adversary, Francisco, but his long arm came down swiftly, and a pistol in his hand struck my unprotected head. The trees and the hanging lamp and the moon disappeared in a crimson sea. I groped blindly, and found friendly hands that let me down gently to the flagstones.

CHAPTER II

The Santa Lucrecia

I lived in a land of dreams, of grotesque fancies, where formless figures moved in silent aimlessness through half-transparent fog. I heard the vaguest echo of a voice, the fragment of a song, the shuffling of footsteps. Morning sunlight, streaming through a narrow, slatted port-hole, stenciled a flaming pattern on the wall above my head.

A figure moved in the cabin, approached and leaned over me. About the face so near my own there was a sort of unreal malformation. One of the eyes was closed, the liver-colored nose was larger by far than any nose should be, and a crooked grin pulled the features all awry.

"Is that a real face," I asked, "or have you, too, just returned from a bal masque?" Whereupon the face swore a bitter Spanish oath, and I knew the owner of it for the soldier. Now the tall form of Francisco bent over me.

"Then you didn't shoot me in the garden of the good Diego, nor drop me in the river?" Smiling, he shook his head. "No; however, Manuel was for slipping a knife between your ribs."

"Is Manuel he of the dark face that resembles a bad dream?" "Yes, Senor." He chuckled. "His face is even worse now—if such could be." He thought a moment. "You fight, Senor, as though you love to fight."

"Not at all; though sometimes, it is true that the blood of my father speaks to me." "If Venezuela had a thousand men like you, Senor," he said, and the flame of the patriot burned in his eyes, "she would win her independence out of hand."

I found nothing to say to this, and he went on, deep anxiety in his eyes: "In your unconsciousness, Senor, you spoke often to Her Majesty, who seems to possess shining black curls and purple moonlight in her eyes. Can we have made so vast a blunder?"

Now, in spite of the torture of my wounded head, I laughed—and groaned, and laughed again. "The majesty, Senor, of the lady of my dreams, lies only in her beauty; I saw her coming from a bal masque, and she was garbed as a queen. You have taken no prince incognito—only an American who has spent one mad night." I knew that they would have killed me after our fight if they had intended to kill me at all, so I assumed that, for the present at least, I was safe.

News Review of Current Events the World Over

Germany's Financial Plight Worries All Other Nations—Hearings on Railway Freight Rate Increase Begun.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD



George W. McGarrath

WHILE all the world looked on with anxious interest, Germany was plunged into a financial crisis that threatened the country with utter economic collapse and made possible even the subversion of the government. Delay in acceptance of the Hoover moratorium by France had resulted in the withdrawal of vast sums from the German banks, the conversion of these funds into foreign currency and its removal from the country.

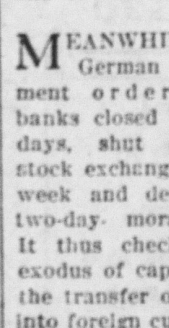
Istana has been filled by the election of another Democrat, John Overton. INVESTIGATION was ordered by Secretary of Commerce Lamont into charges made by Dr. Ray O. Hall that he had been dismissed from the department for protesting against falsification of the recently issued report on the "balance of international payments."

The point he had endeavored to bring out and which, he said, was omitted, was that, in anticipation of higher tariff rates later, foreign shippers had sent greater quantities of goods to this country during the first part of the fiscal year than otherwise would have been the case.



Ezra Brainerd, Jr.

RAILWAY officials, shippers and other interested persons gathered in Washington for the hearings before the Interstate Commerce commission on the application of the railroads for an increase of 15 per cent in rates on all freight traffic. It is one of the biggest questions that Chairman Ezra Brainerd, Jr. and his fellow commissioners have had to handle for some time.



Hans Luther

MEANWHILE the German government ordered all banks closed for two days, shut up the stock exchanges for a week and decreed a two-day moratorium. It thus checked the exodus of capital and the transfer of marks into foreign currencies or securities, for the time being.

At the suggestion of the French government, an important conference was held in Paris Saturday and Sunday, the chief participants from other nations being Chancellor Bruening and Foreign Minister Curtius of Germany, Foreign Secretary Henderson of England and Secretary Stimson of the United States.

President Hoover kept in close touch with the German situation but it was the official view in Washington that Germany must help herself by strong measures and that in the matter of outside assistance Europe must take the lead. Mr. Hoover took the position that in bringing about the moratorium he had done all that he legitimately and properly could do.

Conforming to the wish of President Hoover, that existing wage scales be maintained, the roads are seeking an increase of revenue in increased rates, but their executives have made it plain that if this is not granted, wages will have to come down. Many shippers have let the commission know that they favor the latter alternative, asserting that they cannot bear higher transportation charges.

In an effort to determine whether certain practices of the railroads are consistent with "economical and efficient management," the Interstate Commerce commission announced that it would conduct an investigation of its own motion into practices of carriers which affect their operating revenues and expenses.

Among the practices the commission is investigating are prices paid for railroad fuel and the handling of coal at tidewater ports, lake coal, private freight cars, the spotting of cars at industries and the construction and maintenance of sidings for shippers.

CAPTS. GEORGE ENDRES, of the Hungarian army made a remarkable non-stop flight from Harbor Grace, N. F., to within 14 miles of Budapest. That city was their goal but their fuel ran out just before it was reached.

CHARLES G. EDWARDS, Democrat, representative in congress of the First Georgia district, died suddenly of cerebral hemorrhage in Atlanta. He was fifty-three years old and his home was in Savannah.

SOVIET Russia has taken another step in its return toward old-time ways. It has been decreed by the people's commissariat for agriculture that payment to workers on Russia's collective farms shall henceforth be

made only on the basis of quality and quantity of work performed. The measure is designed to increase the "material interestedness" of the farmers and thus enlarge production.

THREE independent investigators, after a tour of the Pennsylvania, Ohio coal fields, where the miners are on strike, declared that "the people of Pittsburgh are entirely unappreciative of the gravity of the situation. If they do not awaken soon they will shortly find themselves faced with a civil strife unparalleled in the coal industry."

CHILE has a new cabinet headed by Pedro Bianquero who, besides being premier, is minister of finance. Bianquero was formerly finance and public works minister, as well as director of the state railways. He is regarded as an efficient technical man and it is believed in Santiago that he can find the remedy for the precarious state of Chilean finances.

FROM the White House came an official reply to the attacks on the tariff commission that have been made by Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas and other Democratic leaders. The statement represented the tariff commission as a most industrious body which had completed investigations of 110 different articles under the flexible provisions of the tariff act and has investigations of 119 articles still under consideration.

ONE more report from the Wickersham commission has been made public. It deals with methods of criminal procedure, and an interesting paragraph denounces as "shocking to one's sense of justice" the laws under which the famous Mooney-Billings case was conducted. The commission cites the case arising from the 1916 preparedness day bombing in San Francisco as one in which motions for a new trial "were held inadequate to prevent injustice."

Monte M. Lemann, New Orleans lawyer who declined to sign the commission's prohibition report, likewise refused to sign this document. He charges that the report was made without sufficient research to back up the conclusions reached.

VIRTUALLY the father of the army air service, Brig. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulois, will next December, reap the reward of his long and earnest labors. The War department announced his promotion to succeed Maj. Gen. James E. Fechet as chief of the army air corps, effective December 20, when General Fechet's term expires.



Gen. Foulois

ALBERT B. FALL, former secretary of the Interior, was ordered by the Department of Justice to be committed to the New Mexico penitentiary to serve out the term to which he was sentenced on his conviction in the Elk Hills bribery case. In order that Fall, because of incipient tuberculosis, might serve his term in the Southwest, his sentence of a year in jail was changed to a year and a day by Justice Jennings Bailey of the District of Columbia Supreme court.

Buttons Now Obsolete Once Did Real Service

Buttons placed on the underside of men's coat sleeves, says a correspondent of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, were there to fasten the long lace cuffs while the wearers rode horseback or had occasion to reach across the table for another helping of journey cakes, better known as Johnny cakes. For similar reasons, namely to fasten up the lace, buttons were placed along the sides of knee breeches to facilitate ease in horseback riding.

We Knew It!

A correspondent writes that a tensor is that part of a quaternion that alters the length of a vector. We had suspected it right along.—Minneapolis Journal.