

The Vale of Aragon

By Fred McLaughlin
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CHAPTER VIII

The Bugle of Maracay

Emerging again into the sunlight I found the Irish captain still offering sturdy support to the adobe wall. "Every time our colonel wins a battle," said he, "he thinks he's Alexander."

"You speak in parables, Monahan; Pini falls a deal short of Alexander." He grinned, and bent his red head to indicate a massive rock house a stone's throw to the north of us. "That's his headquarters—or will be until the Spaniards run us out again. He has lately entered it, with a lady . . . a reluctant lady, it's true, but the manner of Pini was gently but firmly coercive, so . . ."

"I shall apprise him of our danger at once; we must re-form, and we must keep in touch with the main body of Bolivar's army, else we are lost, for our ammunition—"

"Sure," he said. He caught hold of my arm as I turned away. "Is your pistol loaded, Garde?" There was a strange light in his blue eyes, and under his air of seeming indifference I read a definite tenseness.

"Do I require a pistol to approach our colonel?"

He shrugged. "Go ahead; you went in Caracas without a gun—and out again. This lion's den should be vastly simpler. A Providence watches over you."

The heavy wooden door with its exquisite carvings stood open and as I would have entered, a sentry put a gun across the doorway. "The colonel has issued orders that he is not to be disturbed; will the major wait?"

"The major won't; will you tell the colonel—?"

He showed white teeth in a wide grin. "I cannot; it would be as much as my life is worth to disturb him."

While I waited, wondering what should be done, the colonel's tenor, carrying the burden of a caress, came down the hallway: "Would not the wines of Montalban caress thy palate, Bonita?"

I failed to catch Bonita's reply, but it was not acquiescence, for the colonel spoke again: "When the Spaniards take a city, Senorita, they take all that is in it; may we, then, do less?"

He laughed at her rejoinder and continued: "Had I known Maracay held so gorgeous a beauty I should have taken it long ago; so fair a vision of loveliness may not be kept for a mere Spaniard . . . he cannot properly appreciate. Be not so cold," he pleaded; "a little wine, a little—"

"No, no," she cried, "ah, no!"

Name of G—d—the one voice in all the world! It had called to me in my dreams, it had ridden the wings of the wind, and now . . .

With no thought of consequences I thrust the sentry aside with a sweep of my arm, sped along the hallway and threw my body against the door, which crashed inward under the impact of my fall. By the time I had regained my feet Pini, pistol held ready, was standing across the table from me, and the Senorita Lamartina leaned against the wall, fear in her pale face and slim hands pressed against her bosom.

"Senor!" she gasped.

"Dulce!"

Colonel Pini, misunderstanding me, laughed. "Aye, dulce indeed, Major Garde, for she is the sweetest by far of all those that the stupid Spaniard has yet brought over. But why do you enter my quarters by such forceful means?"

Think! I must think, I must control myself; blind luck so far had been my portion, but now . . . Gracious G—d, give me the use of my brain! Pini did not recognize her, did not realize the value of the prize that he had won; then, manifestly, he should remain in ignorance.

"A vision, in truth!" said I, laughing. "But do you not know, my colonel, that the taking of Maracay has cost us over a hundred men? We would hasten."

She looked at me in amazement, resentment in the deep blue eyes, and I thought, an expression of pleading also.

"Aye," Pini agreed, "a hundred men indeed—but it's worth it; the Senorita alone is worth two hundred." I think the garrulous colonel had partaken too freely of the wines of Montalban.

"Yet there is much to do."

"Did not Bolivar say to take the city, and have I not done so?"

"Yes, but General Bolivar also said to hold it. Do you not know, my colonel, that half our Indian soldiers, having fired away their remaining ammunition in celebration of our victory, have discarded their guns, assuming them—empty—to be of no further use?"

He laughed. "A misfortune, but nothing tragic; it has ever been the habit of the stupid savages. A thing to be discounted as inevitable."

"And," I continued, "that the forces of Paez and Plaza have fallen back before the Spaniards, freeing the two wings that may now close in upon us; that if we do not move swiftly our lines of communication with Bolivar's

army will be broken, so that, half accoutered and without ammunition, we will be lost?"

"How gloomy a tale do you bring me in this, the hour of my happiness." His acquisitive eyes took in the slim beauty of the Senorita, and I could have throttled him for the evil in his look. "Does your American cowardice come to the fore at such a time as this; do you not realize that, of the entire line of attack, only we have broken through?"

"Aye, and I realize also that the Spaniard will close in behind us. And this American cowardice of mine, Senor, does not presume to celebrate a half-victory with drunkenness and other unseemly conduct."

Pini brought the pistol to bear upon me. "Do you speak thus to me, your colonel, your commanding officer?"

"Under similar conditions, my colonel, I would speak so to Bolivar himself, had he fallen so low; a thing I cannot imagine, for, of all our officers, I think Colonel Pini is the only man who might have planned an act so vile."

Madness? Aye, a veritable madness; yet his eyes had offered insult to the Senorita, and I worshiped her.

"Ah, Loren," she cried, fear in her voice—and love, I think, as well. "How vast a blunder. Can you not see—?"

Pini laughed. "Loren? Well! His voice was icy, menacing.

"Ah, Dulce mia," I gasped, "I cannot think; I love thee!"

"Very pretty," said Pini. He offered a sour smile. "I have waited, Garde, for such a time as this." He thought a moment. "It is the Senorita Lamartina—no? Then she shall see how we deal with insubordination, a grievous crime. At such a time I may be judge and jury and executioner, for it is my right."

"The pistol is not made, my colonel," I said, "that may kill me instantly, and if I am given so much as half a minute—"

"No," said Dulce, "no!" She came forward, arms outstretched, toward the man who waited, weapon pointing at his heart. "Anything, Colonel Pini, but—"

I thrust her aside. "No!" I cried, leaping toward him as the gun roared, filling the room with thunder. Flame traversed my arm and sent the red-hot pain coursing through my body. My right arm fell, useless, and the fingers of my left hand found his throat, and held.

No matter what befell I knew that only death awaited me, for this attack upon a superior officer, regardless of

the circumstances or the provocation, could mean but one thing: a court and a decree of death. So, with the weight of my body, and the strength of my legs, I held him against the wall while my fingers did their work. I even laughed, a shrill maniacal outburst, and I talked: "Do you see, Dulce, my own, how a craven dies?"

"No, Loren, no; it is murder! If you love me, dear heart, you will not do it!"

"But he offered insult to thee . . . shall I not kill him for that, does he not deserve—?"

"Listen, Loren, do you not hear it?"

Now there came to us the clear high notes of a bugle, a penetrating, electric summons. I guess I am, and have always been, first a soldier, for that call to arms cleansed my mind of hatred and found a soldier's ready acquiescence in my heart.

Colonel Pini, freed at last, staggered to the table and braced his swaying body with his hands. "You will pay for this, Senor," he rasped through a tortured throat.

Wild yells followed the call of the bugle, and intermittent thudding of guns, then an orderly fusillade. I knew that the Spaniards, having reformed behind us to cut us off, were investing the city.

"I expect to pay, colonel, and you will doubtless pay when Bolivar hears how you have thrown away the fruits of a dearly bought victory."

"After this skirmish," he said, moving unsteadily toward the wreckage of the doorway, "there will be a court."

"I shall be ready, my colonel."

"Ah, Loren, that you should have found me thus!"

"I am thankful that I was able to find you at all." I went to my knees and pressed my lips against a slim hand, for my love for her has been the sort of worship that mortals offer up to saints. "Am I not forgiven, Senorita, that I was so blind as not to see through your masquerade?"

She put her hand upon my head. "It is light again—your hair. I am glad, Loren."

The tumult of conflict approached, and I knew the force of Colonel Pini, drunk with a false victory and too much wine, and insufficiently outfitted with guns and ammunition, were beaten, and moving back.

"Do they lose—your men?"

I nodded.

"I am sorry; Spain does not belong in Venezuela. I have seen. You must go, you must save yourself. Your life—"

"Do you love me, Dulce mia?"

Now she came to her knees beside me. "Ah, Loren mio, there is nothing in my life but love for thee!"

"Then you forgive?"

"Aye, dear heart! Kiss me, kiss me and hold me, hold me close, then . . . Loren, you are wounded, there is blood. Ah, God preserve thee!"

"My arm only, but I can hold thee well with one." I laughed in an excess of happiness.

So I kissed the shining hair, the tear-dimmed eyes, and the tender lips, and I held her close to my heart again, for I knew that this would be the end. Defeat or victory for the forces of Bolivar, my fate was sealed.

"Pollo," I said, "lies wounded, but not seriously, in an adobe house less than two hundred meters south from here."

Now she clung to me, face upraised in pleading. "Is there blame in thy heart, Loren, that Polito should be fighting for the Spanish?"

"A soldier may not turn his back upon his country, my sweet; Polito owes his service to his king."

"Bless thee, my own . . . Adios!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"Did Not Bolivar Say to Take the City, and Have I Not Done So?"

Medieval Dishes That Called for Condiments

An important reason for the apparent vast thirst of the English of medieval times, William Edward Mead explains, in his volume, "The English Medieval Feast," is found in the dishes common to their tables, wherein condiments and spices played a major part. Loaded with pepper, cubebs, mace, saffron, cloves, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, galangale, cummin, licorice, aniseed, and other tart ingredients, they were prone to inspire the consumer to frequent draughts from the ale keg or beer mug.

Here again the element of necessity entered. For, the author points out, fashion had in reality little to do with the extensive use of these elements. Our ancestors, he reminds us, had not yet begun to breed beasts and poultry for the table, except that the value of the capon was remembered from former days. Mutton was apt to be stringy, beef tough; and men made use of food from sources that today would be avoided with a shudder.

In the hope, then, of securing an aid to digestion, as well as to disguise the exact nature of many dishes, the spice box came frequently to hand as the cook worked. For natural crudeness cried aloud for mitigation, even at the feasts where kings ate crowned and bishops dined in cope and miter.

Danish Flag Oldest

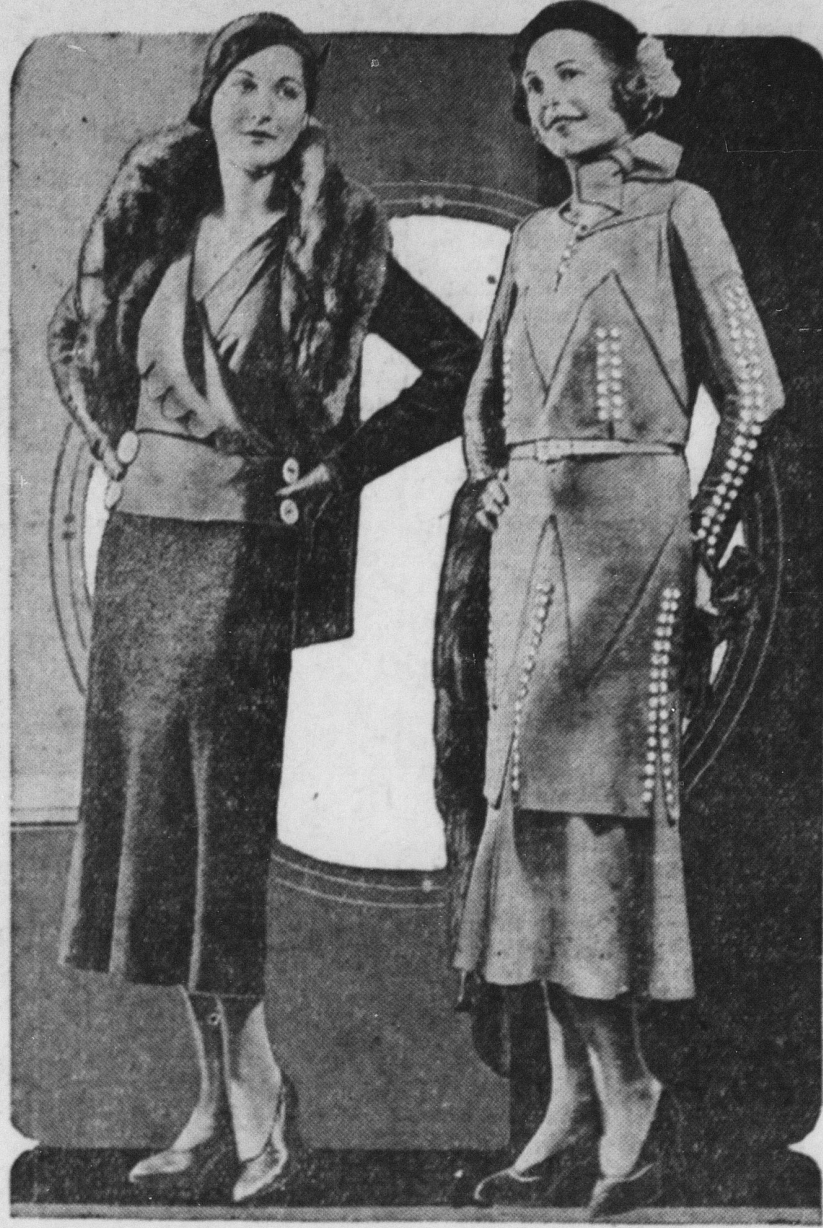
The Stars and Stripes is the second oldest established flag, the Danish flag being the only one which dates farther back in an unchanged form. The cross of the Danish flag was adopted as the national emblem in the year 1219. The changes in our flag are not figured, as the law establishing the flag provided for them. At the time the United States flag was officially adopted, on June 14, 1777, there were a good many national flags which had been in use for a considerable period of time, but through changes in government these flags have all since been changed in one way or another. The present British national flag, or "Union Jack," was not adopted until 1801, the date of the union of Great Britain with Ireland.

Hope

The poets are full of appreciation of hope that makes an otherwise drab life endurable. Tennyson speaks of "the mighty hopes that make us men." Milton says, "What re-enforcement we may gain from hope." "Hope will make thee young," says Shelley.

Buttons Trim College Girl Frocks

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



BUTTONS, buttons, trim your frocks, your blouses, your suits, your coats and your pajama costumes with buttons, such is the message which fashion is fairly shouting in the ears of young moderns who attend college this fall.

An ideal decoration for smart campus clothes is the new buttons, whether there be rows and rows of them, or perhaps a single huge button placed with a view of "showing off" to the best advantage.

The nifty Jersey frocks, which are so decidedly "it" for the college girl this fall, make a perfect background for the now-so-chic button trimmings. In order that you may be made wise as to the effectiveness of the new button treatments your attention is called to the stunning costume of brown wool Jersey shown to the right in this picture. Here rows and rows of beige ocean pearl buttons travel up and down the deftly-seamed sections of the tunic, on the sleeves also, in fact, wherever there is the slightest excuse for their appearance either on bodice or skirt there do these ornamental buttons hold forth.

Color adds greatly to the lure of the clever button trims which are such a definite style feature this season. The

four immense ocean pearl buttons which pose two on one side and two on the other at the neckline of the swanky blouse which the style-wise coed, standing to the left in the picture, is wearing, are a handsome green matching the silk which they trim. The suit itself is fashioned of one of the numerous rough textured loose-woven wools which are so correct for the fall or winter costume. The deep sea-green of this material contrasts handsomely with the brown fur which collars it.

It is really very exciting, the button game as fashion is now playing it. For example, picture, if you will, a modish black silk afternoon dress with a diagonal bodice closing, which is traversed with six large white ocean pearl buttons sewn through with a cording made of bright red fabric.

Paris is not only showing an interest in buttons, but buckles and other pearl trimmings are likewise regarded with favor. This vogue is even reflected in the millinery realm where one sees here a directoire hat trimmed with a single large pearl buckle, or there a felt shape with a tab buttoned over the brim to give it a one-sided flare as the season demands.

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SILKS, WOOLS AND VELVETS IN FAVOR

Velvets, silks and wools lead the parade of fall and winter fabrics, according to Kathleen Howard, New York fashion editor of Harper's Bazaar. Many new weaves and colors are available in these fabrics, she writes.

"Velvets are to be an outstanding fabric for the fall and winter mode," she says. "They are apparent in a variety of weaves."

"Evening dresses, evening wraps, afternoon dresses, cinema dresses are all seen in this luxurious fabric, so suitable to the romantic mode."

"Flat crepes, in flower and fruit shades and in pastels, are greatly in demand. Lames are important. Satin is paramount. Stiffer silks, such as faille and brocades are represented in the collections. Novelties in plaid effects, heavy-pebbled crepes, square alpaca-like weaves and faconne surfaces are offered."

"A woolen season is strongly indicated. In coatings the newest surfaces are rough for daytime wear, changing to duvety or broadcloth for more formal coats."

Jewel Shoulder Straps



The jewel-like beauty of turquoise blue ocean pearl sequins which band the shoulder straps and outline the deep décolletage lends brilliance to this sophisticated evening gown of shell-pink celanese satin.

Some of the New Ideas in Chic Hats for Fall

On distinctly new lines is the small hat with a curving feather like a crescent moon. Not all the new brimmed hats have ostrich. A new one in rust colored felt is trimmed at the side with a roll of green velvet set under the side brim as a feather might be.

A black felt has a large black sailor ribbon bow in the back, under a brim that encircles a very shallow crown. Still more ribbon appears, this time in pink velvet for a black felt model that sports a rather wide brim sloping down in front and up at sides, from a crown almost too slight and small to talk about. The way the velvet ribbon is used deserves a word. Its sedate twin knot perched in front and Watteau shepherdess bow behind,

New Glove Buttons Up Back Instead of Under

A new glove buttons up the back of the hand instead of the under side. It is a gauntlet, but the buttons begin diagonally at the little finger and cross the hand above the wrist. A contrast in color is made by the buttons and the outline around the buttonholes, and occasionally by means of contrasting stitching done by hand around the fingers. On some a cuff turns back, showing a bright lining in combination with white or beige or a lighter shade of whatever the lining is showing.

Ostrich Puts You in Forefront of Fashion

And the ostrich is back. Oh, very much so. Not only on fans, but also on the everyday afternoon hat. Yes, ma'am, two little ostrich plumes over the right ear on a close-fitting hat not only lend softness to the face but put you in the forefront of fashion. What's more, an ostrich tuft has been known to be carried, uselessly but prettily, to evening functions.

Great Relief
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Mrs. Rounds—Thank heaven for that! It will be a novelty to go somewhere without having to pack.
—Boston Transcript.

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Tied and Tied
John D. Rockefeller, Jr., tells the following incident:
"I sat one night over my Shakespeare when a sentence popped up that puzzled me. I said to my father, who was sitting nearby: 'Father, what is the meaning of this question, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune"? What kind of tide would that be?'"
"Tied down to business, son!" said father."

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