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A TALE OF GOLD'S PISTOLS.

It is well known to all in any degree familiar with the history of Mexico that a regular system of highway robbery exists in every section of that happily governed country.

Some years ago, having business which first called me to the capital of Mexico, and there through the interior country to the northward, I met with several thrilling adventures, which I have recorded for the benefit of whomsoever may take an interest therein.

At Perote, I repeat, all who had been my companions from Vera Cruz took leave of me, this being the end of their journey in that direction, but there was one new passenger here to go forward, whom, to my agreeable surprise, I found to be a beautiful young lady, some twenty years of age.

Senorita Paula, as I subsequently ascertained her name to be, was indeed one of those rare beauties seldom met with except in works of fiction.

"I am coming to a dangerous part of the road," she said, "are you still resolved to defend yourself if assailed?"

"With your permission, Senorita," I replied, "I don't think it advisable, she replied, 'but still if such your intention, I think it no more than right that you should give me a chance to take part in my defence, since my risk of danger will be as great as yours.'

"And have you really been robbed on your journey back and forth?" I inquired. "I think I have paid my share to the bandits for my transit through this country," she laughed.

There seemed to be no help for it—the beautiful Senorita Paula Valverde was a spy and accomplice of the robbers. She had entered the diligencia at Perote for no other purpose than to ascertain the exact condition of things inside, and be able to signalize her associates as she passed along, so that they might know exactly in what manner to conduct themselves and make their work sure without risk.

"I acknowledge myself conquered by her," he said to Senorita Paula, who had now collected in a body in front of the door of the diligencia, I continued—"Gentlemen, will you permit me to enlighten and make you some valuable presents? In the language of your country, all I have is yours."

The leader of the party bowed politely in return, and said with a grim smile—"I, Senor, will be most happy to receive anything you so distinguished a traveler may have to bestow."

With this, I quietly stepped from the vehicle, and one quick, searching glance put me in possession of the whole state of affairs. The diligencia, had been stopped in a wild, gloomy place, and the driver was sitting carelessly on his box, taking everything as a matter of course.

"I beg your pardon, Senorita," I pursued, glancing at the Senorita Paula, who with my pistol still in her possession, was quietly standing within the diligencia, regarding the whole proceeding with one of her sweetest smiles.

"I am very kind, Senor; but can I fire it?" she asked. "With ease, Senorita," and producing one of my revolvers I explained to her the manner in which it was to be used.

"I think it is safe to calculate that five out of six will explode, Senorita," I said. "You are a very formidable weapon, indeed!" she replied.

"What a beautiful invention!" she observed, reaching over and taking it from my hand. Then extending her hands, one of the revolvers in each, she continued—"Armed like this, one might almost count himself against a host."

"Quick, Senorita," said I, extending my hand; "quick, in Heaven's name! give me one of those weapons! for now is our time for decisive action!"

It was a convincing proof of the wisdom of the victims, at least, the care they took when their hearts were irretrievably in the little coquette's power, to fence round the place where there had been a high, impenetrable wall of resolves and avoidance and coldness. It is doubtful if they answered any goodly answer, however, except to keep out the intrant things, in case they had the power to get back.

As for the young lady herself, it is uncertain whether she possessed any such troublesome appendage of her own. Perhaps that was the reason she wanted so many of other people's.

Therefore Caroline Faulkner, in the quiet town of Readingville, managed to enjoy herself tolerably well, sporting with men's hearts as a child with its toys, thinking these dangerous playthings made for her especial breaking and tormenting and rejoicing in every new victim to her fascinations.

And when the Squire's proud son, resenting at her teasing and caprices, and standing on their feet, holding many a girl within twenty miles, were she ever so poor and ignorant, than Cary Faulkner, and it was repeated to her, (for who ever knew words of that kind to remain idle?) how the elf's eyes sparkled with glee, and what silvery laughter issued from her sweet mouth as she arched her white neck and threw back her auburn curls.

That evening, at singing school, she smiled so sweetly on the young squire, and looked so approachable, that he was almost beside himself with hope and joy; and when he walked home with her, which she graciously permitted him to do, he was foolish enough to ask her to marry him, and then how innocently surprised Cary looked as she said:

"I am very sorry, Mr. Hubert, I thought you understood me when I told you I could be no more than a friend to you."

"I don't care about borrying, thank you. It is a splendid evening. I am looking at the stars. Se how bright they are."

"Perhaps Miss Caroline was not unwilling to say 'no' again; that evening, for she looked so suitably in the young man's face, though he was only her father's man, and one could see, even by the moonlight, that he was dressed very plainly; and rejoiced, besides, in the romantic name of John Smith.

"What became of the robbers and their beautiful accomplices, I never learned, but the lesson taught me on that journey I have never forgotten; and during the

remainder of my stay in that country, no pretty woman ever had the honor of being my business confidante, or of getting possession of my trusty and unflinching revolver.

MR. JOHN SMITH.

An ardent coquette was Caroline Faulkner, with the bluest, merriest eyes, the reddest pouting lips; the prettiest, reddest ways that ever made sad havoc with unguarded hearts; and those proved to have been many, in the town of Readingville—all the way from the squire's son and the young student minister down to the young milk-woman who helped her father on his farm.

It was a convincing proof of the wisdom of the victims, at least, the care they took when their hearts were irretrievably in the little coquette's power, to fence round the place where there had been a high, impenetrable wall of resolves and avoidance and coldness.

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trouble with other help, hereafter, but she was overruled by Cary and her father. It is uncertain if Mr. Smith duly appreciated the honor of this exception in his favor, possibly not expecting any other course of proceeding. Most certainly, he seemed perfectly at home where he was placed.

Genial, witty, good natured, he was soon a great favorite with the family. He and Cary became good friends, in spite of the fascinations of the latter, he had not, thus far, exhibited, in the least, serious symptoms of any affection of the heart.

Again Miss Caroline Faulkner, in the quiet town of Readingville, managed to enjoy herself tolerably well, sporting with men's hearts as a child with its toys, thinking these dangerous playthings made for her especial breaking and tormenting and rejoicing in every new victim to her fascinations.

And when the Squire's proud son, resenting at her teasing and caprices, and standing on their feet, holding many a girl within twenty miles, were she ever so poor and ignorant, than Cary Faulkner, and it was repeated to her, (for who ever knew words of that kind to remain idle?) how the elf's eyes sparkled with glee, and what silvery laughter issued from her sweet mouth as she arched her white neck and threw back her auburn curls.

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Miss Emmond—a modest, gentle, girl, who was disengaged, as her friend had stated. In his delay in finding a partner, they were among the last to take their places. There was only the couple needed (opposite the squire and his partner) to make the sets complete.

No sooner did the squire observe them, than he whispered to his partner, and they moved away to a seat. The couples at the side followed them, and Mr. Smith and his partner were left alone. The sweet girl beside him looked ready to faint.

"What does this mean?" said Mr. Smith, his eyes flashing lightning, and his teeth full of ire. Excluding himself to Miss Emmons, he strode with hasty step towards the place where Mr. Clayton was toying with his partner. Before he could reach him, a small hand was laid lightly on his arm. He paused. It was Caroline. She looked up beseechingly into his face, her lips quivering.

"Oh, Mr. Smith! don't have any scenes here, pray don't. Let it pass for to-night, please. It's only a mistake, which I will explain when I get home. The set is filled now and waiting for you. Come!"

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She had spoken quite rapidly and impetuously. "You are a brave and thoughtful girl. And you feel all this anxiety for unworthy me, Caroline?"

"Why should you care, Caroline? Hubert Clayton instigated it, and he is a dear friend of yours."

"O, I hate him, she cried passionately. 'I thought you liked him, Caroline. Is there any one dearer to you?'"

"Not till I have first soothed my pretty frightened dove. Be calm, darling; I'll not leave you. Do you not see that it is impossible to escape now, unseen, and the very fact of attempting it would imply my guilt. Besides I have documents by me which will easily prove my innocence. What—trembling? Why you forget the pistol my love? What a brave little heroine this is. Little tremble, too, to place such a wicked article as this in my hand, which if its contents happened to lodge in some unfortunate brain, would have brought me up on a rather more serious charge than this. Caroline, dearest—sweeter, wisest, best, that paid face and those heavy eyes—will you trust me? Will you not trust me, love, when I say that I am not in the least danger—a short detention at the utmost—and go to your room and try to sleep? I will keep watch outside your door and if there is the least alarm, I promise to speak to you. Will you not trust me? You know some day—perhaps nearer than you now imagine—I am to have a charge of you. Good night, my Caroline, my precious one."

The next morning, Hubert Faulkner rubbed his eyes as if doubting his vision, when about half a dozen men, accompanied by two officers entered. They said they came to arrest one John Smith, as their prisoner. He presented himself, stood calm and collected, while they were waiting for the high sheriff and warden of the prison. The men came. The former spoke:

"Good morning, gentlemen; I understand you have an escaped convict—a hardened criminal—in detention. Your zeal merits praise. Ah, John! you here? glad to see you. Father and mother well, eh? he said in a familiar tone of friendship, and shaking Mr. Smith's hand heartily—

"But I must to business first, then I will take you home with me. Where is your fellow? Bring him hither."

"I await your commands," said John, with a deurent smile. The sheriff stood thunderstruck, then burst into a hearty laugh.

"You don't mean to say that I have got out of a comfortable bed and come all this distance to arrest the son of an old friend whom I have known from his cradle? O, that is rich! I wonder what the Governor would say to hear that his son is an escaped convict? Ha! ha! ha! What mad prank have you been playing, John? When you left us a few months ago, you thought you were going immediately to open an office in the city."