

Her Mission

How She Kept It a Secret and How She Performed It

By MANUEL GORDA

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I was born in Madrid of eminent though not noble parents. When I was sixteen I formed the acquaintance of Alonso Gonzales, an anarchist.

I entered the university a year before Gonzales left it, and it was during this year that I was converted to the theories of the anarchists. There were others of our set that were captured by Gonzales, among them a girl, Dolores Sierra, who had been a playmate of mine. But Gonzales, so far as he was able, kept his converts apart, maintaining great secrecy in all his proselyting work. I conceived a great reverence for him, which later was turned to horror. When I was nineteen he persuaded me to join one of the anarchist circles of Madrid. I had been initiated only a few months when the society decided to put out of the way a statesman high in power, who was considered an obstacle to anarchist principles. One night when I went to a meeting of the circle it was announced that lots were to be drawn with a view to determining some member who should assassinate the person in question.

Up to this moment I had been fascinated by the romance I conceived to pervade these efforts to equalize the social strata. When I put my hand in a hat to draw a bit of paper that might compel me to kill a man and probably be executed myself as a felon, the illusion vanished like a mirage, or, rather, it was changed into repulsion, and when the paper I drew was opened and I saw by a skull and crossbones on it that I had drawn the order to commit murder I was frozen with horror.

I did not know what I should have done in the beginning—I made a confidant of my father. He saw at once the terrible position in which I was placed, but, instead of making it worse for me by reproach, kept his head and considered what it would be best for me to do. The result of his deliberations was that I should pass out of existence—that is, that I should disappear from the world as myself and reappear as far away as possible from the place of my exit as some one else.

A few days later, with what ready money I needed and certificates of deposit in the Bank of France, payable to me as Ebenezer Swift, disguised as an old man, I left the city. My object in taking an English name was that I proposed to settle eventually in America, and I intended to give out that I had been born of an American father and a Spanish mother.

It was a year later that I turned up at New York as nature made me, except that my beard had grown. Pretending that my eyes were sensitive to the light, I continually wore dark glasses. It was not absolutely necessary that I should earn a living, for once a year my father remitted sufficient funds to carry me for twelve months. We knew that my family would be watched, that my location might be discovered; hence there was to be no communication oftener than that interval.

One day, so I learned long afterward, Dolores Sierra went to my mother and told her that for my safety she must know where I was, stating that the circle to which I had belonged had condemned me to death, that they knew where I was and that I must be warned at once. Without thinking what she was doing my mother told her where I would be found in New York. My father was absent at the time and when he returned my mother, having learned that she had been indiscreet in giving my whereabouts, did not dare tell him what she had done. She trusted Dolores implicitly and preferred to rely on her to protect me rather than reveal her action to my father. The consequence was that I was not advised of the matter.

Living with a sword suspended over one's head is by no means pleasant. In my case it brought on a nervous breakdown. The summer was on, and I was advised to go up to the Catskill mountains. I therefore went to one of the hotels on the summit, hoping to recover my lost nervous vigor. I had not been there a week before I met with a great surprise. Walking out one afternoon, I met a girl coming toward me, and when we met who should it be but Dolores Sierra.

Cut off as I had been for more than a year from every one I had known before, her appearance gave me a thrill. I sprang toward her with a cry of joy. Instead of meeting me in the same spirit she stood as if paralyzed, all the color leaving her face.

"Dolores!" I exclaimed. "What brings you here?"

"I am so surprised," she stammered, "at meeting you that I"—She could get no further.

"But, Dolores, how strange that I should meet you of all others, and the very one I would rather meet!"

She put her hand to her breast. Her breath was coming quick. For a moment I thought she would fall. I sprang forward to catch her, but she waved me back. I waited till she had somewhat recovered, when she said to me:

"My meeting you unexpectedly after

your sudden disappearance has startled me. It was reported that you had been made away with by the anarchists."

"But what has that to do with your coming to America?"

"To meet one in the flesh whom you have supposed to be dead you must admit is liable to cause a shock," she replied without noticing my question.

"But—"

"Come; let us walk together."

By slow degrees she brought out that she had come to America because there are fields open to women in which they may make their living. She had no dowry, and in Spain a dowry was necessary for marriage; therefore she preferred to be occupied among those of her own sex who were used to work and where there was work to do.

"There is no work to do up in these mountains," I said.

The question took her unawares. That her presence in America was not explained by anything she had told me I did not doubt. But what was her object in coming? As we walked on I probed the matter, wondering all the while at the strange occurrence. Then suddenly a theory suggested itself to me. Might she not have come to protect me? And would she have come all the way across an ocean on my account except for one reason—that she loved me?

But such a suspicion I was not inclined to make known to Dolores. Nevertheless it caught my fancy and brought a wild joy to my heart. Set apart from those with whom I had been reared, dead to every living being I had known, the bare suspicion that this girl loved me and loved me so well that she had come all the way from my beloved Spain for me was like a new birth to me. With this girl for a companion I would be willing to live on in my changed existence.

I said no more to her as to the reason for her coming. In any event it was her secret, provided she chose to keep it a secret, and not mine. I found that she was stopping at a house not far from mine, and there later on I left her, having arranged to call and walk with her the next morning.

And so I did. In that mountain air we strolled, I invigorated not only by its purity, but by the companionship of Dolores. But while I grew strong she seemed to be wasting away. Something was distressing her. I asked her to confess it to me, and she declined. I pressed her to do so, and in a spasm of feeling she cried:

"If you don't leave I shall go mad."

To express my sympathy I took her hand in mine, but she snatched it away.

"One would suppose," I said, wounded, "that a viper had touched you."

"Or that you had touched a viper," she replied.

I was looking her in the face at the time she said this and saw her bite her lip. Perhaps the words and the action should have given me a clue to her secret, but they did not. I was as much puzzled as ever.

One day when we were walking together we met a woman with dark hair and eyes.

"That woman," I said, "came either from Spain or Mexico. At any rate, she's Spanish."

I turned to look at Dolores and saw that she was struggling with some emotion. But by this time I had given over questioning her upon these strange matters and said nothing. To attempt to extract from her their cause seemed only to madden her. We met the same woman again the next day, and I saw on her face a look that assured me that there was some understanding between them; but, as before, I refrained from speaking of it.

One night I awoke with a start. The moon, shining in at the window, showed a woman's figure standing near. She held something in one hand, while with the forefinger of the other she was smearing what she held. Then suddenly she flung the article out of the window. A ray of moonlight struck it and revealed what I took to be a knife.

I rose, supporting myself on my elbow, and asked:

"Who's there?"

A hand grasped mine—a hand cold as ice.

"Hush! I am Dolores."

"What are you doing here?"

"Don't interrupt me while I tell you and what to do. Our lives depend upon it. I came to America ordered by the circle to kill you. A woman was sent with me to see that I did the work. She is the Spanish woman we met. Tonight I told her that I would come to your room, plunge a dagger into your heart and throw the dagger out of the window to prove to her that I have done the deed. I have smeared it with beef's blood. She is to leave by one route, I by another; she by the stony cove and I by the cove leading down eastward. Good-by!"

"Dolores!" I cried, "I will go with you!"

"Where—to death?"

"We will hide ourselves from the world."

"Hide yourself. If you are discovered alive I must die."

"But, Dolores, darling, this woman, not hearing of a murder here, will know that you have not done the deed."

"I have thought of that. But she will not stop till she reaches Madrid."

"Go with me, sweetheart. I love you and so far as I can will protect you."

That was many years ago. I recall how, long before day we met at the mouth of the cove; how we walked ten miles to a railway station and, boarding a train, went so far as those who had known us were concerned out of existence.

HUMOROUS QUIPS

Story of Two Brothers.

Kind reader, mark my truthful tale—No moral is annexed, But if you have none handy We'll print one in our next.

Two brothers in Rehoboth town, When Philip's war began, To show their worth were summoned forth By the head militiaman.

John charged his gun and his canteen All ready for to slay; With Mister-Muster-Master Green He boldly marched away.

(But Robert sought the barn, unseen, And hid him in the hay.)

There came a night of gory fight; Assumptive creek ran red! Oh, grisly sight! By morning light Poor John showed up—shot dead!

So he was done with earthly work, But Robert lived to be Foundkeeper, deacon and town clerk And ancestor of me.

—John Pearson in Puck.

The Oriental Way.

In China when the subscriber rings up exchange the operator may be expected to ask:

"What number does the honorable son of the moon and stars desire?"

"Hohl, two-three."

Silence. Then the exchange resumes.

"Will the honorable person graciously forgive the inadequacy of the insignificant service and permit this humbled slave of the wire to inform him that the never-to-be-sufficiently-censured line is busy?" — Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Where Even the Wireless Fails.

"Can you direct me to the Grand hotel?"

"Beg pardon?"

"Which is the way to the Grand hotel?"

"What's that?"

"Grand—G-r-a-n-d h-o-t-e-l!"

"Well, what about it?"

"How do I get there?"

"I give it up. I'm a stranger here myself." — Browning's Magazine.

Singleness of Purpose.

"Are you going to see the coronation?"

"No," replied Mr. Meekton; "I don't think Henrietta would care for it. She would regard it as a waste of time to organize such a grand parade without putting 'Votes For Women' banners in it." — Washington Star.

He Pleased Her.

"What do you think of your new boarder?" asked the typewriter.

"Oh, I think he's such a nice young man," replied the boarding house lady.

"He's a very small eater, isn't he?"

"Oh, my, yes; he's really eaten his way into my affection." — Yonkers Statesman.

Comfort in That.

"Ain't yer vaccination healed up yet?" asked Jimmy.

"Naw," replied Tommy.

"Gee! Don't it make yer feel bad?"

"Naw. The doctor told mom I musn't take a bath till it's all healed up." — Catholic Standard and Times.

With Alacrity.

"Waal, I dunno," said the farmer's wife when Dusty Rhodes applied for a meal. "Would you be willing to do a few chores?"

"Madam," said Dusty, "if you'll give me something to chew on I'll chew all day." — Harper's Weekly.

Too Quickly.

"Sir, I wish to marry your daughter Susan."

"You do, eh? Are you in a position to support a family?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Better be sure of it. There are ten of us." — Toledo Blade.

Unsatisfactory.

"What became of your ideas of simplified spelling?"

"I abandoned them," replied the universal reformer. "The result looked too much like a dialect story with the quotation marks left out." — St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Just a Way He Had.

"I suppose," growled the pessimist, "you believe in taking things as they come, don't you?"

"Only when I don't consider them worth going after," replied the optimist. — Chicago News.

In the Air.

"I wonder if you could call it high finance?"

"What?"

"Dealing in airships." — New York Journal.

Unanswerable.

Missionary — But what have you against Christianity, my good brother?

Cannibal King — Well, there's too many clothes go with it for a man with forty wives. — Puck.

After the Varsity Meeting.

Jenior — How many glasses did you have last night?

Senior — Only one.

Jenior — How fast did you work it? — Columbia Jester.

Easy.

Teacher (trying to puzzle him) — Tommy, what is the plural of "wealth"?

Tommy Tucker — Scads. — Chicago Tribune.

Equivocal.

"I want you to get me somebody to take this part who's a live wire."

"Humph! That's dead easy." — Baltimore American.

For the Children

Rain Gauge Used by the Ancient Koreans.



The first use of the rain gauge has been credited to Benedetto Castelli, an Italian contemporary of Galileo, but recent research shows that rain gauges were used in the fifteenth century, nearly two centuries before, says Popular Mechanics. In the second volume of the historical annals of Korea is found a reference to rain gauges which translates as follows:

"In the twenty-fourth year of the reign of King Sejo (1442) the king ordered constructed a bronze instrument to measure the rainfall. It is a vase resting on a stone base and was placed at the observatory. Each time it rained the attendants measured the height of water in the vase and reported to the king. Similar instruments were also placed in all the provinces."

The ancient rain gauge herewith illustrated may still be seen at Ta'bo, Korea.

A Japanese Fable.

One day the monkey saw the ant climbing up a tall tree and thought that he would amuse himself at his expense.

"Look here, Mr. Ant," said he, "how quickly you are ascending the tree! Won't you have a race with me to the top of the tree? I am certain that you can beat me."

"All right," replied the ant, and both started to run up the tree from the bottom. In a minute the monkey had reached the middle branch of the tree, while the little ant had scarcely traveled an inch.

The monkey looked down haughtily upon the ant and then began to perform his favorite acrobatic feats upon one of the outstretching branches. Suddenly the wood snapped under his weight, and he fell to the ground. He was so badly hurt that it took some time before he could pick himself up. In the meantime the ant had reached the top of the tree and won the race.

Moral—One who relies too much on his own ability often falls.

The Waitzing Egg.

Place a plate on the table so that it is near enough to the edge to be easily taken in hand. Then place the egg in the middle and with the help of the thumb and the index finger of the right hand, placed respectively at either end, give the egg a lively rotary movement. It will soon stand upright on its points and turn. Now seize the plate and all you have to do to make the egg wait is to move your hand in a waitzing motion. The egg should be a hard boiled one and should while boiling be kept in a perpendicular position in the saucepan. Try it and see the egg spin around the plate.—Magical Experiments.

The Engineer Mouse.

Several years ago workmen were digging holes for some telegraph poles in New York, and into one of them a poor little mouse fell. The tiny prisoner at first raced around the hole frantically; then he seemed to set his wits to work. The hole was several feet deep, but he began to dig a spiral groove around it from the bottom, working night and day. When he got tired he built little landings to his staircase where he could rest. The workmen had become interested in him and gave him food, and when on the third day mouse reached the top all the men cheered him.

An Elephant Rope Walker.

The elephant was trained in the olden time to perform many feats. Mention is made of one that walked the tight rope, and not only near the ground. If we may believe what the old writers say it also walked a rope stretched above the heads of the spectators and carried a man on his back.

The Friendly Sunbeam.

There's a certain little sunbeam who is very fond of me. And every single morning, bright and early as can be (Because he knows my nursery is on the shady side), He leaves his brothers frolicking o'er dewy meadows wide. And he makes a golden bee line across end of our hall. And he creeps across the carpet, and he feels along the wall. And he slips between some curtains and through an open door. And he makes a golden bee line across my bedroom floor. Until, without a tiny sound to tell he's near the place. He has jumped upon my pillow and is shining in my face! Then up I start and out of bed, for who would wish to stay When such a friend has come so far to call one out to play? — Youth's Companion.

Used Another Man's Legs. In the hall of the house of representatives there is a painting of George Washington. He looks a most commanding person, with the stature of a giant and a faultless physique. But looking at the portrait recently a public man commented:

"That is a good deal of a sham. George Washington never looked like that, though I've no doubt he would have been proud to appear so magnificent."

"Notice the legs," the speaker continued. "They are perfect beauties, but they are not Washington's. They are the legs of General Smith of New Jersey, a soldier of the Revolution."

"It happened this way," he explained in conclusion: "Washington had quite unimpressive legs, and the artist who painted that picture was so dissatisfied with their shape that he persuaded General Smith to lend his faultless members as models. So, while we have the face and torso of our great first president, the supporting legs are those of one of his generals. Long may they stand!" — Washington Post.

Not the Answer 'is Expected.

One of Lord Desborough's best anecdotes relates to a clergyman who was far more at home in the hunting field than in the pulpit, says London Tit-Bits. On the morning of a meet he was much annoyed at having to officiate at a funeral; but, this over, he mounted his horse and started in pursuit of his friends. On the road he sought information of an old woman with a donkey cart.

"Well," she said, "if you ride to the top of the hill you will come to a 'meenister.' Then if you turn to the right you will be likely to come up with them."

Handing her a shilling, he said, "My good woman, why did you call the sign post a minister?"

"Why, you see, sir, it's like this: We use to call 'em sign posts, but since you've been in these parts we call 'em meenisters, 'cos, though they points other folks the way, they never goes themselves. Go on, Neddy!"

Death in Factory Fires.

The question is often debated as to whether persons who lose their lives in a fire developing with great rapidity undergo extreme physical suffering. An authoritative opinion is expressed by the New York Medical Journal, which says: "Unnecessary anguish of mind has probably been felt by relatives of unfortunate workers killed in factory fires by reflection on the supposedly agonizing pain caused by such a death. Where a great bulk of highly inflammable substances is quickly consumed in a closed space the result is the production of large quantities of carbon monoxide. This gas, it is well known, combines with the haemoglobin of the blood to form a compound that refuses to combine with oxygen. The result is a speedy and probably painless asphyxiation before the flames have had a chance to attack the bodies of the victims."

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