

THE TRAITOR IN TOWN

A STORY OF LOVE, INTRIGUE AND ADVENTURE

By SCHUYLER STAUNTON

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SYNOPSIS

Robert Harcliffe, fresh from college and a member of a firm in New Orleans, of which his Uncle Nelson is the head, is sent by his uncle to Brazil to act as private secretary and confidential companion to Dom Miguel de Pintra, head of the revolutionary movement against Dom Pedro. Dom Miguel had been a good customer of the Harcliffes, and he and the elder member of the firm were fast friends. Liking the prospect of adventure, Robert consented to go.

On the voyage he encountered Valcour, a spy sent by the Emperor of Brazil, who knew that the American secretary was expected. This spy had decided that Robert was the person for whom he was looking and had planned to make way with him.

But the American elevated his chair. There he was, however, arrested, but on the way to the police headquarters his captor was murdered by Police Sergeant Marco, a fellow, but she eluded him, and caught a train at a distant station.

On the train she was stabbed to the heart, and the finger bearing the ring was severed from the hand. Harcliffe followed by the next train and was promptly arrested by revolutionary sympathizers. After existing experiences Harcliffe made his way back to Dom Miguel's residence, only to find the Emperor and a group of his friends there. In the shrubbery he found a man's body with the ring finger severed. Entering the house he was promptly made a prisoner.

a thorough search and afterward to severe questioning and many fierce threats.

"What will be your fate, señor?" he asked.

"I shall appeal to your counsel at Rio. They must release me," he answered.

"Good. Very good! They must release you. You are no conspirator—a mere secret agent."

I nodded, wishing I might share his confidence. Presently he asked for my name and residence, and I answered him truthfully.

I myself am Manuel Pesta, of the City of Mexico. You must not forget the name, señor. Manuel Pesta, the clock-maker.

"I shall not forget," said I, wondering what he could mean. And a moment later he started me by bending forward and asking in an eager tone:

"Have they searched you?"

"Yes."

"It is my turn soon. This morning."

He looked back at his chair, closed his eyes, and fell silent again.

For my part I lay back upon the pillow, and taking care to face him, and so we remained until daylight came and gradually drove the shadows from the little room.

Even then my strange companion did not move. He was indeed a queer mixture of super activity and absolute repression. Another hour passed, and then we heard footsteps approaching down the passageway.

He stood a start Pesta aroused himself and fixed a searching glance upon my face. Trembling with nervousness he suddenly raised his manacled hands and removed from his mouth a small object and glittered in the morning light.

My heart gave a sudden bound. It was the ring that opened the secret vault! His own agitation prevented his noting my amazement. Thrusting the ring toward me he whispered, hurriedly:

"Conceal it, quickly, for the love of God! Keep it until I demand it of Robert Harcliffe, of New Orleans. It may be to-day—it may be many days. But I will come as a raven."

The bolts of the door shot back and a squad of soldiers entered. Their sudden appearance barely gave me time to drop the ring into an outside pocket of my coat. As two of the soldiers seized him, I noticed that the Mexican was trembling violently, but he arose meekly and submitted to be led from the room. Two others motioned me to follow, and in a few moments we were ushered into the room where I had my interview with the Emperor.

Valcour was standing by the fireplace with indifference, he eyed the Mexican and exhaled a long breath of relief.

"It is a man you found secreted in the outbuilding?"

"It is a man," answered the captain.

"Have you searched him?"

"No, a boy secretly. We took from him this revolver, a knife and his purse. There were no papers."

Valcour took the weapons in his hands and examined them. The revolver, I could see as he threw back the barrel, was loaded in all six chambers. The knife he glanced at and then placed upon the table. When a second thought seemed to induce him to open the blades. It was a large two-bladed affair, and the bright steel showed that it was sharpened as finely as a razor.

As I watched the Emperor's spy I changed to look toward the Mexican and surprised an expression that nearly surprised me. He was looking at me with a handkerchief from his pocket and carefully wiping out the seats in the handkerchief with his finger. The knife was closed. A small stain appeared upon the linen, and the spy carried the handkerchief to the window and inspected the stain with interest. While he was thus engaged the Emperor entered the room, followed by his ministers, and seating himself at the table calmly proceeded to light a cigar. Evidently he had just breakfasted, for he had an appearance of content that indicated a comfortable condition.

Valcour, returning from the window, first saluted the Emperor with great deference, and then addressed the Mexican.

"Why did you kill that man with your knife?"

The Mexican gazed at him in horror.

"I—senor, as God hears me, I—"

"Tell me why!" said Valcour.

"I was guarding him as he sat at the table. Then he threw his hands, all manacled as they were, high above his head, and with a scream that caused even the Emperor to start, fell upon the floor in a swoon."

Valcour turned him over with his foot.

"Search him!" he commanded.

The men were thorough. Not a shred of clothing escaped their eyes. And after they had finished the detective himself made an examination.

Dom Pedro was evidently much interested. Without any explanation further than Valcour's accusation, all present turned to the Mexican and charged him with the murder of the man found in the shrubbery, and therefore he must either have the ring upon his person or he deposited it in some secret place.

He lay unconscious after the search had ended, and Valcour, after a moment's reflection, ordered the men to carry him back to the room where he had passed the night, to guard him well, and to send for a physician.

The Emperor relighted his cigar, which had gone out, and in the interval I stood the mouth of a troop of horse galloping up the drive. There was no mistaking the clank of sabres, and Dom Pedro leaned forward with an expectant look upon his face, in which the men were joined.

The door burst open and a man entered and knelt before the Emperor. I could scarcely restrain a cry of surprise as I saw him.

It was Francisco Paola.

the revolution that he might the more easily crush it.

As he rose to his feet after saluting the Emperor, Paola glanced around the room and noted my presence. I could not well disguise the scorn I felt for this treacherous fellow, and as he met my eyes he smiled and twined his small moustache with a satisfied air.

"Well!" demanded the Emperor.

"All is indeed well, your Majesty," returned the minister, lightly. "The leaders of the conspiracy, with one exception, are now under arrest."

"And that one?"

"Sanchez Bastro, a coffee-planter with a ranch near Rio. He has crossed the border. But it is unimportant."

"And Mendez?"

"Imprisoned in the citadel."

"Barros?"

"He is comforting Mendez, in the same cell."

"Treverot?"

"Unfortunately, we were obliged to shoot him. He chose to resist."

"And Picxoto?"

"Is below, under arrest."

"Have him brought here."

The captain left the room, and again the Emperor turned to Dom Pedro.

"You have done well, señor; and your reward shall be adequate. It was a far-reaching plot, and dangerous." And Dom Pedro smiled as if greatly relieved.

Paola brushed a speck of dust from his sleeve and laughed in his silly fashion.

"The serpent is only dangerous, your Majesty, until its fangs are pulled," he drawled, and strolled away toward Valcour, while the soldiers brought in Senhor Floriano Picxoto.

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"Let the grounds and out-buildings be carefully searched. Is your prisoner recovered, Valcour?"

"He is raving mad," returned the detective, in a surly tone. "It requires two soldiers to control him."

I breathed a sigh of relief, for I had feared the Mexican, in his terror, would betray the fact that he had given me the ring.

CHAPTER XVI.

Traitor to the Cause.

The Emperor retired while the search of the grounds was being conducted, and Picxoto and I were escorted to another room upon the ground floor and locked in. There were two unbarred windows looking upon the grounds, but a sentry was posted at each of these, and as we were still hand-cuffed, our escape was impossible.

For a time my companion did nothing but stare at the ceiling, and I, too, stared at the ceiling, and I made no effort to stop him. But finally this amusement grew monotonous even to its author, and he asked me how I had allowed myself to be captured.

I therefore related my adventures, but said nothing about the ring.

"I have always suspected Paola," he told me, "and often warned Dom Miguel against him. The man's very nature is frivolous. He could not be expected to keep faith. Yet it is surprising he did not choose to betray the Emperor, rather than us, for the Revolution is too powerful a force to be betrayed by a few of its leaders."

"But what of Fonseca?" I asked curiously.

"Why was he not arrested also?"

"Why was not his name mentioned to the Emperor?"

"I confess the fact puzzles me," returned Picxoto, thoughtfully. "Fonseca is even more compromised than I am myself, and unless he had a secret understanding with Paola, and purchased immunity, I cannot account for his escape from arrest."

"But the general will not forsake the cause, I am sure," I said, earnestly. "And he seems to Senator Bastro, also, has been in the cause since the beginning. Therefore, should the royalists fail to find the key to the vault, all may yet be well, in spite of Paola's treachery."

"There is another perplexing matter," returned Picxoto, pacing the room in deep thought. "Miguel de Pintra never told me the vault was empty of nitro-glycerine. Did you know it?"

"Yes," I answered. "But the secret was revealed to me by Lesba Paola, the Minister's sister."

"I can scarcely believe it, nevertheless," he resumed. "Yet what object could the traitor have in preventing their reaching the records, unless he knew the attempt to drill through the walls would destroy us all—himself included?"

"Perhaps he has fear that the records would incriminate him with the Emperor," I suggested.

"Bah! He has made his terms, evidently. That he worked faithfully in our interests for a time is quite believable; but either the Emperor's bribes were too tempting or he lost faith in the Cause."

I was about to reply when the door opened to admit Paola. Picxoto paused in his walk to glare at the Minister, and I was myself no less surprised at the inopportune visit.

But Paola, with the old, smiling smile upon his face that nothing ever seemed to banish, nodded pleasantly at us and sat down in an easy-chair. He rolled a cigarette and carefully lit it before he addressed us.

"Senhores, you are about to denounce me as a traitor to the Cause," said he; "but you may both spare your words. Before the Cause existed I was Minister to the Emperor. A policeman walks in devious paths. If I am true to the oath I gave the Emperor, I am true to the Cause. Floriano Picxoto, who have violated yours, condemn me?"

"I don't," answered the other. "It is absurd to condemn a man, like you, Treachery is written on every line of your face. My only regret is that I did not kill you long ago."

"Yet the chief, Dom Miguel de Pintra, trusted me," remarked Paola, in a musing tone, at the same time flicking the ash from his cigarette with a deliberate gesture. "He was, it seems, the only one."

"Not so," said I, angry at his insolent bearing. "Your sister, sir, had faith in you."

He looked at me with a quizzical expression, and laughed. I had ventured the remark in an endeavor to pierce his shield of conceit and indifference. But it seemed that even Lesba's misplaced confidence failed to shame him, for at that moment the girl's loyalty to the Cause seemed to me beyond a doubt.

"My sister was, I believe, an ardent republican. Poor little girl! How could she judge the man who was a politician to Treachery? But there, señores, let us have done with chidings. I am come for the key."

Picxoto and I stared at each other aghast. The key! Could the Minister suspect either of us in possessing it?

"Quite prettily acted, gentlemen," he resumed, "and it is useless to oppose my request. I suppose our friend Harcliffe has passed it on to you, señor? No! Then he must have it on his person."

"Are you beating wildly?" I asked, with well-assumed contempt.

"No; but the Mexican is. I have just left his room, and he raves perpetually of a ring he has given to Robert Harcliffe, of New Orleans. A ring that must be restored to him on demand."

"He raves," said I, coolly, although my heart was beating wildly.

"He does, indeed," acknowledged Paola. "And he tells exactly where the ring was placed—in the hands of the black-shiny, if you pardon me, señor, if I prove the truth of his assertion?"

(To be continued.)

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

I own that the horror of the thing and the reckless disregard of life evinced in this double murder for the possession of the ring warned me against proceeding further in the matter; and for the moment I had serious thoughts of returning quietly to Rio and taking the first steamer for New Orleans. But there were reasons for remaining. One was to get possession in some way of Dom Miguel's body and see to it decently buried, for he was my uncle's friend, as well as my own, and I could not honorably return home and admit that I had left him lying within the dungeons where his doom had overtaken him! The second reason I could not have definitely explained. Perhaps it was curiosity to see the adventure to the end, or a secret hope that the revolution was too powerful to be balked. And then there was Lesba! At any rate, I resolved not to desert the Cause just yet, although acknowledging it to be the wisest and safest course to pursue.

So, summoning all my resolution and courage to my aid, I crept to the window of my room, and by a method that I had many times before made use of, admitted myself to the apartment.

I had seen no lights whatever shining from the windows, and the house—absolutely deserted. I felt my way to a shelf, found a candle and lighted it.

Then I turned around and faced the barrel of a revolver that was held on a level with my eyes.

"You are our prisoner, señor!" said a voice, stern but suppressed. "I beg you to offer no resistance."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Dom Pedro de Alencara.

I held the candle steadily and stared at my captor. He was dressed in the uniform of an officer of the royal guard—the body commanded by Fonseca.

At his back were two others, silent but alert.

"You are here in the service of General de Fonseca?" I asked, with assumed composure.

"In the Emperor's service, señor," answered the officer, quietly.

"But the general—"

"The general is unaware of our mission. I have orders from His Majesty in person." He smiled somewhat unpleasantly as he made this statement, and for the first time I realized that my arrest might prove a great misfortune.

"Harden me if I appear discourteous," he continued, and made a sign to his men. One took the candle from my hand and the other snapped a pair of handcuffs over my wrists.

I had no spirit to resist. The surprise had been so complete that it well might have numbed my faculties. I heard the officer's voice imploring me in polite tones to follow, and then my captors extinguished the candle and marched me away through a succession of black passages until we had reached an upper room at the back of the house.

Here a door quickly opened and I was thrust into a blaze of light so brilliant that it nearly blinded me.

Blinking my eyes to accustom them to the glare, I presently began to note my surroundings, and found myself standing before a table at which was seated the Emperor of Brazil.

Involuntarily I bowed before his majesty. He was a large man of commanding appearance, with dark eyes that seemed to read me through and through. Behind him stood a group of four men in civilian attire, while the other end of the room was occupied by a squad of a dozen soldiers of the Uruguayan guard.

"A prisoner, your majesty," said the officer, saluting. "One evidently familiar with the house, for he obtained entrance to a room adjoining Dom Miguel's library."

The emperor turned from the papers that littered the table and eyed me gravely.

"Your name?" said he, in a stern voice. I hesitated; but remembering that officially I was occupying a dungeon in Rio I decided to continue the deception of my present disguise.

"André Subig, your majesty."

Some one laughed softly beside me. I turned and saw Valcour at my elbow.

"It is the American secretary, your majesty, one Robert Harcliffe by name."

The spy spoke in his womanish, dainty manner, and with such evident satisfaction that I could have strangled him with much pleasure had I been free.

"Why are you here?" inquired the emperor, after eyeing me curiously for a moment.

"I have some personal belongings in this house which I wished to secure before returning to the United States. Your majesty arrested me in the room I have been occupying."

"Why are you anxious to return to the United States?" questioned the emperor.

"Because my mission to Brazil is ended."

"It is true," returned Dom Pedro, positively. "The conspiracy is at an end."

"Oh that I am not informed," I replied earnestly. "But I have been employed by Miguel de Pintra, not by the emperor."

spiny, as your majesty terms it. And Dom Miguel has no further need of me."

"Dom Miguel is dead," retorted the emperor, with an accent of triumph in his voice.

"Murdered by his daughter, your spy," I added, seeing that he was aware of the truth.

He merely shrugged his broad shoulders and whispered to a gray-bearded man behind him.

"This conspiracy must be summarily dealt with," returned the emperor, boldly enough. "You dare not assassinate me. For if I am injured in any way the United States will call you to give account."

"It is a matter of treason, sir?" returned the Emperor, harshly. "Your citizenship will not protect you in this case. I have myself visited your country and been received there with great courtesy. And no one knows better than I that your countrymen would repudiate one who came to Brazil for the treasonable purpose of overthrowing its legitimate emperor."

That was true enough, and I remained silent.

"Will you give us the required information?" he demanded.

I was curious to know how much the royalists had learned, and in what position the republicans had been placed. This imperial visit to their headquarters, Dom Pedro had said that the conspiracy was at an end; but I did not believe that. "I am sure you err in believing me to be in the secret councils of the republicans," I said, after a moment's thought. "I was merely employed in the capacity of private secretary to Dom Miguel."

"But you know of the underground vault? You have visited it?"

"Often," I replied, seeing no harm in the acknowledgment.

"Can you open it for us?" he demanded.

I laughed, for the question exposed to me his real weakness.

"Your majesty must be well aware that there is but one key," I replied, "and without that secret key I am as powerless as you are to open the vault."

"Here is the key?" he asked.

"I do not know," Dom Pedro de Mar stole it from Dom Miguel.

"And it was taken from her by one of your conspirators."

"Have you tried it no farther?" I inquired, carelessly.

"My men are now investigating the matter," said he. "Doubtless the ring will soon be in our possession."

"And how about the murdered man in the shrubbery?" I asked.

The royalists exchanged glances, and one or two uttered exclamations of surprise.

"Is there a murdered man in the shrubbery, Captain de Souza?" questioned the Emperor, sternly.

"Not that I know of, your Majesty," returned the officer.

"I found one," said I, as I approached the shrubbery, said I. "He has been shot within the hour, and his left hand severed at the wrist."

It was evident that my news startled them. When I had described the location of the body some of the soldiers were sent to fetch it, and during their absence I told him frankly that none of the records of the republicans was in my possession, and that whatever knowledge I had gained of the conspiracy or the conspirators could not be drawn from me by his threats of death. For now I began to understand that his visit to Dom Miguel's house was a secret one, and that the royalists were as much in the dark as ever regarding the conspiracy itself or the whereabouts of its leaders. One thing only they knew—that the records were lying with Dom Miguel's dead body in the secret vault, and that the ring which opened it was missing.

Before long the soldiers bore the body of the latest victim of the fatal ring into the presence of the Emperor, and Valcour bent over it eagerly for a moment, and then shook his head.

"The man is a stranger," he said.

Others present endeavored to identify the murdered man, but were equally unsuccessful.

I could see by their uneasy looks that they were all suspicious of one another; for Captain de Souza protested that no one could have been fired without some of his men hearing it, and the fact that the ring they sought had been so recently within their very reach led them to believe it might not now be very far away.

For all the Emperor's assumed calmness, I knew he was greatly disturbed by this last murder, as well as by the impotency of his spies to discover the whereabouts of the ring. When Valcour suggested, in his soft voice, that I had myself killed the fellow in the shrubbery, and had either secreted the ring or had it now in my possession, they pounced upon me eagerly, and I was subjected to

care. Then he sighed heavily and came back to his seat.

"What will be your fate, señor?" he asked.

"I shall appeal to your counsel at Rio. They must release me," he answered.

"Good. Very good! They must release you. You are no conspirator—a mere secret agent."

I nodded, wishing I might share his confidence. Presently he asked for my name and residence, and I answered him truthfully.

I myself am Manuel Pesta, of the City of Mexico. You must not forget the name, señor. Manuel Pesta, the clock-maker.

"I shall not forget," said I, wondering what he could mean. And a moment later he started me by bending forward and asking in an eager tone:

"Have they searched you?"

"Yes."

"It is my turn soon. This morning."

He looked back at his chair, closed his eyes, and fell silent again.

For my part I lay back upon the pillow, and taking care to face him, and so we remained until daylight came and gradually drove the shadows from the little room.

Even then my strange companion did not move. He was indeed a queer mixture of super activity and absolute repression. Another hour passed, and then we heard footsteps approaching down the passageway.

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Valcour was standing by the fireplace with indifference, he eyed the Mexican and exhaled a long breath of relief.

"It is a man you found secreted in the outbuilding?"

"It is a man," answered the captain.

"Have you searched him?"

"No, a boy secretly. We took from him this revolver, a knife and his purse. There were no papers."

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"I was guarding him as he sat at the table. Then he threw his hands, all manacled as they were, high above his head, and with a scream that caused even the Emperor to start, fell upon the floor in a swoon."

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"Let the grounds and out-buildings be carefully searched. Is your prisoner recovered, Valcour?"

"He is raving mad," returned the detective, in a surly tone. "It requires two soldiers to control him."

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NO EXTENSION OF LOBSTER FISHING SEASON THIS YEAR

Ottawa, July 4.—(Special)—The department of marine and fisheries, after fully considering the very diverse views upon the suggested extension of the lobster fishing season, has decided that this year fishing operations must cease on the date prescribed by law. In most localities lobster fishing will, therefore, cease on the 10th instant. The fishermen in some districts appealed for fifteen to thirty days longer fishing, owing to the lateness of the ice and loss of traps and gear due to stormy weather.

Professing to be disappointed reports from various fishing inspectors, and from these it appears that the fishing, on the whole, has been very fair, in fact, better than was generally anticipated. Many canneries have already closed down, having completed their expected pack. The feeling against retention was very general, and the department's action will be effective in furthering the improvement of the lobster industry, which has seriously declined, largely owing to overfishing, an undeniable sign that the lobster fishery has taken a turn for the better.

WOOSTOCK WOMAN ONE OF ROBBIE'S TWO WIVES

Robinson McIntyre, Ebony Adonis, Lands in Bangor Jail, and Will Fight First Wife's Claim.

The fickle, dashing Robinson McIntyre, father of several children and husband of two fond wives was brought to a sudden check in his wild career by Judge Chapman's decision that a political campaign was held under \$300 bonds for his appearance before the August grand jury, and in default of payment is in jail.

Robbie, the black-shiny, like a plug lat. According to the former tale of witnesses, he married in the year 1898 in the town of Houlton, Miss Anne M. Diamond, a brilliant young woman, it is alleged. She came from Woodstock (N. B.) and the knot was tied by a travelling evangelist by the name of Swinton.

Then, in 1901, he married a young woman, the McIntyre mansion for several years but Rob's restless finally frightened it away, and shortly afterwards the master of the establishment disappeared, to be replaced by a travelling evangelist with no authority to solemnize marriages and is therefore not binding—Bangor News.

NEW YORK'S NOVEL CRAFT.

The New York Herald of July 4 says: "New York city will soon possess the most novel craft afloat. Primarily it will be a hospital boat, and as such will be most comfortably and thoroughly equipped. It will also be a fire boat with complete machinery for fighting flames, as well as a water boat, with enough tank capacity to supply the institutions on all the islands of the Hudson and East rivers, which now are connected with Manhattan by pipe lines."

The boat is to be called the "Claudine," and was designed by Millard & McLean, the firm of which Naval Architect A. J. McLean, who designed the new St. John ferry-boat, is a partner.

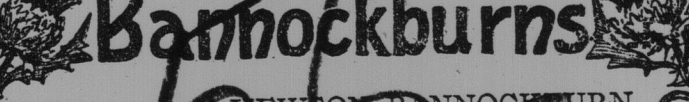
"The true meaning of junketing," says an exchange, "is foisting in along that we had been thinking all along that it only meant getting roaring drunk at public expense. Well, now, we shall know everything one of these days, if we only live long enough."

Design of Curious Boat Turned Out from Office of the St. John "Ludlow's" Builder.

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Get a superior HEWSON BANNOCKBURN TWEED—all pure choice wool—cloth made to look well and wear a long time.

Insist on getting the genuine Hewson Wooler Mill goods, made in the big new mill at Amherst.

\$500 Head Tax Effective.

Victoria, B. C., July 6.—(Special)—Customs returns for the fiscal year just ended show how efficacious the \$500 tax is in excluding Chinese from Canada. During the year not a Chinaman paid the head tax.