

ST. JOHN STAR, FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 1905

SIR HENRY MORGAN, BUCCANEER

By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY,
Author of "The Southerners," "For Love of Country," "The Grip of Honor," Etc.

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Sir Henry Morgan, a notorious buccaneer, who has been made vice-governor of Jamaica, was deposed by King James and ordered with arrest. Morgan, however, with the help of Benjamin Harrigold, is once more able to hold the black flag. Harrigold aids them with the hope of getting Morgan in his power and exacting revenge for his brother whom the old buccaneer had hanged. On the Mary Rose, Morgan sails south and attacks two Spanish frigates conveying heavily loaded galleons. The convicts were destroyed and also the Mary Rose. Morgan, however, sails south in the galleon where he is wrecked off the coast of Caracas.

Captain Dominique Alvarado, commandant of the port of La Guayra, loves the daughter of the Governor of the Spanish colony of Venezuela, and his love is secretly returned. The governor, however, chooses De Rohar as Donna Mercedes' future husband. The governor has sent Alvarado in charge of a party to convey Mercedes to La Guayra and they set out.

The sergeant who followed them out of respect for their confidences checked the pace of his troop horse somewhat, and the two advanced some distance from him out of earshot. The unhappy duenna watched them with anxious eyes, but hesitated to attempt to join them. Indeed, the way was blocked for such an indifferent housewife as she by the adroit maneuvers of the sergeant. He was devoted to his young commander, and he had surmised the state of affairs also. He would have had no scruples in facilitating a meeting, even an elopement. The unhappy duenna watched them with anxious eyes, but hesitated to attempt to join them. Indeed, the way was blocked for such an indifferent housewife as she by the adroit maneuvers of the sergeant. He was devoted to his young commander, and he had surmised the state of affairs also. He would have had no scruples in facilitating a meeting, even an elopement.

"Lady," said Alvarado at last, "I am indeed afraid. You make the strong weak. Your beauty forgives me—masters me. Tempt me not! I can stand no more!" he burst forth with vehemence.

"What troubles thee, Alvarado?" she said softly.

"Thou—my plight word."

"You chose honor and duty last night when you might have had me. Art still in the same mind?"

His instant promise saved her.



"Senorita, this subject is forbidden." "Stop!" cried the girl. "I abhor you from all injunctions of decency. I am a De Lara, and in my father's absence the head of the house. The duty thou hast sworn to him thou owest me. Art still in the same mind as last night, I say?"

"Last night I was a fool!"

"And this morning?"

"I am a slave."

"A slave to whom? To whom?"

"Donna Mercedes," he cried, turning an imploring glance upon her, "press me no further. Indeed, the burden is greater than I can bear."

"A slave to whom?" she went on insistently. She laid her hand upon his strong arm and bent her head close toward him. They were far from the others now, and the tapers of the winding road concealed them.

"A slave to whom? Perhaps to me?" she whispered.

"Have mercy on me!" he cried. "To you—yes. But how?"

"Again those hateful words!" she interrupted, her dark face flushing with anger. "Were I a man, loved I a woman who loved me as I—as I—as you know, I would have seized her in spite of all the world! Once she had fled to the shelter of my arms, while life keens in my heart none should tear her thence."

"Thy father?"

"He thinks not of my happiness."

"Say not so, Donna Mercedes."

"Thy true. It is a matter of convenient arrangement. Two ancient names, two great fortunes, cry aloud for union, and they drown the voice of the heart. I am bestowed like a chattel."

"Don Felipe?"

"Is an honorable gentleman, a brave one. He needs no defense at my hands. That much, at least, my father did. There is no objection to my suit save that I do not love him."

"In time—in time you may," gasped Alvarado.

"Dost thou look within thine own heart and see a fancy so evanescent that thou speakest thus to me?"

"Nay, not so."

"I believe thee, and were a thousand years to roll over my head thine image would still be found here."

She laid her tiny gloved hand upon her breast as she spoke in a low voice, and this time she looked away from him. He would have given heaven and earth to have caught her yielding figure in his arms. She dropped in the saddle beside him in a pose which was a confession of womanly weakness, and she swayed toward him as if the heart in her body cried out to that which beat in his own breast.

"Mercedes! Mercedes!" he said.

"You torture me beyond endurance! Go back to your duenna, to Senora Agapida, I beg of you! I can stand no more! I did promise and now in my

heart—my honor—my duty!" "Aye, with men it is different," said the girl, and the sound of a sob in her voice cut him to the heart, "and these things are above love, above everything. I do not—I cannot understand. I cannot comprehend. You have rejected me. I have offered myself to you a second time after the refusal of last night. I, too, am a slave. I love you. Nay, I cannot marry Don Felipe de Tobar. 'Twere to make a sacrifice of a sacrament."

"Thy father?"

"I have done my best to obey him. I can no more."

"What wilt thou do?"

"This."

The road at the point they had arrived wound sharply around the spur of the mountain which arose above them thousands of feet on one side and fell abruptly away in a terrific precipice upon the other. As she spoke she struck her horse again with the whip. At the same time by a violent wrench on the bridle rein she turned him swiftly toward the open cliff. Quick as she had been, however, Alvarado's own movement was quicker. He struck spur into his powerful barb and with a single bound was by her side in the very nick of time. Her horse's forefeet were slipping among the loose stones on the edge. In another second they would both be over. Alvarado threw his right arm around her and with a force superhuman dragged her from the saddle, at the same time forcing his own horse violently backward with his left hand. His instant promptness had saved her, for the frightened horse she rode, unable to control himself, plunged down the cliff and was crushed to death a thousand feet below.

CHAPTER XIII.

"My God!" cried the young soldier hoarsely, straining her to his breast, while endeavoring to calm his nervous and excited horse. "What would you have done?"

"Why didn't you let me go?" she asked, struggling feebly in his arms. "It would all have been over then."

"I could not. I love you."

The words were wrung from him in spite of himself by her deadly peril, by the desperate design, which he had fully frustrated by superhuman quickness and strength. He was pale, shaking, trembling, unnerfed, for her.

As he spoke these words, "I love you," so blisful for her to hear, she slipped her arm around his neck. He forgot everything—honor, duty, his word—everything he threw to the winds. Before the passion which sought death when denied him his own powers of resistance vanished. He strained her to his breast and bent his head to kiss her. Again and again he drank at the upturned fountain of affection, her lips. The shock had been too much for him. He had seen her upon the verge of eternity. She thought nothing of that in her present joy. She only realized that she was in his arms again, that he had kissed her, and between the kisses he poured out words that were even greater caresses.

The others were far behind. They were alone upon the mountain side, with the rocks behind and the great sapphire sea of the Caribbean before them. He held her close to his breast, and they forgot everything but love as they gently picked along the road of it. It was near noon now, and as the road a furlong farther debouched into an open plateau shaded by trees and watered by a running brook which purled down the mountain side from some inaccessible cloud swept height, it was a fitting place to make camp, where the whole party, tired by a long morning's travel, could repose themselves under the breeze of afternoon tempered the heat of the day. Here he dismounted, lifted her from horse, and they stood together side by side.

"You have saved me," she whispered.

"You have drawn me back from the death that I sought. God has given me to you. We shall never be parted."

"I am a false friend, an ungrateful servant, a faithless man, a perjured soldier!" he groined, passing his hand over his pale brow as if to brush away the idea consequent upon his words.

"But thou hast my love," she whispered tenderly, swaying toward him again.

The others were far behind.

"Yes—yes. Would that it could crown something else than my dishonor."

"Say not so."

"I had been faithful," he went on as if in justification, "had I not seen thee on the brink of that cliff, and then thou wert in my arms—I was lost!"

"And I was found. I leaped to death. I shut my eyes as I drove the horse toward the cliff, and I awakened to find myself in your arms—in heaven! Let nothing take me hence."

"It cannot be," he said. "I must go to the vicerey when he returns from the Orinoco war and tell him that I have betrayed him."

"I will tell him," she answered, "or wilt thou tell him what I tell thee?" she went on.

Doctor (making diagnosis)—Now, as to drink; do you take?

Patient (cheerfully)—Oh, thanks. You are very kind. I don't care if I do. Leave it to you, sir. It is all the same to me.—Western Druggist.

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"Surely." "Then say to him that I sought death rather than be given to Don Felipe or to any one else. Tell him you saved me on the very brink of the cliff and that never soldier made a better fight for field or flag than thou didst make for thy honor and duty, but that I broke thee down. I had the power and I used it. The story is as old as Eden—the woman tempted!"

"I should have been stronger; I should not have weakened. But I shall fight no more. It is all over."

"Ah, thou canst not," she whispered, nestling closer to him. "And tell my father that should harm come to thee—if in their anger he or De Tobar lay hand upon thee—it will not advantage their plans, for I swear, if there be no other way, I will starve myself to death to follow thee!"

"I cannot shelter myself behind a woman."

"Then I will tell them both myself," she cried. "You shall know, they shall know, how a Spanish woman can love."

"And thou shalt know, too," answered Alvarado firmly, "that though I break my heart I, an unknown, can expiate my guilt with all the pride of most ancient lineage and birth highest of them all!"

It was a brave speech, but he did not release his hold upon Mercedes, and in spite of his words when, confident that whatever he might say, however he might struggle, he was hers at last, she smiled up at him again. He kissed her.

"When go you to my father, Senor Alvarado?" she asked.

"When he returns from the Orinoco."

"And that will not be until—"

"Perhaps a month."

"Wilt love me until then?"

"I shall love thee forever."

"Nay, but wilt thou tell me so, with every day, every week, every hour, every moment, with kisses like to these?"

"Oh, tempt me not!" he whispered. But he returned again and again her caresses.

"Ah, my Alvarado, if you have once fallen, what then? Is not one kiss as bad as a thousand?"

"Be it so. We will be happy until that time."

"One month, one month of heaven, my love. After that let come what may," she answered, her cheeks and eyes aflame, her heart throbbing with the exquisite pain in her breast.

"Some one approaches!" he said at last. And at the same moment the rest of the party came around the bend of the road. The poor duenna was consumed with anxiety and remorse.

"Bernarda! Alvarado to the sergeant! They lived and loved!"

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