The Ride for a Life.

"Ride day and night; and remember that a himself He hangs on your success in reaching Blue Ridge within forty-eight hours!"

These were the words which, shouted into the ears of Alan Warviale, as he stepped the steps of the court house at Lynchburg, echoed with haunting persistency through his mind as he dashed away on his mission, miles after miles through a blinding tempest of wind and rain. Before him lay the broad stretch of country the distance afforded; and he knew that a mistake—a mishap to his horse—in the lonely mountains, leagues away from human habitation, would mean the knell to his hopes of right-ing a terrible wrong, which involved the sacrifice of a human life unless within a certain time, he had carried to the jailer at Calhoun the respite from execution of Edward Malden, who lay under death sentence for murder.

It was not personal interest or friendship for the doomed man alone which impelled the rider to quick action. A keen sense of justice had caused him to step forward, when the messenger brought the reprieve to these men that Edward Malden owed the menace of an ignominious death; and his critical position had been brought about entirely through their enmity.

Within a radius of fifty miles from Calhoun there had organized a reckless band of desperadoes, whose numerical strength had led them from a careless life of indolence into actual crime. Drifting together, naturally, under the leadership of an escaped convict, known as "Black Bill," they had finally resolved themselves into a community of bandits; and illicit distilling, the robbery of cattle ranches or the pillaging of some stage coach became mingled with deeds of violence and death. The better class of people in Calhoun had appealed for help to the government; and Edward Malden, a detective had been sent to the district with orders to learn what he could of the band, as also of the fate of a previously appointed officer who had mysteriously disappeared.

Three months later the intelligence had been received at Lynchburg that Malden had been arrested on a charge of murder. The evidence against him was said to be indisputable and he had been convicted and sentenced to be hanged.

It was only at the last moment that a memorial reached the governor in which it was clearly and circumstantially stated—on the authority of the local Chief of Police—that Malden had been convicted on evidence specially prepared by emissaries of the outlaws, and that the writer would not only promise to prove Malden innocent within a month, but would also elucidate the mystery of the disappearance of John Reynolds, a detective, who, on a mission similar to that of Malden, had, it was supposed met his fate at the hands of the outlaws in the mountains near Calhoun.

Actuated by the apparent sincerity of his correspondent, the governor had granted a reprieve, at the last moment—just in time to admit of Alan Warviale barely reaching Calhoun before the hour set for the execution of Edward Malden.

The heart throbs of the reckless horseman, beating against the precious reprieve, seemed to chronicle the swift passing of time. But as the hours flew by and he was enabled to pursue his journey uninterruptedly, he had become less excited and calculated calmly what his chances of reaching Calhoun in time were altogether in his favor, with several hours to spare.

It was only when he found himself in a lonely cut, with night coming on, that he began to grow uneasy and anxious; and as he allowed his horse to proceed slowly over the unsafe road, he cast his eyes around in search of some light, indicating a friendly dwelling where he might remain until daylight would admit of his safely resuming his journey.

He urged on his steed as, nearly a mile ahead, he saw the gleam of a light. But a murmur of disappointment rose to his lips as he observed that the light moved. He was unable to keep it in view because of intervening rocks and trees and he had dismissed it from his mind and was proceeding slowly on his journey, when, as he emerged into a little stretch of valley, his horse kicked something in the path and shied wildly. The horseman's eyes, too, caught a glitter in the wet grass, and halting, he dismounted to examine the object which had attracted his attention.

It proved to be a lantern, broken by a fall to the ground, yet the heat still retained in it told Warviale that its light had been but recently extinguished, and that it might possibly be the same which he had seen. Lying beside the lantern was a revolver with two barrels exploded, and a small, glittering object of steele, and having even in that uncertain light, the outline of a Maltese cross. Warviale dropped the revolver with an instinctive horror and his eyes roamed wildly around him. Had some deed of violence, perhaps murder, been done?

It was not until he had examined the locality carefully that he could be tempted to leave the spot, and then reprehensibly, as he thought of his mission and the possibility that in the vicinity where he now was an assassin was rifling or disposing of the body of a victim. There was a hush on the crystal or pin which he had found. He fastened it to his breast and, seated on his horse, was ruminating over the mystery, when his steed stumbled.

Attention to the animal now required all his thoughts, and he rode on for several hours with great care.

"A light—a house at last!" were the welcome words which his lips spoke as he entered a forest of trees and saw a light gleaming in the distance. A few moments later he dismounted before a low, rambling, two-storey structure, located on the edge of a clearing. As he did so, he regretted his act, as his loud knocking at the door brought forth a low-browed, brutal visaged man, in response to the summons, and he saw, peeping over the man's shoulders, the faces of half a dozen others equally ill-favored.

"What do you want?" was demanded.

Warviale pointed to his horse and eyed the man boldly.

"A shakedown of hay for my horse; a bench by the fireside for myself," he replied.

"Come in," said the man.

The room into which Warviale entered was as uninviting in its furnishings as were the manners and appearance of its occupants. All, save the man who had admitted him, resumed their tasks at playing cards around a rough table.

The spokesman motioned Warviale to a bench near the fireplace, in which burned a huge log, the flame and heat of which were extremely grateful to his chilled frame. A delicious sense of languor and comfort overcame him. Insensibly he glided into a doze; his head fell upon his breast in profound slumber; and then—

He awoke with a rough shake—awoke to find himself lying flat upon his back, his hands pinioned, his body thrown against a partition, and half a dozen men surrounding him, one of whom leaned over him, brandishing a huge knife.

"You've stopped here accidently, have you?" broke with a fierce oath from the man, while his eyes gleamed murderously. "We know what hospitality is, my friend; but we don't know treachery."

Warviale endeavored to raise himself.

"Treachery?" he repeated, vaguely, faintly. "I don't know what you mean."

"You don't eh?" repeated the man, with a brutal laugh. "What's this?"

He raised an envelope in his hand. The prisoner recognized it and a thrill of alarm traversed his heart, a vague intelligence of the truth entering his mind. It was a letter given to him by a prominent lawyer at Lynchburg—his credentials for presenting the reprieve to the jailer at Calhoun.

"This fell from your pocket while you slept. It's got the mark of the law on the outside. Do you know who we are, and what we do with spies? We're Black Bill's gang, and we kill every snuaking detective who runs across us—just as we did Reynolds—just as we will Malden. Your time's come, stranger—prepare to die!"

He raised the knife menacingly. The prisoner drew no hope from the fact that the letter had not been opened. He closed his eyes in a last prayer for help. The outlaw had thrown back the prisoner's coat as if to make surer his aim. Then, as if blinded by a sudden flash of light, he fell back with an exclamation of dismay and surprise, his eyes fixed on the Maltese cross of steel, pinned, carelessly, on the lapel of the prisoner's vest.

Warviale had noticed this emotion; had readily surmised, that in some mysterious manner, the sight of the cross had changed the outlaw's purpose. He saw the man muttering, in profound amazement, to a companion; and then, as if coming directly from the partition behind him, there sounded but clear on Warviale's ear, as if whispered into it;

"Pretend to be a friend of the band. Speak the word 'Crevasse.'"

A wild inspiration filled Warviale's mind. Could it be that the cross was a symbol of the order; that these men invested his possession of it with some public sympathy in their work, and further, that some friend among them was supplying him with the means of escape?

The outlaw approached, after holding a whispered consultation with a companion. He released the prisoner's hands, pointed to a chair, and as Warviale seated himself, said, with a constrained voice;

"My friend, I don't want to make any mistake. Who are you? How came you by the pin our captain always wears? What's the meaning of that letter in your possession?"

Warviale had decided on his course. Boldly he replied;

"These are my secrets. When Black Bill comes let him explain, if he will. I cannot betray the secrets of others."

The prisoner fixed an intent look on the outlaws. Already he saw that the men were wavering with doubt and uncertainty.

"I mean to tell you," he said, impressively, venturing a bold move, "that Black Bill will say 'Crevasse!'"

The effect of the word was electrical. Over the face of the outlaw leader came a hearty smile. He extended his hand, enthusiastically.

"My friend," he said, "I thought it was all right when I saw that pin. I see it all now—a game of yours and Black Bill's on the people of Calhoun. Here, boys, supper and liquor. A friend of Black Bill's mustn't go hungry and thirsty."

Every suspicion subdued, inspired with a new confidence in their visitor, the outlaws were bent on making due amends for their previous discourtesy, and it was only when Warviale pleaded extreme fatigue that they allowed him to seek rest—leading him to a little compartment at the rear of the main building.

Two thoughts filled Warviale's mind as he lay on the rude couch they had given him—thoughts which prevented his sleeping or even dozing. In was evident that these men expected Black Bill before morning. What, then, would be his fate?

He lay, intensely excited, listening to the talk of the men in the next room and finally murmured a slight of relief as quietness told him they had retired to rest. Then he arose to a sitting posture, and, stepping to the floor crept cautiously towards the opening leading to the hall.

All was dark except where the fire irradiated the interior of the main apartment. As Warviale thought of the letter—which the men had not returned to him—and of the expected appearance of Black Bill, he resolved to escape at all hazards. He was about to glide across the floor to the door when a hand touched his arm and a low musical voice whispered in his ear:

"Be silent and cautious and follow me."

His pulse quickened as he recognized the voice as the same which had whispered the password. It was that of a woman, and the hand touching his own was soft and yielding as that of some nurtured belle of fashion. She led him towards the rear of the place. At the open door she paused.

"You must leave here now and at once," she said, hurriedly. "But you must take me with you!"

"Take you with me?" repeated Warviale, in stupefied amazement.

"Not for a moment. But I thought you were one of them."

His words were rudely interrupted. A form had sprung from behind him and a pair of brawny hands encircled his throat. He discerned his peril in a moment and recognizing his assailant as the head outlaw, he struggled violently for the mastery. Over and over the ground they rolled. The outlaw never relaxed his hold on Warviale's throat and the eyes of the latter started from his head, and he was almost exhausted when suddenly the fingers of his assailant relaxed. Warviale sprang to his feet quickly.

"Come," said the voice of the woman, tremulously. "I have only stunned him with a stone. They will pursue us when he recovers."

Under a shed near the cabin stood Warviale's horse. He unhitched it quickly.

"Are there no other horses here?" he asked.

"Yes, but the stable is locked. We must not delay now."

She clambered into the saddle behind Warviale, directing him to the road, and they spoke not a word as they started forth on their journey. Mile after mile was traversed in silence until dawn, when, as they turned a curve in the mountain road, a little town came into view.

"It must be Acton," said Warviale to his companion.

She bloshed deeply at the admiring glance of his eyes. He could not but prolong his gaze, for the face was one of rare beauty, the eyes held a latent witchery which enthralled and captivated him.

"If so, it is only ten miles further to Calhoun," he added.

He felt his companion start.

"Calhoun," she repeated eagerly. "You are going there?"

"Yes, as fast as this horse can carry me. If I reach there by ten o'clock I save an innocent man's life."

He marveled at the swaying, trembling figure behind him, unable to divine the cause of her agitation.

"I don't understand you," she murmured, faintly.

"A man named Edward Malden is under sentence of death for a murder he never committed. I go to carry the governor's reprieve. Merciful heaven! Look, we are pursued!"

The woman's agitation, his wonder at the cause, were forgotten, as both saw, a short distance behind them, three horsemen evidently in hot pursuit.

"We must hasten to the town," cried Warviale, urging forward his jaded steed.

But, as he viewed the rapid rate of progress made by those in the rear a cry of despair rang from his lips. He knew it all now. Either the men pursuing them had read the letter and learned his true character, or Black Bill's appearance had been the signal for a pursuit.

"We are lost!" he cried. "The reprieve for Edward Malden will never arrive."

"Who speaks that name?" cried a voice, suddenly, and a horseman emerged from a side road leading through the mountains, reigning in his steed with the abruptness of an apparition.

Bearded, roughly dressed, he scarcely inspired confidence, yet excited by dreadful suspense, Warviale reaffirmed his mission.

His words seemed to fill the stranger with the wildest excitement.

"Quick!" cried the man. "Pursue your journey. Not through the village—the inhabitants are in sympathy with or fear the bandits. By yonder way skirting the forest. It is only three hours ride to Calhoun."

"And you?" cried Warviale.

"I will face these men."

"Alone?"

A wild, derisive laugh broke from the stranger's lips.

"Trust that to me," he cried. "Hasten!"

Warviale did not wait for a second bidding. Even when the sounds of rapid shooting broke upon his ear he spurred on his horse. They seemed past pursuit; for when the intervening woods shut out the sight of the place where they met the stranger there were no signs of pursuers.

Once he turned to his companion, insisting that she must be weary. But, with feverish impatence she hurried him on, and her excitement was intense as, one hour before the time appointed for the execution of Edward Malden, the brave steed landed them before the jail of Calhoun. Already the preparations for the execution were being made.

Keeping close by Warviale's side, the woman he had so strangely met stood with bated breath and gleaming eyes as the jailer read the reprieve and ordered the prisoner to be brought to him to announce the welcome intelligence.

A cry of surprise broke from Warviale's lips as the prisoner entered the apartment. The woman sprang forward, and in a wild torrent of emotion, flung herself on the prisoner's neck.

"In Heaven's name what does this mean?" ejaculated Warviale.

And the prisoner, looked up quietly, replied, smilingly.

"She is my sister."

He sustained the proud claim of relationship six months later when he gave that same sister away, at the altar, to the man she loved—Alan Warviale himself.

Malden was a free man then, entirely cleared of the imputation of guilt which had been confessed by Black Bill—that the crime had been committed by one of the band and fastened on the detective to keep other officers from disturbing them. For Black Bill had been captured and the mysterious correspondent of the Chief of Police revealed himself at last, being no less a person than the Detective John Reynolds, who was supposed to have been killed.

It was Black Bill who had been captured by Reynolds, and the Maltese cross had fallen from the outlaw in the struggle, where Warviale had found it. Later, his prisoner having been secured among friends, Reynolds was making his way to Calhoun, when he so advantageously met Warviale, and in a bold fight routed the pursuing bandits. He forced Black Bill to a confession and a month later the gang was dispersed or captured.

As to Eleanor Malden, she had been held by the bandits after her brother's arrest, as her testimony would prove an alibi for him. She had seen Warviale a captive in the hands of the outlaws and had whispered the password she had learned, just in time to save his life. A benefit which had become mutual when they escaped together to carry to a beloved brother the governor's reprieve.

MOHAMMEDAN MISSIONS.

Returning from a stay of many months in foreign lands—Algeria, Tunisia, Italy and France—with a goodly number of kodak snapshots showing something of the surface of the countries that I have visited, the thought often recurs to me, What have I to recount of the real life of the people which would be of special interest to the Americans, stay-at-home Catholic? Many times have I wished for a good sized group of despondent ones by my side, that they might share with me the cheer and enthusiasm which come so often to the American Catholic travelling in foreign countries.

In the first place, we Catholics are at home everywhere, wherever there is the most humble little chapel or the grandest Cathedral. I remember well the wistful, half-envious expression on the face of an Englishman in the oasis town of Biskra, when he saw me going to Mass; "You have your Church everywhere!" So in truth it is. I was in the Desert of Sahara, and yet at home.

It is depressing enough to compare the condition of affairs in these modern days, the contrast between the early centuries when the Christian Church was all-powerful in North Africa, and now, when it is a mighty stronghold of Mohammedanism. The Mussulman is there in force, and his fanaticism seems almost incredible in these modern times with the wide spread of enlightment. Another depressing feature in the case is, that those Mussulmans who go to France and England for their education on their return become the more fanatical. Yet it is not all discouraging. The Church of Christ is there, too; and only this last winter a most imposing monument in memory of Cardinal Lavigerie was put up in the chief square of Biskra and dedicated with appropriate ceremonies. So, although it is an important Mussulman center, there stands in bronze the figure of the great Cardinal, holding aloft in triumph the cross of Christ. Little inroad into Mussulman fanaticism does the Christian Church appear to make, but a silent influence is there, and increasing. All the hospitals and charities, and all the schools which include girls among their pupils—for the Mohammedans do not think it worth while to instruct girls—are in the hands of the Catholics, and a suffering native knows whence alone help will come to him in his time of need. "By their works ye shall know them." Is not this the first step by which to recover our lost ground?

There is one marked exception to the general rule that no Christians are made from the native Arab tribes. Fourteen miles from Algiers is the village of St. Cyprien des Attas, founded by Cardinal Lavigerie, and peopled with young Arabs rescued by him during the famine of 1867. It is exclusively an agricultural settlement under ecclesiastical control, has a population of two hundred and three inhabitants, a church, a mission house and an establishment of Sisters, and is in a high state of prosperity. It is most interesting, and shows what can be done with Arabs when free of the fanatic.

There is one uncivilized native tribe which has the custom of tattooing the forehead with the sign of the cross, and of observing a holiday, the 25th of December which is always called "The Birthday." Yet they have no tradition of ever having been Christian in the past, though there seems every probability that they must have been ages ago.

All over Algeria and Tunisia one sees the untiring faith and work of the Catholic Church—the faithful parish priest. The father of his flock, consecrating the whole life and asking for no earthly reward, and the religious orders in their schools and hospitals doing glorious work for God. One order is of special interest there, as the work is centered in Africa—the Fathers of the Desert, or "White Fathers," as they are called, founded by Cardinal Lavigerie, their headquarters at Carthage. The dress is white, and they wear white in Africa either a white hat or the red fez, and live as nearly like the natives as possible. Their missionary work among the black tribe is crowned with extraordinary success, for their converted people numbers thousands. As late as 1896 these dusky-skinned Christians were ready to die for their faith, preferring to be burned alive rather than so be traitors to their Master. It was my privilege to meet several of these good missionaries—one Pere Delattre, famous in the world as an archaeologist, as the excavation of ancient Carthage was wholly superintended by him, but his greater zeal is the real work of his order. It was inspiring to see the enthusiasm of these monks. One with a rare spiritual face said to me, with deep feeling, "People often commiserate us on the hardships we undergo; they should not do that, we do not feel it in that way. Sometimes the little things are trying, but never do great ones." In the meetings of the order, when names are announced of those chosen to go on missions there is hearty applause, clapping of hands at each name that is read and congratulations given to those to whom the chance for active service has been allotted. Yet it means farewell to all friends left behind, and a life of absolute self sacrifice and labor for souls under conditions about as hard as could well be imagined.

The Catholic Church in Tunis is a mighty force for good among a large Catholic population, principally Italian and French, and there are great numbers of works of education and charity under her guidance. There again I saw something of the work of one unassuming priest attached to the Cathedral. He was only one of the many, yet one finds his work everywhere all over the globe—lives of absolute consecration to our Lord's service such as is rarely found outside the ranks of the Catholic clergy. The face of the finest Italian type, the very ideal that artists seek for the faces of their saints, for far beyond the mere beauty of feature was an expression of spirituality, that unmistakable look of entire consecration to our Lord's service which would have been striking enough to beautify even a commonplace face. There he was always to be found at his post, ready with words of help for all who approached him, rich or poor, friend or stranger. My experience was always the same, such Christian kindness and sympathy offered to me without stint from the clergy everywhere, no matter in what country I found myself. Three vivid pictures remain in my mind of this holy young priest, all within the walls of the Tunis Cathedral.

Just outside the sacristy door, one day, I saw him seated while the most wretched-looking, old, ragged man knelt at the side, the very picture of misery, pouring out his tale of woe—for woe indeed it was, for he was bowed down with grief. But the old man knew where to go for help in his time of dire need, the peace and consolation that heaven only gives, offered to him by means of this young priest. Another day I found my young saint—as he always seemed to me—in the sacristy surrounded by a group of voluble old women, while he patiently listened to all they had to say, and, I am sure, helped them. The last picture I recall was in the midst of a group of little Italian girls, giving them a lesson in catechism, and he seemed truly inspired by the Holy Ghost as he pointed to the great crucifix above their heads, and in his eloquent Italian brought home to those fresh young hearts the mighty meaning centered there.—J. G.R., in "The Missionary."

MARSHALL MACMAHON.

Patrick Maurice, Count MacMahon and Duke of Magenta, who was born on June 13, 1808, at the Castle of Sully, in France, belonged to the Clare MacMahons, one of the most ancient families in Ireland, their ancestors having been the O'Briens, kings of Munster, of the race of Heber.

The marshal's grandfather, John Baptist MacMahon, was a native of Limerick, where he was born in 1715. He went to France to seek the education denied him at home. Having proved that an Irishman of his name had acquired fame as the principal doctor in the Paris Military school, he embraced that profession in 1739. He died in 1765, leaving two sons.

At the age 17 the future marshal entered the military school of St. Cyr, from which he graduated with high honors in October, 1827. In January, 1830, he was made a lieutenant of the Fourth Hussars, and in the following April he went with the Twentieth regiment to Algiers, with which country France was then at war. For his brilliant conduct in the war he was made a lieutenant in April, 1831, and in the September following received the cross of Knight of the Legion of Honor, a rare honor then for so young a soldier. From 1840 to 1852 he was Chief of Staff, first to Lamoriciere in Algiers. As lieutenant colonel of the foreign legion he was engaged in all the affairs against the Kabyles from 1842—44, when he was appointed full colonel of the Forty-first regiment of the line in the province of Oran. When the Crimean war broke out General MacMahon was at first appointed to the first corps of the army of the north. The plan of campaign being changed, however, the general was sent to the Crimea in the middle of 1855. MacMahon arrived just in time for glory. General Pelissele was preparing for the final assault. He gave the most difficult task—the storming capture and retention of the Malakoff—to the fresh troops which MacMahon brought. When the moment came—Sept. 8, 1855—the key of Sebastopol fell to their irresistible rush, and was preserved to them by the cool resources of MacMahon, for the first assault was but the beginning of the fight.

The assailants had no sooner become possessed of the position than they had to arrange for its defense. Again and again the Russians returned to regain if they could the lost position. His arrangements were so complete that he had entited with his second in command what was to be done in case MacMahon and his second brigade were blown up.

The possibility was not remote. Forty thousand kilograms of powder had been placed in position and electric connections established. MacMahon's engineer lost not a moment in discovering the latter and severing them. MacMahon had gripped the Malakoff and would not loose his hold.

In September, 1858, MacMahon was appointed commander in chief of all the land and sea forces in Algeria. Shortly after this the war with Austria broke out. Early in 1859 MacMahon went to Italy. On June 3, commanding the Second corps of the French army, he routed all Austrian corps at Roccchette, and on the following day won the famous battle of Magenta which gave the Irish hero his dukedom. For this splendid victory MacMahon was created marshal.

After the close of the Franco-Prussian war and the re-establishment of order in Paris by crushing the commune, MacMahon was offered the presidency of the republic, which he finally accepted.

From his retirement from the presidency, in 1879, until his death, in October, 1893, MacMahon lived a quiet, peaceable life, unalterabbed by the caress of public office. He was offered some dignified office of state, but declined it, saying: "When a man has been first in his country, he can become nothing else, except it be a soldier on the frontier facing the enemy."

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