

Ransomed

By JANE PINCKNEY BENNET

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Shortly before the war between the United States and Mexico Captain Juan Matias of the United States army met at New Orleans and married Concha Herrera, a young Mexican widow who owned a large hacienda in the latter country. Senora Matias was a very patriotic Mexican and upon the breaking out of the war went home to do what she could to serve her country. Captain Matias sailed with his regiment for Vera Cruz and was with that army that made its way fighting battles as it proceeded, from the Gulf coast to the City of Mexico.

Senora Matias, being very rich, organized a company of rangers at her own expense. Several commanders of this force were tried and failed. At last the troops called upon the lady to take command herself. She consented, went into the field, and under her leadership the men who followed her made quite a reputation as paroled rangers. They were not enrolled in the Mexican army, and since they were very troublesome to the United States forces the general commanding gave orders that when captured they should be shot. Several of them were taken from time to time every one of whom was executed. In retaliation Senora Matias gave orders that from the next lot of prisoners taken by her men five should be selected by her for execution.

Not long after this order the rangers made a night attack on an outpost of the American army and captured a captain, a lieutenant and thirty men. The senora was not present on this occasion, having entrusted the attack to a junior officer. The first she knew of the capture was the announcement to her by a messenger that five men selected by her were to be shot outside the camp in charge of them awaiting a special order to shoot them. The lady threw back her tent flap for a look at the doomed men.

Among them was her husband. What to do she did not know. To claim immunity for the man she loved would be to destroy her influence with her troops. They were all very bitter against the Americans for the execution of their comrades and were resolved that an officer was to be shot in retaliation. The only thing that occurred to her was to try to stay off the execution she might find some means of saving her husband.

"Take them back to the guard tent," she said. "I am too busy now to attend to the matter."

"But, senora," protested the officer in charge, "all we wish is the order." "Take them away," interrupted the senora impatiently. "I am not accustomed to receive suggestions from my inferior."

The prisoners were marched off with out Captain Matias knowing that his wife had for the time being saved his life. Senora Matias shut herself up in her tent, endeavoring to think out some plan to prevent the execution. No one suspected the relationship between her and Captain Matias and she did not wish it to be known. It might throw distrust upon her without leaving her husband.

During the evening she gave an order—she dared not refuse one—that the prisoners should be shot at 8 o'clock the next morning. At 10 o'clock that night she went the rounds to see that the guards were on post and the others asleep. Then, instead of returning to her tent, she mounted her horse, that she had picked without the line of sentries, and rode away. An hour later she was taken in by an officer of an American picket post to the tent of the commanding general. After an interview of half an hour she departed, returned to her camp and stole into her tent without any one of her command knowing that she had been away.

Between dawn and sunrise an order came to her to say that an officer commanding a flag of truce from the American camp desired to see her. She directed that he be admitted, and he said:

"Senora, our general, understanding that a captain and four privates belonging to his army are to be shot this morning, has sent me to say that if this is done he would make it his business to capture this command and hang every member of it, including yourself. If, however, these prisoners are surrendered to him a ransom of \$1,000 for each private and \$5,000 for the officer will be distributed to your command."

Senora Matias called her men together and stated the proposition. The threat at first produced a contrary effect from what was intended, but when the ransom was considered with it a change of opinion was effected. Senora Matias watched for an opportune moment when to put the question to vote. It was almost unanimously decided to accept the ransom.

A Mexican officer and ten men were sent back with the flag of truce and all the prisoners, but it required several days to secure the ransom, during which all overt acts were suspended. Finally it arrived and was paid over the prisoners were delivered to their commander, and the Mexicans returned to camp.

Not a man in the command knew that the senora had ransomed the prisoners. A few days later the woman commander gave up the command of the troops and went to the City of Mexico, where after the capture of the capital she met her husband.

Atlas and His Load.

Strictly speaking, "Atlas" is a misnomer for a map book, since it was not the world, but the heavens, that the "Atlas" of mythology upheld. Mercator, the famous Dutch geographer who made globes for Emperor Charles V. of Germany, was the first to use the name in this connection, choosing it as a convenient and in some sort an appropriate title, because Atlas, the demigod, figures with a world upon his shoulders as a frontispiece of some early works on geography.

Atlas, it was said, made war with other Titans upon Zeus and, being conquered, was condemned to bear heaven upon his head and hands. Later tradition represented him as a man changed by means of Medusa's head into a mountain upon which rested heaven and all its stars.

In any case, Atlas was always associated with a heavy burden strongly borne. Thus Shakespeare makes Warwick say to Gloucester:

Thou art the Atlas for so great a weight.

It is not difficult to see how by an association of ideas this came to be chosen as the name for a book of maps which upholds and exhibits to us the whole world.

Marshal Turin and His Soup.

There is a quaint old shop in London which still bears the name of Samuel Birch, the first purveyor of turtle soup in the English capital. Amid all the changes of the city Birch's shop in Cornhill survives in the guise it wore when it was the property of Lord Londonderry in the latter part of the year of Waterloo. Samuel Birch achieved distinction in many fields. He was an orator and a patriot; he was colonel of the city militia and accepted with great good nature his nickname of Marshal Turin. He was a man of letters, produced plays that held the stage, and books that were readable, though seldom read. One of his plays, "The Adopted Child," was popular long after its author had killed his last turtle. His daughter married Lamartine, and one of his sons, a fine classical scholar, began a family of scholars. Yet Birch's claim to fame rests most upon the fact that he was the man who made turtle soup popular. City merchants, templars from the Inns and dandies from the west end all flocked to Cornhill, the turtle house of all London. Argonne.

Reign of the Dandies.

In the matter of dress we have fallen upon a decline since the days when the Duke of Wellington was refused admission to Almack's because he was wearing trousers instead of breeches and silk stockings. Even Almack's, however, had to admit trousers within its closely guarded portals the following year. When Gladstone was "up" at Oxford the reign of the dandies was in full swing. When late in life he revisited the university to lecture to the undergraduates on Homer he was asked by W. E. Russell whether he noticed any difference between his audience and the men of his own time.

"Yes," he replied, "in their dress an enormous change. I am told that it had among my audience some of the most highly educated and richest men in the university, and there wasn't one whom I couldn't have dressed from top to toe for £5." *St. James Gazette.*

A "Fast" Train.

"Speaking of railroads," said the truthful man, "the ultimate word, in my experience, was a certain limited one which I traveled last summer. At a point where we were making our greatest speed a man stood at the side of the track with a moving picture machine. I leaned out of the window and called to him, 'How are you getting on?'"

"He stopped turning the crank and spoke with an expression of deep disgust."

"It don't seem to be no use," he said. "Hold your head still, please. I want to get a time exposure."—*Everybody's.*

The Burglar's Prayer.

Mr. Herbert Riley, speaking of the cases of eastern burglars at a meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute, said a curious system of religious worship prevailed among a caste who were professional burglars. They made a altar in the ground, and a man there cut his arm and prayed to one of the earth gods that there might be a dark night and that he might succeed in obtaining great booty and escape capture.—*London Standard.*

No Whiskers on His Sea Food.

Two colored porters passed to rest a moment on their mops in a downtown office building recently. "Boy," said one, smacking his lips, "did you ever eat mustrat?" "Mustrat?" returned the other. "No; I never eat no mustrat. The only fancy sea food I ever fussed with was lobster."—*New York World.*

Puzzled.

Mother (at lunch)—Yes, darling, these little sardines are sometimes eaten by the larger fish. Mabel (aged five)—But, mamma, how do they get the cans open?—*London Ideas.*

The Truth.

"Truth is as clear as a bell," quoted the wise man.

"Yes, but it isn't always told," added the simple rauc.—*Philadelphia Record.*

Not Serious.

"I hear there are grave charges against Senator Jinks."

"What are they?"

"The senator's bills."

Your labor only may be sold; your soul must not.—*Ruskin.*

An Important Law Case

By CARL SARGENT CHASE

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Driving lazily along a country road I saw ahead of me an old man and a girl running as for dear life. His leaning my pace, I came up with them. They turned, with despair in their faces. The girl clasped her hands as if in prayer, and began to utter a number of incoherent sentences. "I beseech you not to take him back! He will really go mad if you shut him up again in that terrible place. Let us go on and say you couldn't find us."

The girl begging for the old man's liberty was so beautifully feminine that had she not also moved my sympathies I might have let her go on begging for some time longer. As it was I stopped her.

"You are losing valuable time. I am not your pursuer and if any one is after you you'd better tell me about it in few words. If you need help I will help you."

The change on her countenance from despair to hope was even more winning than her expression of supplication. She told me that her grandfather the man who was with her was very rich that his nephew in order to secure possession of his property had secured his incarceration in a lunatic asylum, that she had been admitted to see him and had surreptitiously taken him away. They were sure when they heard the wheels of a buggy that I was coming to take the old man back to the asylum.

I had no doubt from the girl's story the old man was a lunatic who had persuaded his granddaughter that he was of sound mind and was being persecuted for his estate. There was certainly nothing of the millionaire in his appearance and he had probably imitated the story of her grandfather or it was a part of his lunacy. Nevertheless I was attracted to the girl that I resolved to get the couple away from the asylum authorities long enough to look into the case.

An explanation of terror from the girl attracted my attention, and, looking behind me, I saw a horse and buggy coming at a brisk trot. I took the couple into my wagon, but did not make an attempt at flight jogging along at a quiet gait.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed the girl, "we will be taken. Do go faster!" "Not so fast, my dear, you to interest myself in some one, and if your grandfather is in any way confined to my house and earth to accomplish his release."

The prisoner, an official of the lunatic asylum, soon overhauled us. He told me that the old man was a patient at the asylum and he wanted him. I invited him to continue with us into the city toward which we were going promising to hold the patient for him in order that the asylum authorities might substantiate their legal claim to him. He could only accept the terms and I drove on by following.

On reaching the city I pulled up at the office of my attorney and we all went in together. My action I had won the confidence of not only the runaways, but the asylum official, and a compromise was offered by which the former should remain in my keeping while the lawyer investigated the case. Since I lived with my mother in a house plenty large enough for all of us this was a very satisfactory arrangement, enabling me to be constantly with the girl, whose sweetness and devotion to her grandfather won me completely.

At the end of a week my lawyer told me that he had unearthed what he believed to be one of the most nefarious plots he had ever encountered. The old man, Jonathan Gooding, possessed an immense fortune. Being without wife or children, he had taken his granddaughter Grace to live with him when she was a little girl and had made a will bequeathing her his fortune. His nephew, a man of forty-five and a lawyer, had known what legal steps to take to secure the old man's removal to the asylum and had managed the matter very adroitly, his plan being at his uncle's demise to secure distribution of his estate among his heirs, which would give the nephew the lion's share.

Fortunately I was possessed of sufficient property to advance what money was necessary to a thorough legal investigation of the case. A long suit followed, during which Mr. Gooding was committed to a private sanitarium. That his granddaughter was devoted to him became apparent from a test I made. I told her that the case would be settled and her grandfather go free if she would relinquish all claim to his estate. The lightning of her face as she replied that she would gladly do so was delightful to look upon.

I confessed that I had only been testing the disinterestedness of her affection for her grandfather and assured her that we would be able to keep him out of a madhouse without her surrendering any of her rights.

My whole being becoming absorbed in Grace Gooding I made her cause my chief business. Notwithstanding my efforts I came very near being beaten, but by dint of perseverance and using the best legal talent I finally established not only Mr. Gooding's sanity, but his perfect fitness to make a will. I married his granddaughter, but arranged with Mr. Gooding that he should leave the bulk of his property to charity.

THE SAD FATE OF A RESOLUTIONIST

THE New Year's resolutionist is thinking hard these days, assailing against time to get rid of his Christmas gear and get himself as full of resolutions as possible before joining the anti-tobacco league, making memoranda of the errors of his ways during the past year and buying new fat, healthy journals, with 365 white pages and a cover of red leather, lettered in gold.

The New Year's resolution habit is one of those things that won't be snubbed out of fashion as Valentine's day. New Year's calls and other ancient institutions have been. It is an instructive proceeding, this making of promises, signing of pledges and taking the vows. It shows up one's weaknesses and one's strength to all and sundry, but especially to the signer of pledges and maker of promises himself. It proves that two-thirds of the world's resolutions, like pie crust, are made to be broken, and occasionally it weakens up dormant pride and principles, in some weak-willed individual and sets him strenuously on his legs.

But the success attained by the man who keeps his resolutions unbroken through the year is sometimes of doubtful value. It puffs him up with pride, conceit and intolerance. Having accomplished his feat of strength, he has no patience with the weaker who feels who feels by the wayside to put it Hibernianly.

One such individual resolved one New Year's day in the flower of his youth to take a cold plunge every morning.

He considered cold plunges good for health and good discipline for a lazy



HE WOULD BRAG AND HE WOULD LECTURE and sleep loving body. He lived down south when he began his early morning aquatic performances but later he came north to live, and he kept right on plunging head first into a cold tub every morning, winter or summer.

He kept this up for years, and his vigor and bloom were splendid dividends for the benefits of the cold plunge habit and incidentally his strength of will in acquiring and sticking to such a habit.

But he had the weakness of his strength. He would brag, and he would lecture people who did not like cold plunges or else took them only six months of the year. As the years went by he got more and more rigorous and more and more impatient with complaining, late rising, cold catching persons who would not be converted to his ways.

"I rise every morning at 6," he used to tell every one who could be prevailed upon to listen to him. "Then I draw the tub full of cold water—the colder the better. Then I plunge in and in ten minutes I am ready to dress after a violent shudown with the roughest crash in the market. And do I ever have a cold? Am I ever ill? I haven't had a pain or an ache in thirty years, and I am never in bed after 6 o'clock a. m."

Perhaps it is cruel to tell, but it was a positive relief to his friends when one morning he was found dead in bed at 9:30. The coroner said he had been dead five hours. So his friends blamed it all on his not having had the cold plunge at 6. Had he lived until then and taken his usual dip, they said, he never would have died at all.—*New York Evening Post.*

Berlin. "Berle," from which Berlin he caught her name, means unutilized land. Slavonian Wends, the earliest settlers on the sandy plain, could milk but little out of the soil. The population in 1832 was only 250,000. Less than forty years later it was 800,000 and now it runs into 2,000,000. The man who gave to Berlin its present form was Frederick II., but Frederick the Great and the Great Elector started the noble hobby of beautifying their wonderful city.



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Mr. Husband.

It is said that before a man has discovered the color of a girl's eyes she is planning her trousseau and leading him to the altar.

The luckiest girl's destination would be that of going through Woodlawn cemetery, a portion of the city they had never before visited. They stopped for a long time on the bridge which crosses the lake to admire the wonderfully well kept tanks which slope down to the edge of the lake with here and there some artistically arranged shrubbery serving as a back ground. As they cast a last look at the island, situated at one end of the lake, which is so tiny one wonders how the large willow tree standing at the water's edge, with its drooping branches hanging so low that they sweep backward and forward in the water with the wind, could possibly have grown there, one of the bachelor girls was heard to remark to her companion, "Wouldn't this be an ideal place to bury one's husband and come and weep over their graves?"—*New York Times.*

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