Synopsis

CHAPTER XVII: El Caballero Rojo boldly rides through the fiery rear door to escape. When Conroy tries to shoot him, Michael draws first and kills the second man on his list to avenge his parents. He is amazed to find Juanita waiting for him.

CHAPTER XVIII

"But I have decided to go with you, senor," the girl said simply. "Wherever you go, I am going. Is not this my fight, too? To what better purpose could I devote my life? I have nothing else to live for."

"But you still don't understand," Valdez told her a little desperately. "I am going now to Deep Water Valley, and there is much trouble there. There will be bloodshed, and you will be in danger. You must—"

"Then **we** are going to Deep Water Valley," the girl answered him, still calmly, and Valdez did not know how to handle such a situation as now confronted him.

Not knowing, there appeared only one thing to do. There seemed nothing for it now but to give in — at least for the time being.

* * *

When Michael Valdez made no further protest, the girl fell in beside him on Pedro, and they rode on, stirrup to stirrup.

"Tell me about Deep Water Valley," she said presently.

"It is not a pretty situation there," Valdez said, and his face clouded. "As I understand it, a man named Don Attero used to be a priest down in Sonora, **Mejico.** Once, when there came a change in government down there, the new authorities didn't like him and told him that he could not be a padre any more and told him he would have to get out.

"He drifted up to Deep Water Valley with a good many of his former parishioners, and they helped him get started again. Just so there would not be any wrangling over property, he kept the title to all the property in the valley that they had settled. But he's dead now, and without him to rule, it seems that some other folks have got ideas in their heads about the property. That's always a cause of trouble, and there is trouble there now — plenty."

Juanita nodded understandingly. "And you always seek out trouble," she said. "Is there no longing in your soul for peace?"

He did not answer. His thoughts sped to a blind man in a mission far to the south. How could he know that at the same moment the thoughts of the girl who rode beside him were also of the same man, and that her woman's intuition had told her that the blind man's hope was that soon, soon, this son of his would know peace?

"Those letters I took from Garvin, remember?" Valdez said to Juanita. "They point to the fact that the big boss of the whole shebang of crooks who have been stealing one range after another is some man somewhere in Deep Water Valley." His lips tightened in the same grim mark of determination. "I've got to find that man.

"There is another reason I want to go to Deep Water Valley, too. There is another man there for whom I have been looking for a long time, but not until recently did I have any idea where to find him. He is an hombre by the name of Train Carter. When I get the man who is the moving spirit back of all the devilment, and also get this Train Carter, I reckon my vengeance will come to an end — and maybe there will be a chance for some of this peace you speak of, Juanita. It can't be long now. We should get to the valley by tomorrow night, and then—"

There was no need for further words. The two horses jogged along together.

* * *

Juanita, too, was silent a long time after Michael Valdez had finished speaking. But what thoughts were in her mind would have surprised him. This man beside her, this champion of the oppressed, El Caballero Rojo, had stubbornly refused to admit it, but in her heart she knew that he needed her now, and that from now on he would always need her. Their trails had finally converged and merged into one.

For she loved him. Subconsciously she had known it before she had ever ridden to the Mission of Corpus Christi, but the blind man who would never again look at the light in a woman's eyes had opened hers until she had seen clearly into her heart.

She glanced over at the silent man, wondering what thoughts were now beneath his furrowed brow.

"And so we go, you and I, side by side," she said in the soft voice that somehow always soothed him, "to Deep Water Valley."

Michael Valdez nodded slowly and did not protest this time. For it seemed to him, without giving the matter conscious thought, that destiny must have ordained that this beautiful, half wild young girl should join forces with him in battle for the right.

* * *

All day and all night El Caballero Rojo and Juanita de Cuevas rode, like two crusaders of old — until the beautiful spot that was Deep Water Valley was reached. It was another garden spot such as Paisano Valley had appeared to the rider of the vengeance trail when he had first set eyes on that green valley.

Like two ghostly figures the riders moved through the darkened hours, the low murmur of their voices blending with the night sounds. What they said, and what they planned, as they rode, covered all that could have been said between them had they spent weeks in their planning. El Caballero Rojo was well used to making plans swiftly, and to putting them into action on the spur of the moment.

Signals to be used between them when necessity arose were settled upon. Juanita's eyes, in the clear moonlight, were bright and shining with the spirit of adventure. She would make no mistakes, she had promised herself — and him.

They had reached the valley, were at its very entrance, when they saw the huge cross on the top of an eminence that Valdez identified as Mission Ride, by the cross that had been erected there in honor of the deposed priest who had settled with his faithful followers in this lush, verdant spot. And it was somewhere in this vicinity, said the letter now in El Caballero Rojo's pocket, that there would be found the two men for whom he was still looking — one them still a man of mystery.

* * *

As the cross, known far and wide as Don Attero's Cross, and a shrine for many a weary pilgrim, loomed up, Michael Valdez leaned over toward Juanita de Cuevas and muttered a soft command. At once her slim form astride the sorrel faded into the brush beside the trail.

It was precisely midnight when the cry of a mountain lion shattered the tomblike silence of the valley. It floated out on the crisp night air — a long-drawn sound, ghastly, and pregnant with warning. It seemed to beg for a like response from some spot in the valley. But there was no answer — at once. Silence, intense and oppressive, gripped the moonlit expanse, making black velvet of what would in the daylight hours be a carpet of emerald green.

Then came the answer of another mountain cat.

(To be Continued)

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ISSUE 50—1947

ANNE HIRST
Your Family Counselor

Do's And Don'ts For The Bride

SINCE writing rules for a bride-groom recently, I have been besieged by engaged girls to offer rules for the bride. So, following the same pattern, here they are:

If your fiance hasn't talked frankly about his income and the standard of living it will allow, you broach the subject. One of the primary causes of divorce in this country is misunderstanding about money matters. The time to consider that is before your marriage starts. So get down to brass tacks. Make up a budget with the man. You probably will have to revise it six months after you marry, but start out with one —however simple.

● GOOD MANNERS

NEVER let your manners slip. Continue to be as courteous to your husband as you are during these wonderful days of your engagement. Don't forget to say please and thank you. Compliments, and a little flattery judiciously applied, oil the wheels of daily living.

Don't make dates for going out, or entertaining, without asking your husband first. The home is as much his as it is yours, a place to relax in. Entertain his friends, whether you like them or not—and try to like them; they must be worth knowing if he thinks so.

If you don't know much about his business, learn about it, if only so you can listen intelligently. A man likes to recount his little daily triumphs and disappointments, and his wife should be able to enjoy or sympathize with him. She is his partner, and should be his most satisfactory audience. Never distort the truth, even in small matters. Let your husband depend on your slightest word.

Be more than nice to his family. In the event of any misunderstanding (and there will be some), it's a great thing to have them on your side. Be as respectful to his mother, and as considerate of her, as you hope he will be to yours, and convince her that your one aim in life is to keep him well and happy.

Learn to be a good housekeeper, but don't make that your one ambition. Being a good companion is as important. Keep up with what's going on in the world, so your conversation isn't confined to the high cost of living and whether or not the laundry sent for your linens.

Keep him proud of you—of your appearance, your pleasant disposition, your sportsmanship, your personal integrity.

Don't be jealous. Trust your husband implicitly, and let him know you do. A man usually measures up to what he believes you think of him.

Don't nag—and remember if you mention a subject twice, he's apt to call it that.

And never let any quarrel last overnight. Not one of them is worth that.

* * *

TO "MISS X.Y.Z.", "AFRAID OF MARRIAGE", "TRYING HARD," ETC.: I wish I had twice as much space! But these hints will set you on the right track. Study them, enlarge upon them—and good luck!

* * *

The Golden Rule works out in marriage, too, and the will to follow it becomes a habit. Ask Anne Hirst to guide you. Address her at Box A, room 421, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.

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Sunday School Lesson

By Rev. R. Barclay Warren

Loyalty Under Persecution
Revelation 2:8-11; 7:9-17.

Golden Text — Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. — Revelation 2:10.

Of all the books of the Bible the book of Revelation is the most difficult to understand. If the seven churches addressed in chapters 1-3 symbolize successive periods of church history then Smyrna represents the time immediately preceding the conversion to Christianity of Emperor Constantine. Many Christians were put to death because they would not renounce their faith. To the persecuted Jesus sends a message of encouragement and hope. He reminds them that He died but is alive again. So, if they are faithful, though they die for it, He will give them a crown of life. It is not an easy way. Jews assuming to belong to God are among their persecutors but, says Jesus, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer". "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." By the "second death" He is referring to the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone in which the cowardly, faithless, polluted, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars will have their eternal abode. (Chap. 21).

* * *

John's vision as set forth in the second portion of the lesson is most impresive. Those of the innumerable multitude gathered from all nations are clothed in white, waving palms and giving glory to God and the Lamb. "These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They are still serving. But how different is their lot now. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes".

* * *

The days of persecution are not past. Some of us have persecution in mild forms. But a great tribulation may be coming. We may have to choose between death and denying Jesus Christ. Let us ever remember the words of the text: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life".

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