

Standard Bank of Canada

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Paid Up.....1,000,000
Reserve Fund.....1,000,000

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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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"Now, senior," he cried, turning back,
"we can discuss this question unin-
dered by the presence of the lady. You
said you loved her. How dare you, a
man of no birth, whose very name is
an assumption, lift your eyes so high?"
"This from you, my friend!" cried
Alvarado, whiter than ever at this in-
sult.

"Sir," interposed the voice of the
viceroys, "restrain yourself. 'Tis true
we know not the birth or name of this
young man whom I have honored with
my confidence, upon whom you have
bestowed your friendship, but he hath
ever shown himself—and I have watch-
ed him from his youth—a gentleman, a
Spanish gentleman whom all might em-
ulate. You wrong him deeply."
"But he loved her."
"What of that?" answered the vice-
roy.

"Aye," cried Alvarado, "I do love her,
and that I make no secret of it from
you proves the sincerity of my soul.
Who could help loving her, and much
less a man in my position? For, in so far
as was proper in a maiden, she has been
kind to me since I was a boy. I cherish
no hopes, no dreams, no ambitions.
I locked my passion within my breast
and determined to keep it there though
it killed me. Tonight, with her help-
less at my feet, thrown on my pity, it
was wrong from me, but I swear to
you by my knightly honor, by that
friendship that hath subsisted between
us of old, that from this hour those
words shall never pass my lips again;
that from this hour I shall be as silent
as before. Oh, trust me! I am sadly
torn. Thou hast all, I nothing! If thou
canst not trust me—I bade you strike
before, strike now and end it all. Your
excellency, bid him strike."

"Thy life is not mine," answered the
older man. "It belongs to Spain. We
have fallen on evil times, and thy coun-
try needs thine arm. Thou hast said
aright, senior de Tobar," he cried, "he
is thy friend. Take him back to thy
affection. I am an old man and a fa-
ther, but were I young and one so
beautiful crossed my path as Donna
Mercedes—by Our Lady he hath excuse
for anything! He speaks the truth,
though it be to his own hurt. Canst
stand unmoved, senior, in thy happiness
before such misery as that?"

"Dominique, forgive me!" cried De
Tobar. "I was wrong. I am ashamed.
Thou couldst not help it. I forgive
thee. I love thee still."
He made as if to embrace his friend,
but Alvarado held him off.
"Wilt trust me fully, absolutely, en-
tirely?"
"With all my life," answered De To-
bar.

"Thou shalt be tried," said the vice-
roy. "We march toward the Orinoco in
three days. I had proposed to establish
Donna Mercedes at La Guayra under
care of Alvarado."
"Not now, your excellency!" cried the
young man.
"Nay, I shall, provided De Tobar is
willing."

"A test, a test!" answered that young
man. "Gladly do I welcome it. As
thou lovest me and as I love thee,
guard my betrothed."
"Your excellency, take me with you
to the Orinoco and let Don Felipe stay
at home with Donna Mercedes in La
Guayra."

"I am no experienced soldier to com-
mand a town," protested De Tobar.
"Nay," said the vice-roy. "It shall
be as we have said. Wilt thou take
the charge?"
"Aye, and defend it with all my
soul!" answered Alvarado firmly.

"Senior Alvarado and Don Felipe, you
have shown yourselves true Spanish
gentlemen this night, hidalgos of
guard!"



whom Spain may well be proud," cried
the viceroys in pleased and proud con-
tent. "To you, De Tobar, I shall give
my daughter with assurance and pride,
and were there another to bear my
name I could wish no better husband
for her than you, my poor friend.
Now, the hour is late; I have much to
say to Alvarado. Don Felipe, you will
pardon me? Good night."
"Good night, your excellency,"
promptly returned De Tobar. "I shall
see you in the morning, Dominique,
ere you set forth for La Guayra. I
love thee and trust thee, my friend."

CHAPTER XII.
THEY set forth early in the morn-
ing. There was a cool fresh-
ness in the air from the storm
of the day before, and if they
wished to avoid the necessity of trav-
eling in the heat of the day early de-
parture was necessary. Although the
season was summer in a tropical land
not far from the equator, the altitude
of Caracas lowered the ordinary tem-
perature to an agreeable degree, but

after they crossed the pass of La Veta
and began the descent toward La
Guayra they would be within the con-
fines of one of the hottest localities on
the face of the globe.

Early as it was, the viceroys and his
officers, including, of course, De Tobar,
were assembled in the patio to bid the
travelers godspeed. While De Lara
gave a few parting directions to Al-
varado, Don Felipe took advantage of
the opportunity and of his position as
the publicly affianced of Donna Mer-
cedes to address her a few words in
farewell, which she received with list-
less indifference. The final prepara-
tions were soon over. Don Felipe lifted
Donna Mercedes to the saddle of her
Spanish jennet; some of the other
gentlemen assisted the Senora Agapida
to the back of the sure footed mule
which she had elected as her mount;
Alvarado saluted and sprang to the
back of his mettlesome barb, and, fol-
lowed by a half dozen troopers who
constituted the escort, the rear being
brought up by servants with pack
mules carrying the personal baggage of
the two ladies, the little cavalcade
moved off, the gentlemen in the vice-
roy's suit standing bareheaded in the
doorway as they disappeared under the
trees and began the ascent toward the

Alvarado, whose white, haggard face
showed that he had passed a sleepless
night, rode at the head of the column.
Some distance in front of him rode a
trooper, for there were even then
thieves, wandering bands of masterless
men who levied bloody toll on travel-
ers from the capital whenever they got
opportunity. Next to the captain came
the sergeant of the little guard, then
the two women, followed closely by
two more of the soldiers, after that the
little pack train, which he had ordered
to close up and keep in touch after
they left the city, and, last of all, the
two remaining soldiers to bring up the
rear.

The soldiers, servants and muleteers
were in high spirits. The day was
pleasant; the scenery, though familiar,
was at the same time grand and beau-
tiful, and they were happy—all, that is,
except Donna Mercedes, the duenna
and Alvarado.

The worthy Senora Agapida with
womanly shrewdness more than sus-
pected the true state of affairs. In-
deed, Mercedes, who loved the old
woman, who had been as a mother to
her, her own mother having died when
she was a mere child, had scarcely
taken the trouble to conceal her mis-
ery, and the old woman's heart was
wrong whenever she looked at the
drooping figure at her side. She would
fain have brought the flush of happi-
ness to the face of the girl she loved
by throwing her into the arms of Al-
varado, but as a distant connection of
the De Laras herself the worthy dame
had her own notions of pride, and her
honor would not permit her to do any-
thing for which the viceroys could
properly fault her.

When Mercedes had met Alvarado
early in the morning she had acknowl-
edged his profound salutation with the
courtest and coldest of nods. She was
furious and bitterly angry with him,
for, between duty, honor, friendship
and her love, he had not chosen her.
She knew that he loved her. She had
known it a long time, and, if she had
the slightest doubt, the sincerity with
which he had spoken the night before,
the fierce, passionate fervor of the
kisses that he had pressed upon her
lips, his utter abandonment to his pas-
sion, had more than satisfied her. Yet
when she had offered to throw every-
thing to the winds—love, duty, obedi-
ence—if he would only take her away,
he had hesitated. With her, a woman
who had all Venezuela at her feet,
held in his arms, he had refused her,
refused her! He had heard the open
confession of her overwhelming love
for him, and he had resisted her! With
the feel of her heart beating
against his own he had strained her
to his breast and prated of honor and
duty!

She was mad with anger and disap-
pointment. She loathed him; she hated
him; she raged against him in her
heart. Why had he not killed De Tobar
where he stood, seized her in his arms,
braved the anger of her father and
galloped away—anywhere out into the
mysterious southland where they could
be together? Well and good—she would
marry Don Felipe. She would as-
sume a happiness that she could not
feel and kill him with the sight of it.
He had disdained her; he should suffer,
suffer in proportion to his love, such
torments as he had made her suffer
last night—shame, disappointment, in-
dignation.

She had not slept the entire night,
either, thinking these things, yet it had
not all been pain. How nobly he had
led to save her—he to whom a lie was
worse than death! He had tried to as-
sume dishonor for her sake. He loved
her—yes, there was no doubt of it.
She closed her eyes with the thought,
and her whole being was filled with ex-
quisite anguish. He loved her, he was
made for her, yet when he might have
taken her he refused. De Tobar was
indeed a brave and gallant gentleman,
but his qualities were as moonlight to
the sunlight compared to those of Al-
varado. In spite of herself, though

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the mere suggestion of it angered her,
she found herself obliged to grant that
there was something noble in that posi-
tion he had assumed which so filled
her with fury. It was not with him
a question of loving duty and honor
more than herself, but it was a ques-
tion of doing duty and preserving honor,
though the heart broke and the
soul was rent in the effort.

In spite of her careful avoidance of
his eyes, her cold demeanor, that morn-
ing she had marked the haggard, pale
face of the young soldier to whom she
had given her heart, which showed
that he, too, had suffered. She watch-
ed him as he rode, superb horseman
that he was, at the head of the little
cavalcade. Tall, straight, erect, grace-
ful, she was glad that he rode in ad-
vance, with his back to her, so that she
might follow him with her eyes, her
gaze unheeded by any but Senora
Agapida, and for her she did not care.

As he turned at intervals to survey
his charges, to see that all were keep-
ing closed up and in order, by furtive
glances she could mark with exulta-
tion the pallor that had taken the place
of the ruddy hue on the fair cheek of her
lover. She could even note the black
circles under the blue eyes beneath the
sunny hair, so different from her own
midnight crown.

And indeed his thoughts were bit-
ter. What must she think of him? He
had been a fool. Happiness had been
his for the taking, and he had thrown
it away. Why had he not brushed De
Tobar out of his path, silenced the vice-
roy—ay, not by death, but by binding
him fast—and then taken the woman
he loved and who loved him, for she
had proved it by her utter abandon-
ment of herself to him? Those old sol-
diers who had served him for many
years would have followed him wher-
ever he led. The viceroys' arm was
long, but they could have found a ha-
ven where they could have been to-
gether. God had made them for each
other, and he had refused. He had
thrust her aside. He had pushed the

cup of happiness from his own lips
with his own hand.

He wished it was all to do over again.
Now it was too late. To the chains of
duty, honor, gratitude, had been added
that of his plighted word. Knowing
his love, De Tobar, his friend, had
trusted him. Knowing his daughter's
love, the viceroys had also trusted him.
He was locked with fetters, bound and
sealed, helpless. And yet the tempta-
tion grew with each hour. He had sus-
pected, he had dreamed, he had hoped,
that Mercedes loved him; now he was
sure of it. Oh, what happiness might
have been his!

What was this mystery about his
birth? He had been picked up a baby
in a deserted village outside of Pana-
ma. He had been found by the Count

de Lara, who had led his troops to the
succor of that doomed town, which un-
fortunately he had reached only after
the buccaneers had departed. Search
had been made for his parents, but
without success. The viceroys, finding
none to claim the bright faced baby,
had given him a name and had caused
him to be brought up in his own house-
hold. There was nothing in his ap-
parel to distinguish him save the ex-
quisite fineness and richness of the ma-
terial. Thrown around his neck had
been a curiously wrought silver cruci-
fix on a silver chain, and that crucifix
he had worn ever since. It lay upon
his breast beneath his clothing now.
It was the sole object which connected
him with his past.

Since he had reached man's estate
he had thought of these things often
and had prayed that in some way,
at some time, the mystery might be solv-

ed, for the suspense was worse than
any assurance, however dreadful. He
had often thought with longing upon
his father, his mother. He despaired
at last of ever finding out anything.
What mattered it now? He might be
of the proudest and most honorable
lineage in New Spain, a Sotomayor,
a Bobadilla, even a De Guzman. It
would advantage him nothing since he
had lost Mercedes. In spite of him-
self he groaned aloud, and the girl rid-
ing a little distance behind him heard
the sound of anguish in his voice.

Her heart, which had been yearning
toward him with increasing force, was
stirred within her bosom.
"Ride thou here," she said suddenly
to Senora Agapida. "I go forward to
speak with Captain Alvarado."
"But, senorita, thy father!"—
"Is it not permitted that I speak with
the captain of the soldiery who escort
me?"
"Certainly, if I am by."
"I do not choose to have it so," re-
plied Mercedes, with all the haughti-
ness of her father. "Remain here. I
will return presently."

Brushing her aside with an imperious
wave of her hand and a threatening
glance before which the poor duenna
quailed, for her charge had never
shown such spirit before, Mercedes
struck her Spanish jennet with the
whip she carried, and reined in her
steed by Alvarado's horse. So close,
indeed, was she to the captain that she
almost touched him. It was good to
see the light leap in his eyes, the flush
come into his pale cheek, as he became
aware of her presence.

"Donna Mercedes!" he cried in sur-
prise. "Is anything wrong? Where is
the Senora Agapida?"
"Nothing is wrong. I left her there."
"Shall I summon her?"
"Art afraid to speak to me, to a
woman, alone, Sir Captain?"
"Wouldst thou lesson me in man-
ners, master soldier?" cried the girl
laughingly.

"God forbid, lady, but thy father!"
"He laid no injunction upon me that
I should not speak to you, sir. Is that
forbidden?"
"Of course not, but—"
"But what, sir? It is your own
weakness you fear? You were strong
enough last night. Have you by
chance repented?"

There was such a passionate eager-
ness in her voice and such a leaping
hope for an affirmative answer in the
glance she bent upon him that he could
scarcely sustain the shock of it. His
whole soul had risen to meet hers, com-
ing as she came. He trembled at her
propinquity. The voice of the girl
thrilled him as never before.

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

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them. Indeed, the way was blocked
for such an indifferent horsewoman as
she by the adroit maneuvers of the ser-
geant. 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 meet-
ing, even an elopement. The two lov-
ers, therefore, could speak unobserved,
or at least unheard, by any stranger.

"Lady," said Alvarado at last, "I am
indeed afraid. You make the strong
weak. Your beauty—forgive me—mas-
ters me. Tempt me not! I can stand
no more!" he burst forth with vehe-
mence.

"What troubles thee, Alvarado?" she
said softly.
"Thou—and my plighted word."
"You chose honor and duty last night
when you might have had me. Art still
in the same mind?"

"Senorita, this subject is forbidden."
"Stop!" cried the girl. "I absolve you
from all injunctions of silence. I, too,
am a De Lara, and in my father's ab-
sence 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 what? 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 in-
sistently. She laid her hand upon his
strong arm and bent her head close to
ward him. They were far from the oth-
ers now, and the turns 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 honor, duty!"
"Again those hateful words!" she in-
terrupted, her dark face flushing with
anger. "Were I a man, loved I a woman
who loved me as I—as I—as one
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 beat in my heart none should tear
her thence."

"Thy father!"
"He thinks not of my happiness."
"Say not so, Donna Mercedes."
"Tis true. It is a matter of con-
venient 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 suitor
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 drooped in
the saddle beside him in a pose which
was a confession of womanly weak-
ness, 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 vow in my
heart—my honor—my duty!"

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