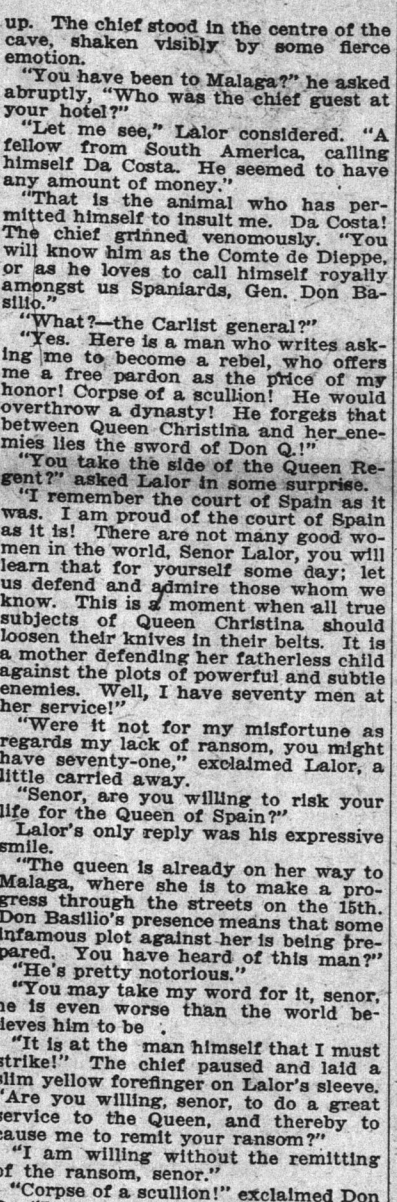


How Don Q.'s Sword Was Drawn for the Queen

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cover his speech, he was trotting up the hill followed by his nephew and the hotel clerk.

Don Basilio stood still, uncertain how to act. Just then the bishop's piping tones came. "Te, te, te! I will remain. I am ill. And if you refuse me entertainment I am sure I shall be obliged to appeal to the authorities. I shall stay for a week."

Don Basilio went back to his cigar and his reflection.

So it happened that the lord bishop of Britain, or the man who masqueraded under that name, planted his flag in the town of San Blas, his enemy; in other words, obtained lodging at the headquarters of Don Basilio.

The latter worthy for a time did not know what to do. He was a doctor on the departure of the peppery English cleric, or he would be wiser to let sleeping dogs lie. But his sense of obligation, he decided that awkward as was the presence of the two strangers in his town, he might be still more awkward to bring himself and his people into prominent notice at the moment.

So Don Basilio cursed the bishop in his heart, and then he wrote a note and finally despatched a little note of apology to the bishop of Britain, which he signed "Don Basilio." He did not shake it out from his fingers with contempt.

"So you see, senor, after all no harm has come of taking my word," Don Basilio said to Lator. "I knew my man. Had I allowed him to rough-ride over me, he would have been a different man, and we turned out of the hotel."

"Now, can you suggest a suitable illness for a bishop? I am about to go home in two days."

"Go to bed?"

"Yes, it is an essential part of my plan. I shall be happy to do it." Don Basilio is no doubt meditating whether he should leave the hotel. If I cross his path too often he may do so. That is what I hope. But if I give out that I am very ill, he will simply indulge in pious platitudes and stay where he is. I am certain that my powers of interference have been provisionally spoiled. I once had an English captive, he contracted the disease, and he died of chickenpox. Is that a disease adapted to the highest ranks of the princes of the earth?"

"Gout would be more dignified," suggested Lator.

"Gout? Gout it shall be. An tell them that I have lost faith in the medical profession of this country, and that if a

resently commanded Don Q. "I feel sure that the senior will understand that a man who craves my sword will pierce his throat."

Don Basilio replied by a rumble of laughter.

"If you are not stann, who are you?" Basilio humped his shoulders and took an sidewise at Don Q.

"Do you not hear?" Then I will tell you my name. This brigand bent to the other's ear and whispered something.

"I saw a look of stupefaction and incredulity on the face of the purple facot."

"It is impossible!" he snarled.

"I am also known to a few intimates as 'Don Q.' and 'the great saviour'."

"Don Q. Why you must have had my message?"

"You are here," replied Don Q. "I came to look upon the man who mis took me for a traitor."

"But you are—"

"Sequester!" True. Of the nobles rank of brigand. But it is now your turn to reply to questions.

And as the trial passed, Don Q. proved himself a past master in cross-examination, and in an hour the plot against the throne of Spain was laid bare.

"And now, senior, I have heard enough," Don Q. spoke slowly. "I will now kill you as a dog, although you may have named your death as a gift to you a chance of life. I have told you my name. You are the only man I have ever met who has asked to live, since I took to the mountains, have I revealed that old name of mine, and now you ask to die. I will give you an hour after. Take this pistol, newspaper and unloose his bonds. If he attempts to flee, kill him as you see fit."

Don Q. handed the revolver to Lalor. Then from a corner of the room, he brought out two duelling rapiers, and counselled Don Basilio to make choice of one.

"We will fight senior, you for your life, I for mine. Clear a little space in the centre of the room, and I shall nephew. I am about to honor this deed by running him through the body."

The swords crossed, and Lalor had another of his many surprises when he saw the other's sword pierce his arm. He was as quick as a fencing master, and his style, though that of a bygone age, was perfect.

"For the queen!" cried Don Q. pierced his antagonist's arm.

Then, with a stroke, with the pain made a fierce onslaught and Don

holding his sword straightly, passed through the fleshy body, which uttered a horrible leaning movement to the floor.

Don Q. cleaned both rapiers with some care on the sheets, then looking down at the dead man he said shortly:

"Through the heart. That is the end of you."

Lalor stood silent, staring across the corpse at the terrible chair.

"You are a coward," said Don Q., after a musing pause; "but first I would arrange that our friend shall be allowed to greet her majesty from my balcony when she passes in the morning."

With a strength of which the young man was not conscious, he raised the mable, Don Q. bent down, and raising the body, placed it in the chair. Then he turned round, and in a magnificent posture, and carried the chair into the balcony outside their window, which overlooked the street through which the procession was to pass.

A few moments later they had reached the street, and hurried along it, until they had passed the balcony, stopped to look back. Over the edge of the balcony with his flapping dress, the tall, thin, and pale figure of the Carlist, sustained there on his high seat of mockery to do honor to her who wore whom and himself had slain the sword.

Lalor stopped at the door of the carriage which was awaiting the brigadier, and said to Don Q.:

"How about our bargain, now, senor?" he questioned.

Don Q. stepped back from the step, bowed punctiliously to the young fellow and answered:

"I am not a senator, senor Lalor. Your ransom is remitted for the good service you have rendered to her majesty; and I thank you in her name, and my own. What do you now desire to do?"

"I cannot return to England—very easily," said Lalor, in a low tone.

"Not yet, I am afraid senor."

"And if I remain here I shall be put into the hands of the Carlists."

"Then, obviously, you must return with me to the mountains. I have confidence in you, senor, such as a fellow would have in a friend, and I will be a heart to a lonely man. Besides, there is no harm in my hand."

There was nothing more to be agreed to with Don Q., at least for the present. Lalor thanked the chief and they drove away together.

lieve me," replied Lalor, unable for the life of him to avoid imitating the chief

"Your relations — they must cherish you," was the answer. "But there is your Government, rich as dream, and pitiful. I have heard of public subscription — for a popular cause thousands could be raised, not so?"

"I dare say it is," Lolor's lips took shape. "But I am not so lucky. I am not a popular author, only an unknown one — yet, Ingham, the captain warned me before I started on this mad and desperate scheme for ransom before. Anyhow, Ingham told me plainly they were tired of paying ransom. And that was all I could get. As for relations, I have, one in the world which would give sixpence for me. And now you know how we stand."

"But this is terribly sad," exclaimed Don Q. softly. "I hope you have missed your way, and that I can help you. Lolor shook his head. "It is already nearly as late. I rarely take a fancy to one of our captives, but whenever I do, I am sure I shall not let him go. He is one who falls with his ransom assured you, senior, this fact forms one of the most reliable ones."

Don Q.'s face peaked and sunken like that of the bird he resembled, was inclined courteously towards his prisoner.

"I will do all I can for you, Senior Lolor," he said, after a short pause. "I will name but a little ransom, and I am sure that this can be raised."

"Your sake?"

Garth shook his head. "You 'won't get it. I'm not worth anything, and my people are not. What are you?"

"Alternatives are usually deplorable but we will wait for fifteen days until you have an answer from your consul," said the chief.

"But the alternative?"

Don Q. sighed. "Alas, senor, you are so very young to die."

Major Tabor was conscious of feeling very young and very human. The strong life in his veins chilled for the moment, but when he spoke his voice was as casual as before.

"What good will my death be to you?"

"My dear senor"—there was regret in the soft sibilant tones that made the lad shudder involuntarily—"it is business. I have a terrible reputation to maintain."

"Do you know," he said, "before I heard the alternative you have so delicately alluded to, I was congratulating myself on having fallen into your hands?"

"You travelled to get local color?" inquired Don Q.

"Well, you see,"—Lalor looked oddly shy—"I'm not old. If a fellow hasn't made his age he has to get experience. Don't you think so?"

The chief felt his heart quite warm to this ingenious Britisher.

"I know an author," he began, "who for years has seldom left his own hearthstone, yet his transcriptions of

"You are right. I have occupied myself with the things of the world, and I will tend to set me right in the eyes of men. But I will not neglect the things of the next life."

"Well, for reasons which I have already mentioned to you, I am sometimes forced to adopt regrettable alternatives." The chief stopped and looked resentfully at the door, where one of his men stood holding a letter.

The daylight had now grown stronger, odd moments in compiling an autobiography. It will not be a dull book and Don Q. went to the terrace outside the cave-mouth to read the communication. An odd sound made Lolor look

With your character," remonstrated the young man; "but if you will allow me I will say that we have telegraphed to the great gout specialist in London, Sir Charles Jenkinson, and that until he comes you will trust to your own knowledge rather than to local talent."

Don Q. looked up from the buckled shoe he was removing. "Excellent," he commented. "I foresee, Señor Lalor, that you will in a day become a very great writer, indeed."

Lalor carried out his part of the programme and everything fell out as Don Q. had foreseen.

"The queen enters Malaga this afternoon," observed Lalor, sitting down.

on the edge of the pallet he occupied in the bishop's room. "The royal programme through the streets takes place, as arranged, early to-morrow."

"Ah, then, why not?" replied Don Q., raising himself up with his pillow. "This delay is very wearisome, senior. It has been in my mind to go down to desayuno, and pistol Don Basilio where he sat."

Lalor grinned appreciatively.

"I'm afraid you would have been disappointed, for Don Basilio always reappears in his own room for desayuno, though he sometimes joins us at comida in the evening."

Don Q. was out of bed in a twinkling and wrapped in his dressing gown.

"He was already bandaging one foot with a towel before he spoke."
"It is midday," he said. "A waiter has brought my invalid soup. Every person in the hotel is at this moment engaged in devouring food. The time has come, dear nephew, to do what you have come here to do."
"What are you going to do?" asked Lalor.
"First we will concern ourselves with what you are to do," returned the chief serenely. "When you leave me you will descend and partake of desayuno, and do not forget, my dear nephew, to give evidence of anxiety at the increasing disposition of your cherished uncle to can no longer be with you. I am gifted with an imagination. I copy

the matter in your hands. Afterward you will go toward the stables, and there you will find a ragged fellow assisting with the horses. I venture to believe that you will recognize a black-eyed scoundrel you have seen/heard in the sierra. When you catch him, take his eye, be so good as to place your forefinger of the left hand thus upon your chin."

"I understand," said Lalor. The affair was becoming engrossing once more. He waited eagerly for Don Quixote's next words.

"As for me, my dear senor," resumed the chief, "you tell me that Don Basilio has been good enough to in-

Don Q. perched himself actively on Lolor's shoulders, and they passed out into the empty passages of the hotel on their way to the quarters of the Carlist leader.

Don Basilio sat alone at his meal, and was in the act of raising a glass of wine when he saw, when Lolor, bearing this strange burden, paused in the doorway.

"That will do, dear nephew," piped the bishop: place me in a chair by my good friend Don Basilio, and go at once to your breakfast."

"What does this mean—this unwar-

“Not at all, not at all, senor,” Lolor heard him say as he closed the door upon the couple: “I have come to thank you for the kind inquiries you have been making after me, and to have a little talk with you.”

Lolor, in obedience to orders—no one but the *capataz* and *mat* through the meal table of anxiety.

As soon as he could leave the table without remark, Lolor made his way to the stables, where, sure enough he at once caught sight of the handsome

...aughing face of Rómulo, Don Q's hand. He was standing at the door with a bucket in his hand.

Don Q gave the signal, and receiving an enigmatic smile of intelligence in return, stroked back to the bedroom of the bishop. What, he wondered, could he have done to offend the bishop? Don Q lay panting in the bed, his very face even paler than his wont. His thoughts were all of the bishop. "You are ill?" The real concern on the young Englishman's face may have encouraged the brigand. He smiled sadly and said: "I am not ill, dear nephew. I have no emotion arising from the interview I have been enjoying and the action of my heart—no more."

"I hope that brute, Basilio," began Salor.

BY VIRGINIA LELLA

home to-night," he said in a voice softened with reverence.

There was actual tears in Alberta's eyes, even as the setting was, simple as was the scene, and had fetched her to a revelation. After all, that was the real sum of life, was it not, dear God—love, and grace, and a clear unbartered conscience?

"Well, if you still want to stay, I'm going out for a whiskey and soda," she said. "I'll be back in a minute." A heavy hand on hers as the curtain dropped on the second act. "You don't seem up to conversation to-night. I'm going to bed. I'll be back in a minute—old lady's a corker when talk gets scarce! If I'm not back by the time the lights goes up, don't get frightened. I'll be here before the bloom'n' thing over."

As he was turning out in the aisle, unconsciously, even to herself, Alberta's eyes swept him from head to foot—shaming physique, obtrusive jewels—and all. She shuddered involuntarily, passing the time what she would rather sharply into her flesh.

Oh—if only the orchestra would play that "Spring Song" of Mendelssohn's! She had been trying so hard to shut Robert Harvey out from her life—and this fetched him so vividly before her! "But if I live with Idas, when we two
On the low earth shall prosper, hand in hand"—
those were the words from Stephen

“*Madressa*,” which Harvey had been wont to set to that music, saying: “They seem to have been made for each other—just like you and I, sweet heart.”

However in the world had she made herself able to give him up? It was her cursed love of luxury, she told herself, and when would luxury profit her without him. What a fool she had been—But the worst was yet to do—to-morrow she was to write the letter which was to stab his dear heart like a knife.

“—and an awfully stunning fellow—regular Gibson type you know. We tried to induce him to join us to-night

"And he leaves for the South tomorrow. Fancy arriving in fascinating old New York one day and leaving it the next! Ma says she'll warrant he has a sweetheart in Louisville. For he's dead set on going there immediately. This morning, on deck, just before we sailed into the harbor"—But "Ma" who was from Chicago, and full of Western surprise, finished the sentence for herself.

what d'ye think he was doing? Leaning over the rail and looking at a picture in his watch! 'Ah-ha, Mr. Harvey,' I cried, 'you're caught at last! Why you let me see her picture?' 'In a few moments I'll show you the statue of Liberty instead,' said he, closing his watch softly, and unstrapping his field glasses. And, would you believe it, the winning sweetness of his smile took all the sting out of the refusal.¹

"Why didn't you strike for him yourself, Maude, as soon as the Louisville girl out?" came a laughing voice. "Or wasn't he looking for a rich wife?"

"Don't know, I'm sure," was the response. "But, anyway, he's not rich."

Got the information from his chum coming over—the one who's going to take us to the Union League reception to-morrow. He owns some sort of a plantation in Kentucky, however, and people there call him, le grand seigneur, 'cause he's considered so exclusive. It appears Mr. Harvey in his aristocrat poverty had a horror of the nouveau riches." She sniffed and said a dignified good night.

The lights went down; the orchestra stopped playing, and the curtain went up on the third act.

Presently, having had one glass of whisky and soda too much, Hershel came back. He looked at Alberta close-

ly with a loom before which she suddenly shrank. She seen it focused before this on many things—his automobile, his diamonds, his horses—but never wholly on herself. The glance of possession shot through her nerves with a sickening humiliation.

"You'll loosen the stone in your ring if you keep drawing it around like that," said Hershel in a blurred whisper. "An" that sort of diamond ain't

"We'll go now," she said simply, but