

THE
SCARLET SHOULDERS;
OR,
THE MINER RANGERS.

Jos. E. Badger.

Published
Semi-Monthly.

BEAVER

Number 77,
Vol. VI.

POCKET NOVELS



The Scarlet Shoulder.⁷⁷



Table of Contents

CHAPTER I. THE TRAGEDY.

CHAPTER II. A STORY TOLD AND A SURPRISE.

CHAPTER III. MARCOS SAYOSA, THE YOUNG MINER.

CHAPTER IV. THE MINER'S RIOT.

CHAPTER V. THE RESCUE.

CHAPTER VI. CARLITA.

CHAPTER VII. FELIPE'S VISITOR.

CHAPTER VIII. A FEARFUL PERIL.

CHAPTER IX. THE JAROCHO'S PRISONER.

CHAPTER X. FELIPE'S CONFESSION.

CHAPTER XI. IN THE CAVE AND OUT OF IT.

CHAPTER XII. EXPLANATIONS.

STANDARD Dime dialogueS

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 1.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 2.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 3.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 4.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 5.

DIME DIALOGUES, NO. 6.

DIME DIALECT SPEAKER, No. 23.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 26.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 27.

DIME DIALOGUES No. 28.

DIME POCKET NOVELS. PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY,
AT TEN CENTS EACH.

THE SCARLET SHOULDERS;
OR,
THE MINER RANGERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAGEDY.

“*Indios—Indios bravos!*” yelled Manuel Navaja, as he discharged his *escopette* full at the glowing disk of old Sol; then dropping it, he rushed through the outer gates, sounding the terrible words at every step, his affright being shared by all the *peons* who heard him, and, leaving their posts, one and all swarmed to the main building.

There is a spell—a fascination like that of a rattlesnake—that none but the dweller in “the land of the sun” can know. Young and old, men, women and children felt it now, and all rushed into the *hacienda*, only intent upon their own safety. But a clear, stern voice soared above the din, above the shouts of men, the shrieks of women and children; and, aided by his strong arm, that dealt blows upon every hand, he managed to restore order so far that the inner gates were fastened securely, the window shutters closed, and doors barred, and then blockaded with such heavy articles of the furniture as could be moved. The outer gates were left open; no person would venture there, the *haciendado* being held back by a beautiful woman, who twined her arms around him with strength lent by terror.

Then, with wild yells and whoops, the half nude, paint-bedaubed horde came swarming through the gateway into the *patio*, or outer courtyard, while others assailed the building in front. The *peons* within had been hastily armed, and opened a scattering fusilade, but with little damage to the enemy, for in their terror they generally fired at random, as often with both eyes shut as taking aim.

Then the shock came. The doors shook and creaked under the weight hurled against them; the hinges slowly yielded, but the barricade held them in place.

If the majority of the defenders were cowardly, others were there whose courage amply supplied this deficiency. A tall, stalwart man, of a singularly handsome and noble countenance, went from post to post, reproving or encouraging the men in a few quick words, pointing out the best methods of procedure—at times aiming an *escopette* with a skill that spoke well for his marksmanship. This was the *hacendado*, Don Christobal Canelo, a man of perhaps thirty years of age.

Close behind him was a lady, who, although her face was as pale as death, betrayed no fear; on the contrary, whenever her husband fired a shot, and the wild yell of mortal agony followed, a smile of pride swept athwart her face, and her eyes flashed with an ardor equal to his own. Then the first fury of the assault was checked, the savages drawing behind the outbuildings, and, turning to note the extent of the damage inflicted upon his little band, Canelo noticed the presence of his wife.

“My God, Luzecita, you here! Where is Felipe?”

“With Josefa in the—”

“But you—this is no place for you, my wife. Think, a bullet might—”

“Pardon, Christobal; where should I be if not by my husband’s side?”

“But not now; there is danger. You should be with your child—our boy,” urged Canelo, affectionately.

“And is there no danger to you?” she added, reproachfully.

“It is my place—my duty to encourage and assist the *peons*. But think, if you are here, in danger, it will do no good, and only distract me. I could think of nothing else. If you should be—any thing happen to you, what would become of our Felipe? Come, let me take you to him, where you will be safe, at least for the present.”

“And leave you here to be killed?”

“*Mi alma*, if that is to be my fate, your presence could not avert it, but only make it the more bitter. Your prayers to the blessed Virgin will strengthen our hands and hearts. Come,” and he led her from the hall.

“See, *comarados*,” exclaimed Tadeo Campos, the *capataz*, “the red-skinned devils come again. Show yourselves men now, and true Mexicans. Fire!”

He was answered by a volley that did some execution, and then the savages hurled themselves against the shattered door, hewing it with axes, battering it with beams and logs of wood that they had procured from the *caballariza* (stable), while others pummeled the window screens, or fired at the loop-holes. The *patio* was filled with smoke, and through it gleamed the oiled bodies of the Indians, as they flitted to and fro.

A large hole was now made in the door, and through it shots were exchanged. But the besieged had the advantage of being in a darkened room, while the enemy were plainly revealed. From without the shots were fired at random, although several took

effect; but Campos, with his comrades, taking deliberate aim, made fearful havoc among their assailants.

But this could not last long. One of the shutters began to give way before the force applied to it, and the *grills* of strong iron bars, called *rega*, were bending inward, and the ranks of the besieged were really thinned. Then came a loud shout from without, and, with wild yells of exultation, the savages retreated, to the great joy of the *peons*, for it seemed as if a few minutes more would see the foe effect an entrance.

For a few moments all was silence within the building; even the process of reloading was checked, so eager were they to learn the cause of this strange maneuver. They could hear a faint hum from without, that told them the enemy had not yet abandoned the siege. In vain they peered through the shattered door. The smoke concealed every thing, as it was a still, foggy day, and it settled heavily upon the earth.

Then came a bright flash, a loud roar, and the *adobes* by the side of the door crumbled, while the shock made the entire house tremble. But one thing could have that effect, and the swarthy faces turned a shade more ashen as the whisper run around of:

“Los canones!”

Where had the cannon come from? there were none belonging to the *hacienda*. And what were the Indians doing with such a piece? These were questions that all asked, but none could answer.

If their danger had been great before, now it was increased tenfold. A few hours, at least, would end the struggle. The fog and smoke might prevent them from getting range of the doorway for a spell,

but not long; and then one or two balls would open a breach for their entrance. Another barricade was formed at the other end of the hall, but that could avail little. The same power would reduce that, and then it would be hilt to hilt, breast to breast.

At this new phase, Canelo sought the chamber where his wife and child were, and hastily explained the cause of the commotion.

“And now, Luzecita, you must not remain here. We can not tell what may happen, and with you and darling Felipe in safety, I can fight with a better will.”

“And you?”

“My place is here. The *peons* need my influence to encourage and direct them.”

“Where you are, I stay—nay, do not interrupt me,” she hastily exclaimed. “I am your wife, and will live or die with you. The blow that kills you shall reach my heart at the same time.”

“But it can not be; think—”

“I do think—I have thought, and I will stay. What would life be without you?” the woman uttered, as she clasped him around the neck.

“My wife, you *must* listen, and you will see that what I say is best. Think of our Felipe—what would become of him if these fiends should overpower us? Remember that not we alone would perish—and you know but too well the fate a woman would receive at their hands—but he, our bright, beautiful boy—he, too, would die!”

“Why should he live if we are killed?” faltered the wife.

“Perhaps we may beat them off, then no harm is done. But if the worst is to be, he will have a parent’s hand—a mother’s love to show him how to live. Would you doom him to death, and he so brave and innocent? And then,” as he bent his head and whispered, “think of the one that is to come; would you—”

“My husband, do not ask me; I can not—can not leave you!” and she clung to Canelo hysterically, sobbing as though her heart would break.

“Luzecita,” he cried, assuming a stern voice, while the great tears stood in his eyes, “this is folly. You *must* go, and soon, or it will be too late. See, if you refuse, I will kill myself before your eyes! And then you will have my death upon your soul, as well as that of your children!” and he held her tightly to his breast as he drew a pistol, and, cocking it, placed the barrel against his temple.

“Christobal—husband, what would you do?” shrieked his wife, struggling wildly to free her arms, so that she could avert the weapon.

“I have said, if you will not flee with Felipe—our son—as I believe in the holy Virgin, I will kill myself!”

“Enough—enough, I will go—my God, I will go!” faintly murmured the lady, as she swooned from grief and terror.

“This is a deeper pain to me, my darling, than death could bring,” he murmured, as he gently placed her upon a sofa, while the scalding tears fell freely from his eyes. “My God, to speak such words to her—my heart’s darling, when perhaps an hour may part us forever. It is hard, ah, so hard; but it was for *her* sake and our

child's," and then he hastened from the room, after directing the terrified maid to attend to her mistress.

As he entered the hall, the cannon was fired for the second time, and the six-pound ball crashed through the barricade, shattering the furniture and scattering the splinters in every direction. One of the *peons* was killed outright, and several others severely wounded. Another shot as well aimed would clear the passage so that an entrance could be effected. Canelo knew that he had no time to spare, if he would save his dear ones.

As he looked for Tadeo Campos, he heard a loud shout and then the sound of a struggle in an adjoining room, or pantry, where there was a door leading out into the garden. Thinking the enemy had effected an entrance, he rushed to the place, just in time to see the *capataz* master one of the *peons*, and hurl him to the floor.

"What's this, Campos? Is not that Pepe Raymon?"

"*Si, senor,*" panted the *capataz*, "and a precious scoundrel he is, too. What do you think? He was unbarring the door yonder to let in the savages—the cursed dog!"

"Are you sure, Tadeo?"

"*Carrai!* yes. He pretended to be badly wounded, but I watched him, and when he sneaked off here, I followed after, and was just in time, as you see. The upper bolt is drawn!"

"Then he must be put beyond chance of doing us any further harm. Take this pistol, and when it is unloaded, come to me. I have work for you to do."

He had scarcely passed the door, when the report told that the traitor had met his doom, and then Campos overtook his master. In a few, quick words, Canelo told him what he required him to do, and although the *capataz* looked any thing but pleased at the task, he dared not hint as much.

He was to conduct his mistress and child, with the servant, by a rear exit, from the *hacienda*, trusting that the besiegers would be all occupied with the cannon and preparing for the assault, in front of the building, and the dense and smoke-laden fog, to effect their escape unseen. It would be risky to attempt securing horses, as the stable was probably occupied by the savages, so they were to hasten on foot to the *chapparal*, where they could lay concealed until the fate of the building was settled. It was risky, but would not entail as great danger as remaining in the building, when in a few minutes more, at the furthest, a hand-to-hand combat must take place.

Tadeo Campos first reconnoitered the ground, found the way clear, and then, after a few hasty words of parting, the husband, wife, and child separated, never more to meet on this earth alive.

And not a minute too soon, either. Another ball hurtled through the barricade and completed the breach. The *haciendado* returned to his men, and formed them into a double rank to meet the onset that he knew was coming. Over the heads of the kneeling ones, those in the rear leveled their *escopettes*, nerved with despair, to meet their fate like men. Many of them were the veriest cowards that lived, but now, under their master's eye, and knowing that, while there was no chance of fleeing, no quarter was to be expected from their red-skinned foes, they would fight desperately and well.

Then came the rush. There was only a subdued rustling, as of many feet cautiously planted, and then from the dense fog a horde of the painted demons rushed into the breach left by the shattered door. Their own impetuosity came near being fatal to themselves, for, as the crowd became jammed in the doorway, and entangled in the mass of broken furniture, the clear, strong tones of Canelo rung out the order to fire.

The double volley, delivered at such close quarters, was withering in its effects. The savages fell in piles, almost blocking up the entrance, and the others shrunk back from such a deadly reception. The besieged, led by Canelo, sprung forward to meet them, with *machetes*, pistols, or clubbed guns. Then came an order for the savages to rush over their dead and close hand to hand.

Christobal Canelo started, as if thunderstruck. The order had been given in *pure Castilian*, and, moreover, he could almost have sworn that he recognized the voice as that of one whom he had befriended, trusted, and loved!

And then where did an Indian—a Comanche upon the war-path—learn to speak that language so perfectly? And to his braves; could they comprehend him? If so, they must be strange savages.

But he had no further time to ponder over the matter. The savages had rallied, and tearing their dead comrades from the breach, they swarmed into the house, led by a tall, sinewy man, who dashed into the midst of his foes. In vain Canelo strove to meet this person, for he knew that if their chief was slain, the assailants would probably retreat. But the savage ever eluded him, ever kept a crowd between him and the *haciendado*. He wielded a heavy saber

that, while it seemed to shed the blows rained at him, like a magic shield, dealt death or gaping wounds at every stroke.

Several savages had singled out Canelo, and were pressing him hard. Two of their number had fallen before his sword, but he was wounded, and the blood flowed freely. It required all his address and activity to keep from being clenching from behind by his enemies; but then, as he clove down the foremost, he dashed to the wall, where he could no longer be surrounded.

The savages were all around with *sabers or machetes*, and he was fast failing. Still he met them bravely. A saber laid bare his cheek but the man who dealt the wound went down the next moment with his head cloven in twain.

The tall leader of the savages saw this, and, hissing out a fierce oath, drew his pistol, and, retreating to the wall at a space that was free from combatants, deliberately aimed at the brave Canelo. The latter saw nothing of this, as he desperately struggled with his assailants. Then the finger pressed upon the trigger, and there came a flash, a loud report, and the *haciendado* sunk at the feet of his foes, with the blood slowly oozing from the little discolored hole in the center of his forehead, a dead man.

His death was noted by a *peon*, and he raised the cry. It was like depriving a ship in a storm of its rudder, the fall of their leader, and with but one or two exceptions, the besieged threw down their weapons and begged for quarter. But the mercy they received was like that rendered famous in the revolutionary war, as "*Tarleton quarter.*"

One by one they were cut down, even as they knelt and implored mercy in the Virgin's name, and in two minutes after the

death of Christobal Canelo the only survivors were they who wore the paint and trappings of Comanche warriors; even those who were dying received a finishing stroke.

The leader did not await this. As soon as he had murdered the *haciendado*, he left the hall, and proceeded at once, and without hesitation, to the room where Canelo had so shortly before changed his wife's resolve of sharing his fate. He looked through this apartment as though he was seeking some person, and then ran hurriedly into the other rooms, but with the same result. What he sought was not there.

Calling to his men in a tone choked with rage and baffled vengeance, he cried to one, a huge, herculean man:

“*Mil diablos*, Barajo, the birds have both vanished! But they can't be gone far, for they were here an hour since. Take you a few men and circle around the place. Scatter, and look well, for if they are lost, what we have done here is all for nothing. Find them and a thousand *pesos* are yours. *Al monte—al monte! Capa de Dios!* why do you wait?” raged the disguised Mexican or Spaniard, for surely an Indian tongue never mastered the *lingua Espagnol* so perfectly.

But at length the men returned from a fruitless search, and then, half wild with rage and disappointment, the leader reluctantly gave the order for marching, and they filed out from the *hacienda*. The building was left intact, with the exception of what injury had been done by the cannon. The outhouses were undisturbed; the stock, both horses and cloven-footed animals, were abandoned. Truly they were a strange war-party of Comanches in more ways than one.

CHAPTER II.

A STORY TOLD AND A SURPRISE.

“*Madre mia*, why so sad this bright and beautiful day, when all should be as gay and happy as it is out of doors?” exclaimed a young girl, as she entered the room, and, kneeling at her mother’s feet, lifted the bowed head, holding it between her two dainty palms, and pressed affectionate kisses upon the pale cheeks and lips.

“Ah, child, if you knew what anniversary this sad day is, you would not wonder at my grief,” returned the elder lady, mournfully. “Luisa, child, how old are you?” she added, half vacantly.

“Why, mother, need you ask that?” laughed her daughter. “I am nearly nineteen! Almost an old woman, aren’t I?” and her soft, gleesome laugh again rung out.

“Listen, Luisa; you have never learned the true way in which your father—my husband, died. But you are old enough now, and I think I can bear to tell it all. I have been thinking of the past this morning—of your father and brother, child, who was stolen when you were a babe.”

“*Stolen!*” exclaimed Luisa, eagerly. “I thought you said he was dead?”

“And so he is—he *must* be, or I should have found him years ago,” murmured the mother; and then she detailed at length the incidents embodied in our first chapter, so far as she was conversant with them.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

