

Dice of Destiny

By JACKSON GREGORY

Copyright

CHAPTER XI—Continued.
—
Dempton's pale lips opened, but no words came forth. A little shiver ran through him.

"We have learned everything, Dempton," Stanway went on in his whispering voice. "Even to the hiding-place. There is the door." He pointed to the panel with the thumb-print upon it. "I think that we can send you to the penthouse for a long time with very little trouble. Will you talk now, Dempton?"

Dempton hesitated, denial upon his lips, growing feebly in his eyes.

"What do you want to know?" he asked in a shaking whisper. "—Oh, my God! This has gone further already—"

"I want to know how many men are with Torre in this thing?"

"There—there is Juarez—and—and—"

"Don't be a fool as well as a coward, Dempton!" muttered Stanway. "You are such a pale little thing that nobody is going to want to prosecute you if you help us now. There is Torre and Juarez and you. Who else?"

"I don't know," Dempton licked his dry lips and gazed between Vidal and Mendez as though he were going to fall. "Oh, I was a fool—"

"Granted. But tell what you know while you have the chance. How many?"

"Seven, I think," chattered Dempton. "Seven besides Torre and Juarez. Five inside, two outside with the horses."

"Outside?" queried Stanway.

"Yes. To ride away, leading extra horses, so that it would sound like a number of riders were racing for the border. To leave the trail which you followed south. The other five to do the work inside."

"And De la Guerra was never to be taken from the house?"

"No. It seemed safer this way."

"There was every hazard to it—"

"Simply because you happened to be at the ranch," returned Dempton with a little flash of bitterness. "Had there been only the secret, it would have been easy to have worked on her love for her grandfather."

"And Torre?"

"Killed a man a month ago in San Antonio—is running away from the gallow. With the money he expected to make from it he could buy the silence of the one man who can identify him as the murderer. It was his only chance."

"Juarez?"

"He is actually a rebel captain. Torre was to give him his share. Then Torre was to have a commission in the rebel army. He looked to distinguished favors when the rebels fought their way into power. Now—"

"Now what?"

"Now, if he goes into Mexico the rebels will shoot him as a traitor. That was another chance he was taking. He was to give five thousand dollars to the cause. For that they let him have Juarez and the other men. He was to give his life if he led to them. If he tricked them or—if he failed, he could never get across the border without their spies finding him."

Then Gauchó returned with word that everything was ready. Vidal, at Stanway's command, handed Dempton securely once more, hand and foot, and tossed him to the bed as one might toss a sack of wheat. The men had kicked off their shoes and boots, and stood eager and expectant.

Stanway, his revolver in his right hand, pressed with the left thumb upon the spot in the paneling where another thumb had pressed.

There was a little click, and the panel slid back into the wall, showing a narrow doorway, a narrow passageway beyond. There were candles burning there, their steady flames casting a clear, yellow light.

"Each man keep three feet behind the man in front of him," whispered Stanway. "We must have room. Vidal, Gauchó, come just behind me."

He stepped through the door into the two-story wide hallway which ran along inside the wall, its trend eastward and downward. There were no steps, but the slant led quickly under the foundations of the great adobe buildings.

shook back in his throat by the hard hands of the rancher. The struggle ended almost as soon as it began.

But some sound of the brief scuffle must have penetrated to the other side of the oak door. Before the rest of the vagabonds could crowd into the little room the door had been jerked open, a dark, bearded face showed at the crack.

"Your axes!" shouted Stanway, leaping to one side to make room. "Yield, you take one. Get it down, quick!"

But, even to the attack of the great arms of Vidal and another of the cowboys, the great thick door stood defiant as the swift seconds fled by. From the other side came the sound of quick, snapping voices, of scurrying feet, the sound of a cry which tripped through Stanway's blood and sent Vidal with recoltored vigor to the onslaught on the door.

At last the door fell. Stanway and Vidal, side by side, leaped through. There was another hall, wider than the first shorter. At the end of the hall another door, studded with nails, barred upon the farther side.

Evidently there had been a second guard here, evidently in the next room were the prisoners.

"De la Guerra!" shouted Stanway. "Teresa!"

There was no answer, no sound. "Smash in the door!" he yelled. "Quick! Gauchó, go upstairs. You!"

"Outside?" queried Stanway.

"Yes. To ride away, leading extra horses, so that it would sound like a number of riders were racing for the border. To leave the trail which you followed south. The other five to do the work inside."

"And Torre?"

"Killed a man a month ago in San Antonio—is running away from the gallow. With the money he expected to make from it he could buy the silence of the one man who can identify him as the murderer. It was his only chance."

"Juarez?"

"He is actually a rebel captain. Torre was to give him his share. Then Torre was to have a commission in the rebel army. He looked to distinguished favors when the rebels fought their way into power. Now—"

"Now what?"

"Now, if he goes into Mexico the rebels will shoot him as a traitor. That was another chance he was taking. He was to give five thousand dollars to the cause. For that they let him have Juarez and the other men. He was to give his life if he led to them. If he tricked them or—if he failed, he could never get across the border without their spies finding him."

Then Gauchó returned with word that everything was ready. Vidal, at Stanway's command, handed Dempton securely once more, hand and foot, and tossed him to the bed as one might toss a sack of wheat. The men had kicked off their shoes and boots, and stood eager and expectant.

Stanway, his revolver in his right hand, pressed with the left thumb upon the spot in the paneling where another thumb had pressed.

There was a little click, and the panel slid back into the wall, showing a narrow doorway, a narrow passageway beyond. There were candles burning there, their steady flames casting a clear, yellow light.

"Each man keep three feet behind the man in front of him," whispered Stanway. "We must have room. Vidal, Gauchó, come just behind me."

He stepped through the door into the two-story wide hallway which ran along inside the wall, its trend eastward and downward. There were no steps, but the slant led quickly under the foundations of the great adobe buildings.

Stanway passed the first candle set into a niche in the rough wood wall. Already he felt that he must be below the level of the floor when he came to the second candle. Here the flame was less steady, a little breath of air playing with it.

He turned a corner, the hallway opened suddenly into a small, rough-walled room some eight or ten feet square.

Across the room was a heavy barred door; in the center of the door was a couch, and on the couch a man was lying upon his back, his hands clasped behind his head, a cigarette between his lips.

Stanway was in the room, noiseless as his stockinged feet. Vidal at his side, Gauchó was entering when the man heard, turned quickly, and saw them. He sprang to his feet.

But the cry rising to his lips was

choked back in his throat by the hard hands of the rancher. The struggle ended almost as soon as it began.

"We have learned everything, Dempton," Stanway went on in his whispering voice. "Even to the hiding-place. There is the door." He pointed to the panel with the thumb-print upon it. "I think that we can send you to the penthouse for a long time with very little trouble. Will you talk now, Dempton?"

Dempton hesitated, denial upon his lips, growing feebly in his eyes.

"What do you want to know?" he asked in a shaking whisper. "—Oh, my God! This has gone further already—"

"I want to know how many men are with Torre in this thing?"

"There—there is Juarez—and—and—"

"Don't be a fool as well as a coward, Dempton!" muttered Stanway. "You are such a pale little thing that nobody is going to want to prosecute you if you help us now. There is Torre and Juarez and you. Who else?"

"I don't know," Dempton licked his dry lips and gazed between Vidal and Mendez as though he were going to fall. "Oh, I was a fool—"

"Granted. But tell what you know while you have the chance. How many?"

"Seven, I think," chattered Dempton. "Seven besides Torre and Juarez. Five inside, two outside with the horses."

"Outside?" queried Stanway.

"Yes. To ride away, leading extra horses, so that it would sound like a number of riders were racing for the border. To leave the trail which you followed south. The other five to do the work inside."

"And Torre?"

"Killed a man a month ago in San Antonio—is running away from the gallow. With the money he expected to make from it he could buy the silence of the one man who can identify him as the murderer. It was his only chance."

"There was every hazard to it—"

"Simply because you happened to be at the ranch," returned Dempton with a little flash of bitterness. "Had there been only the secret, it would have been easy to have worked on her love for her grandfather."

"And Torre?"

"Killed a man a month ago in San Antonio—is running away from the gallow. With the money he expected to make from it he could buy the silence of the one man who can identify him as the murderer. It was his only chance."

"Juarez?"

"He is actually a rebel captain. Torre was to give him his share. Then Torre was to have a commission in the rebel army. He looked to distinguished favors when the rebels fought their way into power. Now—"

"Now what?"

"Now, if he goes into Mexico the rebels will shoot him as a traitor. That was another chance he was taking. He was to give five thousand dollars to the cause. For that they let him have Juarez and the other men. He was to give his life if he led to them. If he tricked them or—if he failed, he could never get across the border without their spies finding him."

Then Gauchó returned with word that everything was ready. Vidal, at Stanway's command, handed Dempton securely once more, hand and foot, and tossed him to the bed as one might toss a sack of wheat. The men had kicked off their shoes and boots, and stood eager and expectant.

Stanway, his revolver in his right hand, pressed with the left thumb upon the spot in the paneling where another thumb had pressed.

There was a little click, and the panel slid back into the wall, showing a narrow doorway, a narrow passageway beyond. There were candles burning there, their steady flames casting a clear, yellow light.

"Each man keep three feet behind the man in front of him," whispered Stanway. "We must have room. Vidal, Gauchó, come just behind me."

He stepped through the door into the two-story wide hallway which ran along inside the wall, its trend eastward and downward. There were no steps, but the slant led quickly under the foundations of the great adobe buildings.

SIMPLICITY AND BEAUTY IN DAINTY NEGLIGEEES



The average woman may have little use for very elaborate negligees, but for daintiness, loveliness of color and simplicity she always has an instinctive longing. These always appeal to her and specialists in the manufacture of negligees understand this—so that the bulk of their output combines just these elements. "Negligee" is a term that includes a very wide variety of garments—inspired by the best of many peoples—for it is in the seclusion of home that women may indulge themselves in the fanciful. Japan and China contribute much and we have interpreted their ideas to suit our selves, besides buying generously of their productions. France is an exhaustless source of inspiration and we use its wonderful creations all the time, adopting and adapting ideas according to our own needs.

Our needs demand at least ten negligees that are simple and pretty, daintily made in lovely colors, to one that is elaborate.

Morning jackets and coats of tulle in gay colors, to be worn with lace-trimmed petticoats are popular, because they embody the things we like best, and negligees of the character of the two shown here are in constant demand. All these appear in

ROMANCE VS. RICE

By ADELDAID R. KEMP.

Anne Preston boarded the crowded Pullman of a through train with an expression of absolute weariness on her pretty face. It was a warm day and she settled herself for her long journey unmoved by the monotonous murmur of voices drifting about her, and thinking only of the vast ahead. Tired from her hard winter in the office, she felt glad indeed she had resisted the pleading of the other girls to spend her three weeks' vacation with them at a fashionable seaside resort. With closed eyes she remembered gratefully the kind letter from dear Aunt Maria inviting her down to the old home in Maine, where she had spent such happy summers when she was a little girl.

It was late in the afternoon when the train came to her station. Alighting, the first thing on which her eyes fell was an old survey with its fringed top and a plump horse in the shafts. Coming toward her was a tall, well-built young man with eyes gray, serene, and strangely compelling, the look of strength in his mouth and chin and in the square swing of his shoulders. Could this be Aunt Maria's adopted son, the merry, freckled-faced lad with whom she had spent such happy days fishing and picking berries?

With outstretched hand and a slow, friendly smile, he met her.

"You are little Anne. I should have known you anywhere," he said.

"Why!" she exclaimed in her calm, deep voice causing an odd flutter in her heart, "you must be David."

As they jogged along the country road they were soon chatting merrily together, quickly bridging over the years since their last met, as is the way of youth.

"Oh!" she said, "was anything ever so lovely? Why have I stayed away so long?"

David looked at her thoughtfully. "I don't know," he said slowly. "But I hope you won't do it again."

On the brow of the hill overlooking the sea stood the lovely old farmhouse. White paint gleamed on eaves, board and timber. Eaves, window shutters and doors were green, and there also, as Anne had remembered, were some plants blending with the hollyhocks. As they drove up Aunt Maria's motherly figure rose from the wicker rocker on the porch and with a kind, rosy face beaming with affection, came to meet her. Anne felt a tightening of her throat, and with a sudden mist blurring her eyes she hid her face in the ample bosom.

Long hours of the beach or in the hammock among the pines gave splendid results, and the flush of health returned to Anne's cheeks, the sparkle to her brown eyes. With it all a spirit of happiness and content filled her whole being. One morning she entered the kitchen at an earlier hour than usual, to find it deserted. A few dishes at the end of the table gave evidence that the men had finished their breakfast. But the fire was low and an unusual air of desolation seemed to pervade the atmosphere. Anne quickly ran upstairs to Aunt Maria's room, only to find that kind-hearted soul stricken with a severe headache and unable to dress.

"Oh, auntie, why ever didn't you call me?" exclaimed Anne, laying her cool little fingers on the aching brow.

"You must never dandle. I'll soon be better," answered Aunt Maria. "If I could only sleep a short time. But there is so much to be done downstairs."

"Auntie!" said Anne, with determination, "I can do everything if you will tell me what to get for dinner. And then you can take a good rest and feel all right by afternoon."

Aunt Maria, with relieved sigh, gave a few directions, adding at the last, "and David loves rice pudding. So you can make a big one, and he can have it for supper, too."

It might have been two hours later that David, returning to the house as was his habit for a little lunch, heard a queer, choking noise in the kitchen. Hurriedly entering, he saw a slight figure huddled on the old sofa.

"Why, little Anne," he said, hurrying to her side, "what has happened?"

For a moment she lifted her tear-stained face and glistened despairingly toward the man who called her "Rice."

David looked wonderingly in the same direction. "I don't understand," he said. Anne's face was hidden on his broad shoulder now and he held her close.

"Why! Why!" she stammered in muffled tones, "Auntie asked me to make you a rice pudding—a big one. And I got her new ten-pound package and put it to look—and, oh, dear!" she was overcome now and could say no more. A look of understanding came suddenly to David's face. Over on the stove were kettles of rice, little kettles, big kettles, even the dispan had been called into service. He drew one long breath and then his pale face and hands were heard in the attic. Anne looked up indignantly, and tried to draw away.

It was at this juncture Aunt Maria appeared in the doorway, her headache bandage perched on one ear, bewildered in her eyes. On the old sofa sat her help blithely unconscious of being undone or dinner to be cooked. Late in the autumn, when they started on a happy wedding journey, David picked a few tiny particles from the folds of his wife's dainty suit.

"Look, little Anne," he said, "shall we save these for a pudding?"

(Copyright, 1919, McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

Hats That Interpret Autumn



If, in all the varied styles in millinery, there is a staple point in common, it is that fall hats interpret the season. They are rich, brilliant, generous trimmed, many of them superbly unusual, and they are refined. Three ultra-smart examples pictured in the group above may have been selected as exponents of the mode, but three hats selected at random would probably cover the same ideas. The hat at the right of the group is made of black satin ribbon, bordered with gold. The beret is mounted to a band of plain, straw ribbon, overlaid with two rows of gold-tinged ribbon, and this same ribbon makes the plaited pompon at the left. Work with this hat is an overblouse of silk voile made to match the hat by the addition of a collar and wide band of the embroidered ribbon. This hat might be named October.

A pretty velvet turban, with a hint of India in its shape and style, is of velvet that makes itself a background for clusters of grapes. These are made of satin, but then grapes of many varieties on autumn hats and metal tissues account for some of the most beautiful. Sometimes the colors are like those of nature and often they are entirely different. Besides the grapes a generous trimmer has allowed this rich turban a bow of narrow gold ribbon near the back.

A hat and a veil of equal importance, at the left of the group, is to be classed among the unusual and pleasing things that the autumn shopper is always seeking for. Perhaps this veil was made for the hat, or the hat was made for the veil; at any rate the design shows them to be inseparable. The small turban has a crown of tulle upon velvet and a hem of plain dark brown velvet that supports the veil. Straps of velvet, fastened down with metal ornaments, are brought down over the veil at the front, back and sides. Veils and hats have had their fortunes cast together on many a hat fall, where each would fall with the other, but together they make a success.

Julia Bottomley