

The Knife Throwers

By **FREDERIC VAN RENSSELAER DEY.**
Author of "Not Like Other Men," Etc.

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CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

BOTH were silent until the luncheon was finished—that is, silent regarding the subjects nearest to the thoughts of each. Maria, who had returned to her table as placidly as if nothing unusual had happened and whom Wyndham had warmly thanked for her part in the scene so lately enacted, had turned her back to them and was gazing out through the window at the carriages that were constantly passing to and fro.

"Now, Carmen," said Craig at last, "war is declared. I do not know what Escudera has got up his sleeve."

"A knife, doubtless," she interpolated, and Craig smiled and continued: "but I do not doubt that he has something. We have forced his hand, and I have not a doubt that he will at once endeavor to fix this crime that we know he committed upon me. Still, I have considerable time to act, so we need not make unnecessary haste. There are several things that I must know to complete the knowledge I already have, for I already know more about the history of your father and Burr than you think I do. I think the best way to get at what I require now will be to ask you a few questions. It will save time, and in that way we can get directly at the important points."

"I will reply to any question you will ask if it is one that I am informed about."

"Under what name did your father first visit Mexico?"

"Bridge. That is why my cards are inscribed Del Puente—of the bridge."

"Did your mother know his true name when they were married?"

"Yes. He never deceived her."

"Do you know why he went to Mexico under an assumed name?"

"Yes. Pancho, who was his servant and is now mine, has told me. A syndicate that had been formed by my father in New York met with disaster of some kind at the hands of the then Mexican government. He was known to the Mexicans by name only, and he went among them to investigate the affairs of the syndicate. In order to accomplish the task better he assumed a name at random. Bridge happened to be the one he selected. The government of Mexico was very unstable at that time. Life was not valued at a very high price—not much higher than their bonds, which were then worthless. There were national complications of some kind which I do not understand, but—"

"I know about that, Carmen, and I will tell you in a few words enough so that you will know what a really great man Robert Pendleton was. An American officer of the government was grossly insulted by the Mexican government. Your father might, by forming his own government of all he knew, have brought on difficulties between the two nations, which would probably have resulted in the downfall of Mexico, at that time torn by internal conflicts. Your mother plead for her country, and for love of her he not only kept silent, but he voluntarily relinquished a fortune, or what they would call these several fortunes. He did not return to Mexico for the same reason, because his life would not have been safe for a moment—because she begged him not to do so. She promised to come here to him, but she died. That much I have learned from documents that I found in Burr's safe. And here let me add: Burr knew that his father had married again in Mexico and that his wife had died. He did not know that there was a child, but he believed it probable, and that is why he left the property in trust to me, with private directions what to do. Now, Carmen, were you the only child of that marriage?"

"No." She cast down her eyes so that he could not meet her glance. "I had a twin brother."

"You had a twin brother? He is dead, then?"

"No; he lives, but I will not recognize him. Captain Romero, with whom Burr fought the duel, is my brother. He was born at the same time that I was born."

"My God! Brother against brother! What a fortunate thing it is that the duel did not terminate fatally! Did you know about it at the time?"

"Yes, and I tried to prevent. But for Pancho, my old servant, I would have done so. But for once in his life, and only once, I believe, Pancho betrayed me. But he hates Ignacio for his own sake and because he has been unkind to me. After Burr left Mexico he came to me and confessed what he had done. It was Pancho who drove my carriage yesterday, so you may know that I still trust him. He came to New York once with a message from my mother to my father, and he remained here a month. Now you understand how it is that he knows his way about the city."

"Then in a few words she related to Craig how she, having learned that there was to be a duel, determined to prevent it; how she sent a messenger to Burr requesting him to meet her in the garden at "Jenks"; how, falling to influence him and not daring at that time to betray the relations between them, she had her servants kidnap him on the road between Tacubaya and Chapultepec; how she kept him prisoner, and how Pancho liberated him and conducted him to the dueling ground; she told of her anxiety to get

him out of Mexico lest Ignacio Romero should have him assassinated.

"Was Ignacio aware of the relationship between him and Burr?" asked Craig.

"Yes; that is why he hated him so. He would never consent to bear the name of Bridge or Del Puente, but selected instead our mother's name, Romero. But if he could have killed Burr or have had him killed he would gladly have taken the name of Pendleton in order to inherit the property. My mother's family never forgave her for marrying an American and a heretic, as they styled my father. Their hatred fills the veins of Ignacio."

"Who is Captain Agramonte?"

"A very dear friend—one whom I esteem most highly. He has been a brother to me in many kindnesses. Ignacio and he are not friends, although there has never been an open rupture between them. I love him dearly."

She uttered the last sentence quite calmly, as one might speak of a favorite horse, and the sudden leap that Craig Wyndham's heart had given was not repeated.

"Now tell me about Escudera," he said.

"I have already told you that he is my cousin and my fiance. I can only add that he and Ignacio are inseparable friends. In fact, there are four friends in the group, and they are known as the "four duelists" throughout Mexico. They pass their time at the shooting gallery and in the gambling houses, and they are bound to-

gether by the ties of some secret society which, I believe, is inimical to the government, but I do not know. Ignacio is still bedridden with the wound he received from Burr. The remaining three came here to accomplish the death of Burr. How well they succeeded you know."

"Three?" exclaimed Craig. "Where, then, are the others?"

"They are in the city. They are not far from this spot at this moment. Between them they would have served you as Burr was served long before this only that they await the recovery of Ignacio so that he may be on hand to claim the estate. It is a tangled skein, Craig, but it is as clear to me as noonday."

"It begins to be clear to me also," he replied.

"Now that you have served Carlos as you have," she continued, and she smiled again when the scene recurred to her. "I do not think they will have the patience to wait. Certainly you are in constant peril. With a Mexican—that is, with such Mexicans as they are—vengeance comes before mercy."

"You have already told me," said Craig thoughtfully, ignoring her reference to his own danger, "that you are not in need of money—in short, that you are—rich. Did the property of your mother all descend to you?"

"No; Ignacio received the same that I did, but he has gambled his portion away until he has nothing. It was to demand money of me that he accosted me one day on the Paseo, when Burr interfered, and which was the real cause of the duel."

"That was the first time that Burr ever saw me," she added after a moment's pause.

"One word more about the property, Carmen. I know that there are estates in Mexico, in the state of Michoacan, which were in the hands of a man named Sepulveda, and I know that Burr's father in a letter directed him to go to Mexico and recover them. I know that Burr wrote to Sepulveda several times, or, rather, I wrote for him, and that no satisfactory replies were received. I also know that those properties were transferred by Sepulveda to Burr while he was there, for I have found copies of the papers relating to them, but I do not know any of the particulars. The real cause of Burr's trip was to find a brother or a sister; ostensibly it was to recover this property, for which he did not care a fig. Can you tell me anything about that?"

"Yes. Pancho knows about it and has told me. My father made my mother a very rich woman before he left Mexico, and he was thoughtful enough to place it all in United States government bonds in her name. He also possessed large estates in Michoacan, but those he did not dare, for some reason, to transfer directly to her. Therefore he made Senor Sepulveda the ostensible owner, with directions to transfer them to my mother whenever it was safe to do so and in the event of her death and his to his son in New York. Senor Sepulveda is a very conscientious man. It was his wish long ago to give the property to me, but he did not believe he had the right to do so. Ignacio knows nothing about those properties. It is the regret of my life, Craig, that I never saw my father—only his picture," she added pensively.

"What are the names of the two Mexicans who came here with Escudera?" asked Craig, suddenly changing the subject.

"Juan Rodriguez and Emilio Bustamante. Both are rather light complexioned and might readily pass for Americans, for they speak English fluently."

"Good!" exclaimed Craig, rising suddenly. "I know them both. I have seen them with Escudera twice when they did not see me. Now let us go. I will take you back to your hotel, and I want to see Pancho."

"He is there; but if you take him away I will not be safe a moment. I am afraid of Carlos."

"Carlos will be kicking his toes against iron bars before he is twenty-four hours older," replied Craig, with a frown.

"But he is crafty, and much may be accomplished in twenty-four hours. You must not leave me unprotected."

"Unprotected, Carmen? Unprotected? I will never leave you unprotected as long as I live if you will give me the right to protect you. Hush! Hush! That slipped out without permission, Carmelita; but I mean it. I mean it. It is too sudden, but I am a sudden fellow, and you must not mind. Have I frightened you, Carmen? Am I a great big brute? There; keep back your tears and forget that I said what I did."

She raised her glowing eyes to his and, looking deep into his own, replied: "I do not want to forget it. I want to remember it—always, Craig."

After that neither spoke during a full minute, but sat like two statues gazing into each other's eyes. What silent sentences passed between them then nobody will ever know. Presently Craig broke the silence.

"Come, Carmelita," he said gently; "we must go. There is so much to do, but I believe with it all that I am at this moment the happiest man on God's green earth. God has been good to me always, but better now than ever before, querida mia."

And when he turned around he for the first time that day discovered the old duenna looking at him, and she murmured so that the words just reached his hearing: "Esta bien, señor. Esta muy bien!"

HE WAS EXCUSED.

But the Taleman Bought the Escudera For Breeding Jerry Dey.

A young man whose features and flashing eyes betokened great earnestness was summoned before a judge of the city court the other day for jury duty. He immediately asked to be excused. When the judge asked him what excuse he had for not serving, he replied:

"I believe it is a rule of the court that the jury is the sole judge of the facts and the court of the law—that the juror should only weigh the facts as presented by the evidence, not taking into consideration any of the rules of law governing the case, wherefore all lawyers are exempt from jury duty."

"But are you a lawyer?" asked the judge.

"No, but I have been a close student of the law for many years."

"I am afraid that I cannot excuse you if you are not a lawyer," said the court, smiling.

"But," continued the young man, with great earnestness, the color mounting to his temples, "I am sure if your honor knew as much law as I do your conscience would not allow you to serve on a jury."

After the bench and bar had recovered from this naive outburst the judge told the young man that if it was a matter which affected his conscience so deeply he would excuse him, and a very much abashed youth left the courtroom.—New York Times.

The Scorpion's Wonderful Ear.

I have studied the habits of the scorpion for many years and have often noticed how very sensitive scorpions are to the most delicate sound, musical or otherwise. Under the thorax the scorpion has two comblike appendages, which are the antennae (pectinate). It is pretty well settled by physiologists and entomologists that in insects the antennae represent the organs of hearing. These delicate structures are easily affected by the vibrations of sound, and there can be no doubt whatever that they are also affected by sounds quite inaudible to the human ear.

The slightest vibration of the atmosphere from any cause whatever at once sets in motion the delicate structures which compose the antennae, so that organs insects owe the power of protecting themselves against danger as well as the means of recognizing the approach of one another—London Spectator.

Railways in Argentina.

"The railway system of Argentina," says a correspondent of the London Post, "is second to none in the world. Trains run at frequent intervals and punctually, especially the long distance trains. The rolling stock is excellent, and a long distance journey by rail is a luxury. The sleeping cars are sumptuously appointed, the permanent ways are well laid, and there is consequently very little jolting. It is possible to breakfast or dine in the trains as comfortably as in a hotel. The dining cars are well fitted up and beautifully decorated with flowers and pot plants. The food is properly cooked and tastefully served at any hour of the day or night, and, above all, the charges are extraordinarily low. Fares, too, are very low, so that traveling is an easy and a cheap matter."

A Look Ahead.

"Well, Charley, has your wedding day been set?"

"Yes, old chap. I had my fiancée agree to be married on her birthday."

"That does have a little romantic flavor."

"That wasn't the idea, you see. I was thinking that one present would answer for both anniversaries."—New York Herald.

DOCTOR AND PATIENT.

It Is Not Always Profitable to Tell the Plain Truth.

As a rule you can never take a woman at her word. A Louisville woman and her husband went east for recreation. It was their intention to interview a leading physician before they came back in order to get his opinion of the wife's health. She had been far from well and finally concluded nothing would satisfy her but the verdict of this medical celebrity.

Accordingly husband and wife called by appointment upon this specialist. "Now, doctor," said the woman, "I want your honest opinion. I like candor and don't wish to make the trip here to be told any falsehood about myself."

This sounded very open and courageous, so the expert went to work. He looked at her well, asked questions, made a minute examination of the case and finally inquired, "Did any doctor ever tell you you had so and so?"

"Only one—the horrid brute!" was the reply. "I have been to ten or twelve, and he was the only one who was so ignorant and rude as to tell me such a thing, and I discharged him at once."

"Discharged him!" exclaimed the expert. "Why, madam, he was the only one of the lot who told you the truth."—Louisville Times.

Fresh Water Sponges.

That certain sponges can do a great deal of harm is now maintained by a French scientist. According to him, the water supply of some cities and towns has been polluted by them, and the water supply of others may be polluted if steps are not taken to prevent it.

Sponges of this kind are found only in fresh water and are known as "coracuspungia." A close examination shows that each of the various parts of such a sponge is composed of three layers. First, there is a flattened layer of epithelial cells, which covers the outer surface; next, there is a digestive layer of cells, each of which is surrounded by a collar, from which projects a little thread or whip, and, finally, between these two there is a third layer, containing the reproductive cells as well as the spicules and fibers which form the skeleton.

In some sponges the spicules are composed of silica and in others of calcium carbonate.

After some time sponges of this type decay, and if the water inhabited by them is used for drinking purposes the pollution caused by them is likely, according to the French scientist, to prove injurious to the public health, and therefore he recommends that the water be cleared of such sponges whenever it is possible to do so.

There are sponges of this kind in many rivers and ponds in this country.

Mozart and Beethoven.

The stories of how men of genius have had future fame predicted for them in their early youth must generally be taken with a considerable grain of salt. As authentic as most is the account of the first meeting of Mozart with the young Beethoven, which took place on the latter's first visit to Vienna in the year 1787. Mozart, then at the height of his fame, asked him to play, but, thinking his performance a prepared piece, paid little attention to it. Beethoven, seeing this, untended Mozart to give him a subject, which he did, and the boy, getting excited with the occasion, played so finely that the composer of "Don Giovanni," stepping softly into the next room, said to his friends there: "Pay attention to him. He will make a noise in the world some day or another."—Chambers' Journal.

One Suspicious Sundowner.

Few people in England, remarks a London paper, who grow the sundowner for ornament have any idea of its usefulness. And then it proceeds thus to describe the sundowner on its native heath in the United States:

So much is this plant in oil that the seed of one of these monster plants will yield fifty gallons of oil, while the refuse of the seed after this quantity of oil has been expressed weighs 1,500 pounds when made into cattle cakes.

Three Classes.

Henry Thomas Buckle's thoughts and conversation were always on a high level. Once he remarked:

"Men and women range themselves into three classes of orders of intelligence. You can tell the lowest class by their habit of always talking about persons, the next by the fact that their habit is always to converse about things, the highest by their preference for the discussion of ideas."

An Epitaph.

In a cemetery in Trumbull county, O., there is a tombstone on which the following epitaph, composed by the son of the deceased, is inscribed:

Here lies our father beneath the sod His spirit is gone to meet his God. We never more shall hear his tread Nor see the wag upon his head.

How He Emphatically St.

Stephen—So it is all over with Miss Dotter. How did it happen that she threw you over?

James—I don't know for certain, but I suspect it was because she wasn't hopelessly in love with me.—Exchange.

Fellow Feeling.


Mrs. Meeks—How do you know that stranger you were talking to is a married man? Did he say he was?

Meeker—No, but he looked sort of sympathetic when I told him I was.—Chicago News.

Some people can be made to believe anything except that they don't know everything.—Arlinson Globe.

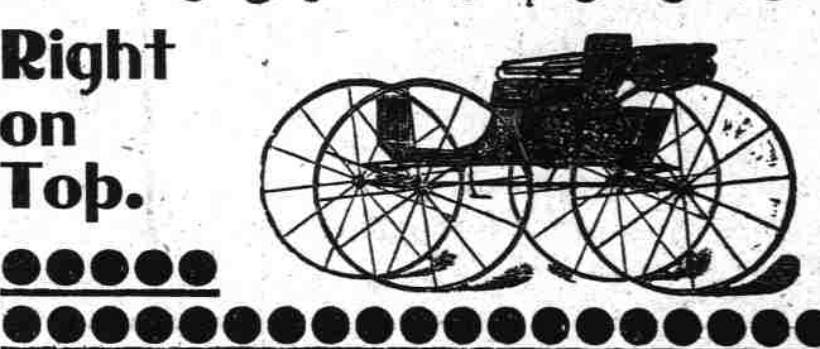
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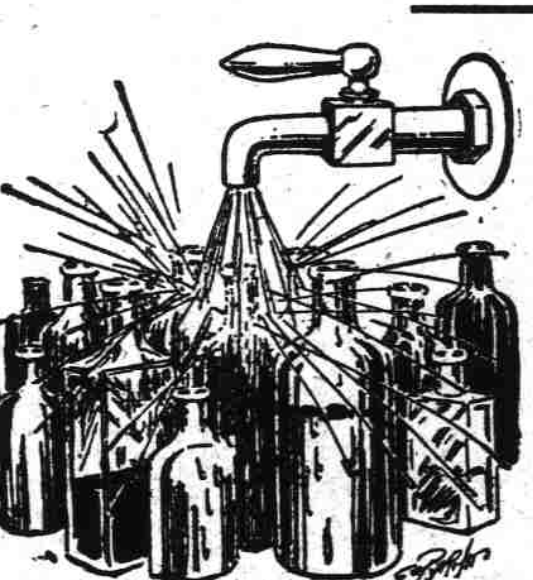
only for her house keeping ability does an unjust thing to himself, and certainly does not know

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Walk In, You'r Next.

Shave, Hair Cut or Shampoo?

Never come to our door and turn away. "Now is the accepted time." Lots and lots of times men come and just open the door, loo in and say, "I'll be back later," when, if they were to come in and take a seat could probably have their work done before they could walk back to their business.

FIRST-CLASS BARBERS AND SHARP RAZORS.

J. B. Ferebee, MAIN STREET.

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