A CAPTAIN UNAFRAID

PART IV. Narrated by CAPTAIN JOHN O'BRIEN to HORACE SMITH

WHEN I returned to New York after having landed General Garcia and the Bermuda's cargo of arms in Cuba without mishap of any kind, I found Mr. Palma and his associates enthusiastic. They insisted that I become a part of their organization and remain with them until the close of the war, and I finally gave them my word that I would do so. This decision was prompted by nothing but sympathy with the cause for which they were fighting and the love of adventure; for their treasury was always too low to permit any large salaries, and I could have made much more money as a pilot.

If I had not had a wife and family to provide for, I might have served without pay; but I had to consider them. It was agreed that one hundred dollars should be sent to them every month, which would cover their expenses, as I owned my own home, and that I would be paid three hundred dollars for every expedition I landed. This latter, I may add, was not always paid, when funds were unavailable; but that did not in any degree lessen my enthusiasm. When it is remembered that the owners of the tugboats we used were paid ten thousand dollars for every cargo that was shipped on them, whether or not it was landed in Cuba, and that they risked only property, at a very high premium, while I risked my life repeatedly, for practically nothing in the way of financial reward, I think it will be conceded that I contributed something toward the freedom of Cuba.

I was appointed Navigator for the Department of Expeditions, which was reorganized by General Nuñez and made a really effective instrument. The other members of it were José Eliseo Cartaya and Pablo Rojo, aides; Laureano Prado and Frank Pagluchi, engineers; and Justo Carillo, secretary to General Nuñez. Colonel Federico Perez Carbo was included for a time.

CARTAYA was one of the real heroes of the war, and one of those who sacrificed most for their country. He was with me on practically all my expeditions, and a better or braver companion no man could want. Often have I seen him in handgrips with death; but never have I known him to flinch or falter. He cared no more for whistling bullets than for a pattering rain. He was born in Matanzas, that home of the rugged old Canary Islanders whence came many of the best Cubans, and in 1876, when only eighteen years old, was arrested, along with eight or ten others, for taking part in a revolutionary conspiracy, incident to the Ten Years' War. On account of his youth, and the fact that he could not be made to talk, either about himself or the others, he was eventually released; but his friend Carlos Lopez, who was one of the chief conspirators, was sentenced to death.

After all efforts to secure his release had failed, Cartaya adopted a most daring method to effect his liberation. He joined the Spanish Volunteers, who did guard duty at all Government buildings, including the prisons. The volunteers were composed of Cubans who were loyal to Spain. They were more bitter and more brutal than the Spaniards themselves, and were the more cordially hated by the rest of the Cubans. Therefore, there was much cursing of Cartaya when he became one of them. His real purpose was not suspected, and he was made a Corporal as a reward for his supposed change of heart.

He had to wait several months before he found an opportunity to carry out his plan. Then the Sergeant of the guard was taken sick one evening, and Cartaya was in command of the squad stationed at the prison in which his friend was confined. He went to the prison and started to take Lopez out, explaining that he was taking him to see his family and would return with him before morning. The sentry who was on post at the door of the jail refused to allow the removal of Lopez; so Cartaya had him locked up in the guardhouse for disobedience of orders and posted a new sentry who had more respect for his superior officer. To insure a less vigorous search he also released, on the same pretext, a brother of Florence Beralta, the Captain of the Rural District, who was locked up for some minor offense.

Cartaya and Lopez lost themselves in the hills, and ten days later, at a distant point, were spirited aboard a schooner bound for New Orleans. Cartaya went to New York, and for ten years was employed by one of the largest cigar firms in the city. Then he moved to Tampa as manager of one of the principal factories, with an interest in the profits.

When he disappeared from Matanzas, with Lopez, a reward of five thousand dollars was offered for his capture, and he was sentenced, by default, to twelve years in prison. The general amnesty that ended the Ten Years' War did not cover Cartaya, as he was a deserter from the army, and it took more than ten years of hard work on the part of his father to procure a special pardon for him from the Queen Regent of Spain. Immediately on the issuance of this pardon he took out his final papers as an American citizen. Subsequently he visited his old home; but refused to live in Cuba so long as it was under the Spanish flag.

When the last revolution was launched he was making more than ten thousand dollars a year; but he at once resigned his position and offered Palma his services, without pay. He was assigned to the Department of Expeditions, where he served with such distinction that at the close of the war he was the only man whom Palma recommended to the War Department for a position in Cuba, under the American occupation. He was made an inspector of customs at Havana, and was rapidly promoted until he was appointed Collector of the Port by General Wood. After abolishing graft and putting the service on a high plane of efficiency, he resigned to go into business for himself.

MADE up of such men, it was natural that the Department of Expeditions should accomplish what it set out to do. We had our own agents at different points, and our own method of communicating with one another. It was all very simple, but also very effective in preventing any of our plans from becoming known in advance to men who might betray them. Our secret cipher code, which was used for both telegraphic and mail correspondence, was based on a lot of pocket dictionaries, all exactly alike, which we picked up at an old bookstore. In deciphering a message one would look up the code word in his dictionary, and then turn to the word in the same position on the second page following, which would be the true word. This system permitted any number of changes in the positions of the two words. The key was carried in our heads so the loss of a dictionary could reveal no secrets, nor even suggest any, though it could cause inconvenience. I lost mine once in Wilmington, North Carolina, just as I was preparing to get an expedition away, and had to go back into the bush and hide until a new one was sent me by a messenger.

When two men were sent out separately, by different routes, with instructions to meet at a certain time and place, each of them was given half a card that had been torn in two so as to leave irregular edges. The matching of these halves served to identify the men, who often were strangers to each other, and vouched for each to the other.

By these and other similar methods, suggested by some experience in baffling detectives, we guarded against the successful operation of the spies who were constantly at our heels. From the day that I returned from the Bermuda expedition until after the United States declared war against Spain, my home was watched night and day by at least two detectives, and for part of the time by four. They never bothered us much except when they sought to pry into the privacy of my home life by peering through the shutters at night. Mrs. O'Brien rather broke them of that bad habit when she "inadvertently" threw a pot of boiling water over one of them when she heard him sneaking round in the dark on the back porch.

My son Fisher, as brave and brainy a boy as ever lived, evolved a scheme for beating the detectives at their own game which caused them a lot of worry. Every time I went to New York, Fisher would follow me by the next train, with an understanding as to where he would find me when he arrived. The detectives who were watching the house, and whom I knew by sight, trailed me to the city, where, having telephoned ahead that we were coming, they turned me over to two new men, who were supposed to follow me wherever I went.

I would lead the strangers on an aimless walk about town until I was sure Fisher had spotted them, and then drop in at some convenient saloon. They would soon line up at the other end of the bar. Then Fisher would come in and, standing close beside me but without giving any sign of recognition, order a drink. When he was waiting for it he would whisper, "The one in the brown hat and the fellow on his right with the black mustache," or whatever description fitted the pair.

Knowing my men, it was easy for me to lose them, if I had anything on hand I did not wish them to know about; for there were a number of places I sometimes visited that had means of egress beyond the ken of any sleuth. If I was in the city merely for some routine conference with the Cubans and did not care whether or not I was followed, I would often go up to the detectives and buy them a drink and tell them where I was going. Their chagrin, when they saw that I knew them, was highly amusing. They were always puzzled to know how I picked them up so quickly; but, though they never suspected it, all of the credit was due to Fisher. The detectives and spies were active enough to earn all they were paid; but they never found out anything I was not willing they should know.

Then Fisher Would Stand Beside Me without Any Sign of Recognition.

ON July 27, 1896, just as we had the department well organized and were preparing to get down to business, President Cleveland issued his second neutrality proclamation, which was much more vigorous than the one that had preceded it a year before. In it "citizens of the United States and others within their jurisdiction" were warned to abstain from violating the neutrality laws by contributing in anyway to the armed resistance to the established Government of Spain then prevailing in the Island of Cuba. They were notified that they must not furnish arms to the rebels nor aid in the transportation of any military expeditions, and that all violations of the law would be vigorously punished. To that end the coöperation of "all good citizens" was invoked, and all executive officers of the United States were enjoined to "use the utmost diligence in preventing, prosecuting, and punishing infractions thereof."

This plain spoken pronunciamento assured us that we could expect nothing but active hostility from Washington; but we had counted on nothing else. Neither Mr. Cleveland nor Mr. McKinley, who succeeded him, was influenced in the slightest degree by public sympathy for the Cubans. They complied with both the letter and the spirit of the law, and did everything in their power to prevent and punish filibustering. If, in their unofficial hearts, they wished well of the brave fight that was being made to establish a sister Republic in Cuba, they concealed that senti-

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