

## A CASTLE IN SPAIN.

### CHAPTER LI.

WHICH TELLS OF A REUNION OF VERY  
DEAR OLD FRIENDS.

WHILE Brooke and Talbot were thus conversing, others were indulging in the same occupation, and none to better purpose than Harry and Katie.

No one can say that Katie had not been very severely tried, and had not passed through a most distressing ordeal. Apart from the long trial of mind which had pre-

might rest, supported by Harry's encircling arm, and at the same time be refreshed by the fresh air. Katie now began to rally with the rapidity which is characteristic of buoyant natures, and soon showed something of her usual lightness of heart. Harry, however, though most tender and affectionate, seemed changed, and the change was soon detected by Katie's quick perception.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked. "You don't seem glad at all."



"THEY RETREATED TO A RUDE BENCH, UPON WHICH THEY SEATED THEMSELVES."—[SEE PAGE 862.]

ceded that eventful morning, the circumstances of the final scene were enough to shake stronger nerves than those of Katie. So completely was she prostrated that, under any other circumstances, nothing could have saved her from a fit of sickness, which might possibly have resulted in brain-fever, and terminated fatally; but fortunately, under the actually existing circumstances, she was spared all this. The presence of Harry made all the difference in the world.

After retiring from the scene of conflict they ascended into that upper chamber in which Katie had last been imprisoned, and here they seated themselves so that Katie

"Oh yes," said Harry, "I'm very glad indeed."

He spoke in a doleful tone of voice, which was by no means in accord with his words.

"Your voice don't sound very glad," said Katie, reproachfully, "and you look troubled. You are so preoccupied that you can't say anything. But I suppose you feel the effects of that awful scene—and oh, how awful it was!"

Katie relapsed into silence, and Harry felt somewhat relieved; for in truth he was preoccupied, and had much on his mind.

It was the thought of Talbot that filled



"THE JOVIAL MONARCH CAUGHT MRS. RUSSELL'S HAND IN HIS, AND PROCEEDED TO DANCE."—[SEE PAGE 870.]

his mind. It was she whom he had seen in that priest's disguise. It was his affianced bride, whom he had lost, and now at last found! Found! Great Heaven! and here! and thus! Here—when he was ready to die for Katie; when he was now with Katie, who had turned to him from all the world!

Was he a man of honor? Honor! The word now seemed a mockery. Which way would honor impel him? To give up Katie? What! when she had given up all for him? What! when he had faced death in quarrel with Ashby for her? Honor! Was not honor due to Ashby? and had he not been a traitor to his friend?

There was this fight yet before him, and it would be soon; for Ashby was free. A fight for Katie! And Talbot was here!

She would know all. And she—she who had come all the way from England, who had found him not, who had imagined herself deserted—she would learn of his perfidy. The thought was horrible.

Upon such agonizing thoughts as these came Katie's question:

"Why are you so sad?"

Harry sighed.

"I'm thinking of Ashby," said he. "He's free now. He'll soon find you."

At this Katie tapped with her foot nervously.

"Well," said she, "if you are thinking of him, it's very bad taste to say so. I wasn't thinking of him at all."

But this remark seemed to set Katie off thinking about Ashby, for she too seemed preoccupied.

"I think it's a great shame," said she.

"What?"

"Why, for Mr. Ashby to come bothering me just now."

Harry said nothing, and they both relapsed once more into silence.

The harder task was before Harry. There were two for him to face. One, the friend to whom he had been a traitor; the other, his betrothed, to whom he had been false. Of these two the latter was by far the worse. He had faced Ashby already, and could face him again, as a mortal enemy, to fight a mortal battle; but Talbot! Ah! with what eyes could he look upon that pure and noble face? with what words could he address her?

Katie's thoughts seemed to be running in that channel which Harry was using for his own, for she suddenly looked at him with earnest scrutiny, and said, abruptly,

"But you are as bad."

"As bad?"

"As bad as I."

Harry sighed.

"Mr. Ashby," said Katie, innocently, "will want to see you too, you know."

"Of course," said Harry.

"Oh, well, then," said Katie, "I needn't see him at all. You can explain it all; for really I hardly know what I can possibly find to say to him."

"I'm afraid," said Harry, "that he will insist on seeing you, and on learning his fate from your own lips."

"His fate!" said Katie—"oh dear!"

"I would take all the difficulty from you if I could," said Harry, "but I don't see how I can."

"Oh, well," said Katie, cheerfully, "perhaps he will not be in any very great hurry to see me, after all. He did not seem very anxious about me in the room below. *He* did not look like a maniac. *He* did not remonstrate with Lopez. *He* did not draw his pistol and attack the captain in the midst of his men. *He* did not fight for me, and risk his life. No; he thought too much of his own dear self, and left all the fighting and all the risk to one who is worth far more than ten thousand Ashbys! And that's what I'll tell him!" said Katie. "Let me see him now, while all this is fresh in my memory. Come, Harry, let us wait no longer, but if this meeting has to be, let it be now."

Katie poured forth these words in an impetuous torrent, and, starting up, led the

way out. Harry followed, and thus they descended the stairway to the lower hall.

Ashby had gone out shortly after Harry and Katie, following Dolores, who was anxious to see about the gates. The six Carlists followed. The gates were wide open, and far away a few of the fugitives could still be seen flying as fast as their feet could carry them. The six Carlists soon had the gates firmly closed and barred, and mounted guard here, deeming this to be the weak point of the castle; and thinking, too, that if an enemy appeared, he would consider six men at the gate a sign that six hundred were in the garrison.

Russell had followed the six Carlists, thinking that with them he would be safer than anywhere else. Rita had now a horror of those Carlists whom she had betrayed, and, as he thought, would venture anywhere rather than into their presence.

And now the good man felt quite martial. This new change in his situation, and the inspiring presence of his military friends, made him determine to get rid of that odious disguise which Rita had furnished him. He proceeded, therefore, to divest himself of it.

The Carlists had not noticed him thus far, and had not at all recognized him. Great was their surprise when they saw this "woman" tearing off her outer robe; but far greater was it when they saw the marvellous transformation of a commonplace woman into a resplendent general officer all in blue and gold.

A murmur ran through them, partly of amusement, partly of approval.

One of them addressed him.

Russell shook his head.

"He is a French general," said one; "he doesn't understand us. Can't some one speak French?"

No one could.

One of them then ran inside and brought out a sword, with belt, etc., which he handed to the "French general." Russell took it, and after some trouble succeeded in buckling the martial gear around him. Then, by way of an additional safeguard against his enemy, he drew his sword, and taking his seat on a stone near the gate, glared watchfully around.

Dolores and Ashby had much to talk of, but Dolores was too prudent to waste time on mere explanations. There was yet very much to be done. Above all, they must now consider how they were to get out of

the castle. After all, as far as she could see, their position had changed little, if at all, for the better. The enemy would rally. They would be attacked. No defense was possible. They would soon be prisoners or fugitives. And if they were to fly, how could they hope to escape in a country swarming with roving bands of marauders belonging to both parties? The problem was a difficult one, and one which was not to be solved very readily.

At length Dolores thought of the wounded men, and as she had a very tender heart, she proposed to go and help them. The two then returned and entered the castle.

They reached the hall at the very time when the other parties were coming into it—namely, Brooke and Talbot from the room, and Harry and Katie from the upper regions. Such coincidences are frequent in real life, and still more frequent in our "Castles in Spain."

As Brooke and Talbot came out, Ashby and Dolores, advancing toward the room, met them face to face. Brooke and Dolores looked upon one another. There was the flash of mutual recognition in the faces of both. Brooke seemed struck dumb. Dolores was the first to speak.

"Raleigh!" she said, in tones of amazement and consternation.

"Dolores!" said Brooke, in a deep, hollow voice.

Brooke was ghastly; but this may have been the effect of the recent shock. As for Dolores, every trace of color fled from her face, and she was as white as marble.

Talbot heard this and saw it. These words, these familiar names, smote her to the heart. She recollected the story which Brooke had told her. She remembered the name of that Cuban maid. It was this—it was "Dolores!" Was this she?

She looked around in despair.

At that moment, as her despairing eyes wandered around, they fell full upon the face of Harry, for Harry and Katie, on descending the stairs, had on this instant reached the spot.

Harry saw her again.

The priest's dress was removed. She stood in her own garb, her very self—Talbot—with all her noble face revealed, and all her exquisite grace of feature and of form.

"Sydney!" said he.

"Harry!" said Talbot.

Katie heard this. She turned pale. All

her thoughts fled from her; she shrank back, and stood staring. But one thought now remained—the thought suggested by that name, Sydney. Well she remembered that name, and all the incidents of that story which Harry had told her when they were first acquainted: the wreck of the ship; the maiden deserted and despairing; her rescue by Harry; their escape in the boat; their love; their plighted faith; the appointed marriage; the lost bride.

Sydney! It was she herself—the promised bride of Harry, whom he would, no doubt, be required to wed at once.

Now she understood why Harry had been so preoccupied.

## CHAPTER LII.

IN WHICH A NUMBER OF PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES IN A VERY EMBARRASSING SITUATION.

BROOKE and Dolores stood facing one another in silence. The embarrassment was most painful. Each felt it too much to be able to notice it in the other, and each instinctively avoided the glance of the other's eyes, casting only looks of a furtive kind at the other's face, and then hastily looking elsewhere. In fact, the situation was truly horrible.

But Brooke felt it incumbent on him to say something; he also felt anxious to vindicate his honor, if such a thing were, indeed, in any way possible. But ardent words, excited, eager welcomes, and all those other circumstances that usually attend upon the meeting of long-divided lovers were in this case clearly impossible. Brooke felt Talbot's presence—Talbot, who was worth to him ten thousand like Dolores; so he could only take refuge in the most commonplace conventionalities. It is true, Talbot could not understand Spanish, but Talbot could understand those tones of voice which form the universal and natural language of man; and if Brooke had felt ever so full of eager delight, he would have hesitated to manifest it under such very delicate circumstances.

At length Brooke cleared his throat.

"This," said he, in a solemn tone—"this is indeed an unexpected pleasure."

Dolores sighed.

"It is indeed, señor," she replied, "an unexpected, a most unexpected one."



"It is indeed," said Brooke, in quite a helpless way.

Saying this, he held out his hand. Dolores held out hers. They shook hands. Then they cast hasty looks at one another.

"I hope you have been quite well?" said Brooke.

"Oh, quite," said Dolores; "and you, señor?"

"Oh, very well," said Brooke, "very well indeed."

And now another pause succeeded. Both of them were horribly embarrassed. Each had the same feeling, but neither one knew the feeling of the other. Each knew that a change had occurred, but neither knew that the same change had been experienced by the other. Brooke knew himself false, but thought Dolores true, while Dolores had a similar feeling. Besides, this new love which each had conceived and cherished made the old one seem a mistake—made them regard each other with aversion, and this meeting as a calamity; yet each felt bound to conceal these feelings, and exhibit toward the other an impossible cordiality. All this caused a wretched embarrassment and restraint, which each felt, and for which each took the blame, thinking the other altogether true and innocent.

The deep feelings of the past were yet strong in their hearts—the immediate past—and with these their hearts were full. Yet these had to be concealed. Each felt bound to the other by a solemn vow, and by every principle of duty and honor. They had exchanged vows of love and eternal fidelity. From such vows who could release them? Yet the vows were already broken by each, and of this each was conscious. Had Brooke met Dolores before this last scene with Talbot, he might have felt self-reproach, but he could not have felt such a sense of unworthiness. For before that he had, at least, kept a watch upon his tongue, and in words, at least, he had not told his love for another. But now his word had gone forth, and he had pledged himself to another.

But he had to say something. Dolores was silent. He thought she was waiting for him to explain.

"I—I," he stammered—"I have hunted—hunted you—all through Spain."

This was the truth, for Brooke had been faithful to Dolores until he had met with Talbot.

Dolores was conscious-smitten by this proof of her former lover's fidelity. She hastened to excuse herself somehow.

"I—I," she said, with an embarrassment equal to that of Brooke—"I thought you were in America."

"No; I was in Cuba."

"I thought I had lost you," said Dolores: "you ceased to write."

This sounded like the reproach of a faithful lover. Brooke felt hurt.

"Oh no," said he; "I wrote, but you ceased to answer."

"I thought something had happened," said Dolores.

"I thought so too," said Brooke. "I never got your letters. Where did you go?"

Dolores jumped at this question as giving a chance of relief. So she began to give a long account of her life in Spain, detailing minute incidents, and growing gradually calmer, more self-possessed, and more observant of Brooke. She saw with satisfaction that Brooke made no demonstrations; yet her satisfaction was checked by the thought that perhaps he was deterred from exhibiting the raptures of a lover by the presence of others—by the fear that he had been only too true, and that those raptures would yet be exhibited. She resolved that he should not have an opportunity. Yet how could she avoid him? And thus she thought, and still she went on talking.

The effect of her story was a crushing one. She made no mention of Ashby, and Brooke concluded that she had been true, while he had been false. And now what was he? Clearly false. Could he come back to Dolores? Could he be what he had been? Could he give up Talbot? The thought was intolerable. Never had any one been to him so dear as Talbot. Never had Talbot been to him so dear as now. And yet was he not in honor bound to Dolores? Honor! and did not honor bind him to Talbot?

Such was the struggle within this unhappy man.

Almost at the same time Harry and Talbot had recognized each other.

Talbot, who had stood unmoved at the presence of death, now felt herself quail and grow all unnerved at the presence of Harry. But then she had been strengthened by her new love for Brooke; now she was weakened by the remembrance of her lost love for Harry. This was an ordeal

for which there was no outside inspiration. The remembrance of her passionate words to Brooke, so lately uttered, so ardently answered, was strong within her. And yet here was one who held her promise, who could claim her as his own, who could take her away from Brooke; and what could she do?

Harry, on the other hand, had dared death for Katie; for her he had tried to fling away his life. This had been done in the presence of his Sydney. Had she understood that? She could not have understood it. Could he explain? Impossible! Could he tell the story of his falsity to this noble lady, whom he had professed to love, whom he had come also to revere? And this proud, this delicately nurtured girl had come from her home for his sake, to suffer, to risk her life, to become a miserable captive! Was there not in this a stronger reason than ever why he should be true to her? And yet, if he loved another better, would it not be wrong to marry Sydney?

All the tenderness of his heart rose up within him in one strong, yearning thought of—Oh, Katie! But all his honor, his pride, his manliness, all his pity, too, and his sympathy, made themselves felt in a deep under-tone of feeling—oh, Sydney! true and faithful!

At last he was able to speak.

"Oh, Sydney," said he, "what bitter, bitter fortune has brought you here to this horrible place—to so much misery?"

Talbot looked down. She could not look in his face. She felt unworthy of him. He seemed faithful still. She had seen the act of his in attacking Lopez, but had not understood it. She thought him faithful in spite of all.

"Bitter," said she, slowly. "Bitter; yes, bitter indeed—bitter was the fortune that brought me here!"

She could say no more. She was thinking only of that bitter fortune which had brought her to a place where she might be forever torn from Brooke; where Brooke, too, had found one who might tear him from her.

But Harry understood this differently. He detected in these words a reflection upon himself. He thought she alluded to her long journey to him, when she had come so far, and had reached her destination only to find him absent; when she had waited for days without finding any trace of him or hearing any word from

him, and at last had turned about on her lonely homeward road. And yet he was blameless then. As far as that was concerned he could excuse himself; he could explain all. He felt so guilty in some things that he was anxious to show his innocence in other things where he had not been to blame; and so he hastened most eagerly to give a long and an eloquent vindication of himself by explaining all about his journey to England, and his return to Barcelona, and his search after her, which had led him to this.

And in all this Talbot found only proofs of Harry's unalterable fidelity. He had been true! She had been false! What now was there for her to do? To sacrifice this man? What! after such love and loyalty? Or, on the other hand, to give up Brooke! Brooke!—give up Brooke! Oh, heavens! How was that possible? Would she not rather die than give up Brooke? When her own words to him were fresh in her memory, and when his words of love to her were still ringing in her ears—at such a moment as this could she think of giving up Brooke?

Such were the thoughts and feelings of these two.

Meanwhile Ashby, finding himself left alone by Dolores, stood for a while wondering who her friend might be; until at length, finding that she was beginning to give him a detailed history of her life, he looked around in despair. And he saw Katie standing alone, where she had been left by Harry, near the foot of the stairway; and as all the others were engaged in their own affairs, and, moreover, as his relations with Katie were of the most intimate kind, he saw no other course open to him than to approach her and converse with her. And at that moment he remembered that Katie had in her possession—perhaps in her pocket—a certain letter which he had written to her only a few days before, full of protestations of love, in which he informed her that he was going to travel with her in the same train, in the hope of seeing her at Burgos or Bayonne; in which he urged her to come to him, to be his wife; to set at defiance her hostile guardian, and to unite herself with him. This seemed strange to him now, when his mind was filled with thoughts of Dolores, and his heart was full of the love of Dolores. Even his resentment against her had passed away. She had allowed herself to in-

dulge in a flirtation with his friend Rivers. Was that a crime? He, on the other hand, had lost all love for her, and had given all his heart to Dolores. Katie seemed to him now not repugnant as a false one, but merely pitiable as a weak, child-like character. The falsity now seemed rather on his part than on hers. He believed that Harry had gone much farther in treachery than Katie. Katie, he thought, was merely a weak-minded flirt, while Harry had become a traitor in allowing himself to fall in love with her. Even for Harry he could now make some allowances; and since he had found out his own feelings, he had less jealousy, and therefore less resentment against his former friend. As for jealousy, if he now had that feeling, it was all directed elsewhere, namely, toward that stranger whose sudden appearance had so engrossed Dolores.

In such a state of mind as this Ashby advanced toward Katie. Now Katie had come down with the express purpose of seeing him, and with her mind full of a very pretty speech which she intended to make to him. But the sudden meeting of Harry with Talbot had raised other thoughts and feelings, which had driven her pretty speech altogether out of her mind. A bitter jealousy afflicted her tender heart. This lady was the Sydney Talbot of whom he had told her, and who had come all the way from England on this perilous journey to marry him. Would she now give him up? Impossible! And how could Harry escape her?

As Ashby approached, Katie therefore had but little thought for him. Ashby also thought less of her than of Dolores. Who was this stranger? he thought. Why was he so familiar? Why did Dolores leave him so abruptly? and why was she telling to this stranger the whole story of her life?

Thus Ashby and Katie met again.

Ashby had to say something, and so, as was natural, he took refuge in conventionalities.

"I hope," said he, "that no ill effects have arisen from this recent excitement."

"Oh no," said Katie, in an abstracted tone. She was trying to listen to Talbot's words. They did not sound pleasant.

Ashby also was trying to listen to Dolores. She seemed to him to be altogether too familiar.

"I'm very glad," said Ashby. "I was

afraid that this excitement might have an injurious effect."

(Dolores was still giving an account of herself. It was unworthy of her!)

"Oh no," said Katie, "not at all."

She heard Harry speak in an apologetic manner. It was very hard to bear. Would he leave her for this lady?

There was now a pause.

Ashby and Katie were both listening with all their might to hear what was said by Dolores and by Harry respectively.

Ashby felt the necessity of saying something.

"Very fine weather," said he.

"Oh, very fine," said Katie.

"A fine moon."

"Oh, very fine."

At this mention of the moon each thought of those moonbeams which had streamed in through the narrow windows on those past few nights—nights so memorable to each; and each thought of them with the same feelings.

Ashby tried to find something new to say. He thought of the position in which they all were—its danger—their liability to recapture—the necessity of flight, and yet the difficulty of doing so—things which he and Dolores had just been considering.

"This," said he, "is a very embarrassing position."

Katie by this understood him to mean the relations which they bore to one another, and which had become somewhat confused by her affair with Harry. She thought this was Ashby's way of putting it.

She sighed. She looked at Harry and Talbot. They seemed coming to an understanding. Harry was certainly making an explanation which seemed unnecessarily long. And here was Ashby hinting at an explanation with herself. She had forgotten all her fine speeches with which she had come down. She knew not what to say. She only felt a jealous fear about Harry, and another fear about an explanation with Ashby.

Ashby meanwhile thought nothing about Katie, but was full of eagerness to learn what was going on between Dolores and Brooke.

There were three couples involved in this awkward situation, and among them all it is difficult to say which was most embarrassed. It was bad enough to meet with the old lover, but it was worse to

feel that the eye of the new lover was upon them. Moreover, each new lover felt jealous of the old one; and the mind of each had thus to be distracted between two discordant anxieties. In short, it was, as Ashby had well said, a most embarrassing situation.

Suddenly, in the midst of all this, a figure entered the hall which attracted all eyes. It was a figure of commanding presence; a man rather elderly, in the uniform of a general officer, all ablaze with gold. There was a universal shock at such an apparition. The first thought of every one was that the castle had been captured by some new enemy—that this was the leader, and that they all were prisoners.

But one by one, to Ashby, Harry, Brooke, to Katie, Talbot, and Dolores, came the recognition of the fact that under this magnificent exterior lay concealed the person of their companion and friend, the venerable and the virtuous Russell.

"I want to look after something," said he; and with these words he went into the room where he had first been confined—namely, the one opposite to that in which the recent ceremony had taken place.

### CHAPTER LIII.

#### HOW HARRY AND KATIE DISCUSS THE SITUATION, AND ASHBY TELLS DOLORES HER DUTY.

THE sudden appearance of Russell broke the spell which had rested upon all.

Talbot was the first to make a movement.

"Excuse me for a few moments," said she. "There are some wounded men inside who are in my care. I came out to get some water for them. I must make haste."

Saying these words, she left Harry, and went to the corner of the apartment where there was a jar of water. Filling a vessel from this, she returned to the wounded.

Harry did not follow her.

Upon seeing this movement of Talbot, Katie withdrew from Ashby. Ashby did not seem to notice this, for he was still watching Dolores.

Dolores now remarked to Brooke that she was just at that time engaged in looking after the defenses of the castle, for

there was serious danger of an immediate attack by the enemy.

At this Brooke said nothing, but merely bowed, and followed Talbot to help her with the wounded men.

Dolores, upon this, cast a glance at Ashby and went out. Ashby immediately followed her.

Upon this Harry approached Katie. Neither said a word, but, acting on one common impulse, they went upstairs together into the upper hall. As they thus went up, Russell came out of the other room, and seeing them ascending the stairs, he followed them.

On reaching the top of the stairs Harry and Katie stood, and Russell also stopped a little below. He wasn't proud. He was anxious for information. So he stood and listened to what they had to say.

The two stood there in silence for some time, until at length Katie spoke.

"Isn't this horrible?" said she, with a heavy sigh.

Harry gave another sigh responsive to hers.

"It's worse," said Katie, "than ever."

Harry, with another sigh, allowed that it was.

"I can't stay here," said Katie, "in this place, and what's more, I won't stay. I'm free now, and I've made up my mind to go away."

"Will you?" said Harry, in an eager voice.

"Yes, I will," said Katie, decidedly; "and I'll go all alone. You needn't come; for of course you'll stay."

"Stay?" said Harry—"stay? and here? when you've gone away?"

"Oh yes," said Katie, "of course you'll stay here with your dear Sydney!"

Harry sighed.

"But *I* won't stay," continued Katie, after another pause; "I'm going to leave; and I'll walk back to the railway all alone."

"I think that would be a capital idea," said Harry, in a tone of great animation.

At this Katie burst into tears.

Harry was now quite distracted. He caught her in his arms and kissed her over and over again.

"You don't understand," said he. "I mean it would be a good idea to go; but, of course, you shall not go alone."

"Yes, I will go alone," said Katie—"all alone. You don't care for me, now that you've got your Sydney. You don't care for me a bit!"



"Care for you!" cried Harry; "you're the only one, Katie, in all the world that I do care for."

Katie struggled away from his encircling arms.

"No," said she, "you're not speaking the truth. You'll leave me, and say those same words to your Sydney."

"Bother Sydney!" cried Harry, in unfeigned vexation.

At this Katie, whose head had been for a moment averted, now turned her tearful eyes on him, and Harry once more took her in his arms.

"But do you, after all," said she—"do you, after all, care for me just a little bit, Harry?"

"Care for you!" cried Harry, with headlong impetuosity. "I swear, Katie, that I love you better than all the world. I will give up everything for you. Will you do as much for me?"

"Why—why, how can I help it?" said Katie.

At this reply Harry kissed her again.

"You—you offered your life for me," said Katie, in tearful agitation, "and didn't I almost give my life for you, you dear old boy? You don't know all yet. You don't know that it was for your sake only, and to save you from death, that I consented to sacrifice myself to that awful man."

Katie now told Harry the whole story, and the effect of this narration was only to intensify the ardent love of this volatile youth. While he had been face to face with Talbot he had undergone a severe struggle from conflicting emotions and impulses. But now Katie was before him, Talbot was present no longer; and Katie was so sweet, so tender, so trustful, and, above all, she had such a story to tell, that he could not resist. Talbot's claims on him became less and less perceptible in these new ones which Katie presented; and so the consequence was that he yielded up everything—his honor, his loyalty, and his duty.

"Katie," said he, as he pressed her in his arms, "I love you alone. I'll give up all for you. Let us fly from this place—let us fly. Let us not wait here where these other people are."

"Fly?" said Katie; "where?"

"Yes, fly!"

"But how can we get out? Shall we go out boldly through the gate?"

Suddenly some one came between them, and a voice chimed into the conversation.

"Yes," said the voice, "fly! That's the ticket. There's a devil here—a she-devil. I'll show you the way out. If you want to get off without Ashby seeing you, I'll show you how; I know the way. It's a secret passage. That's how I escaped the last time; and I'll take you to it when it gets dark."

It was Russell who had thus interposed. Harry and Katie showed no resentment whatever at his intrusion, but caught at his suggestion. Russell alluded with clumsy and rather vulgar playfulness to their tender relations, and offered, as guardian, to give Katie away the moment they should find a parson.

Meanwhile Dolores had gone out into the court-yard, followed by Ashby. There they stopped, and looked at one another in silence.

"Who's that fellow?" said Ashby at last.

Dolores explained that he was a friend of hers who had been of great help in Cuba. She did not tell how tender their relations had been.

"H'm!" said Ashby. "Never heard of him before. You seemed very intimate."

"He saved my life," said Dolores.

"Saved your life?"

Dolores sighed.

Then more of her story escaped her. At last the whole truth came out.

"What!" said Ashby; "and so you were engaged! In fact, the fellow is an old lover."

Dolores said nothing, but looked at Ashby with mournful inquiry, as though appealing to him to know what she ought to do.

"How did he get here?" asked Ashby, calmly.

"He has been seeking for me all these years, and traced me here, and was captured."

"H'm! that's devotion," said Ashby. "And who's his friend—the girl that was disguised as priest?"

"I don't know."

"So she's a girl," said Ashby; "and so that's the reason she wouldn't marry Lopez and Katie. A most infernally pretty girl. Who is she—did you say?"

"I don't know."

"Didn't your—your friend tell you?"

"No."

It may be supposed that Ashby should have known Brooke's feelings toward this "priest" by his devotion to her in saving

her life. But it was not so. Brooke's desperate act in flinging himself before Lopez seemed to Ashby merely an accident consequent upon his struggle with his captors. Besides, the attack of Dolores and her six Carlists had followed so closely upon this that all had become confused together.

While Ashby had been asking these few questions Dolores remained looking at him with that same mournful inquiry. Ashby noticed it, for he looked at her several times, though each time he looked away elsewhere. He was turning over all this in his mind.

At length he looked at her once more, and took her hands in his.

"Dolores," said he, "I have made up my mind."

"What?" said she, in a faint voice, looking up at him in awful suspense.

"I will not give you up! That's decided. You must dismiss the idea from your mind."

In an instant the shadow of anxiety fled from the face of Dolores, followed by a flash of joy like a sunbeam. She said not a word, but Ashby saw that rush of happiness, and all his own nature responded.

"You must come with me," said he. "That fellow may look out for himself."

"But—but—" said Dolores.

She paused.

"What?"

"We—we—are—engaged."

"Pooh!" said Ashby. "That's an old story."

"But—but—"

"Well?" said Ashby, impatiently, as she paused.

"He—he saved my life once."

"He be hanged!" said Ashby. "I'll save your life fifty times. You mustn't think of that man again. Do you hear, Dolores?"

"Yes," said Dolores, meekly; "but I only want to satisfy my conscience, and find out my duty."

"Conscience? Duty? Ah!" repeated Ashby. "Well, then, I'll tell you what to think of—think of *me*! Here was I, engaged to that English maiden. You have won my love. You have made me indifferent to her. You have made my love grow stronger and stronger every moment, until now I'm ready to give up everything for you. Your duty, therefore, is to be true to me, as I will be true to you."

Dolores looked up again with her face

in a rapture of gladness, and Ashby pressed her hands more closely in his. Then they walked away to inspect the fortifications.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### IN WHICH THERE IS A TERRIBLE CALAMITY.

RUSSELL's advent among the embarrassed lovers can easily be explained. Seated at the gate in the uniform of a general, with gorgeous array of blue and gold, with a sword in his manly hand, and armed warriors around him, his martial soul had gradually lost its terrors, and his mind was at leisure to think of other things.

First among these other things was that precious package which he had concealed. Now was the time for him to look it up and regain possession. None but friends were now in the castle. Those bonds would now be safer in his own possession than anywhere else, and never could he hope for a better chance than this. As for Rita, she must have fled, he thought, with the other fugitives, and with her had fled his worst fear.

With such thoughts as these, the martial Russell sheathed his warlike sword and walked back again toward the castle. Here he entered the hall where the others were talking, and passing through, entered the well-remembered room where he had been confined. He looked all around. He was alone. He walked to the chimney. He looked up. Through the broad opening at the top he saw the sky. In the gloom of the shaft he saw also that opening in which he had placed the precious parcel.

All seemed as it had been, and he felt convinced that his papers were safe. Further examination, however, was just now not advisable. He would have to light a torch, and some of his friends might come in just as he was going up or coming down. So he concluded to defer his search until they had gone out of the way a little, until which time the package would be quite safe. In the mean time he thought he would go back and hear what they were all talking about.

Coming back again, he saw them all going in different directions, and, as a matter of course, he followed those who were nearest and dearest, namely, Katie and Harry. He stood and listened with a

benignant smile to their loving words. He gazed complacently upon their outrageous and unbounded spooning. He had no objection now to any one whom Katie might choose. To Ashby he felt repugnance on account of former quarrels, but to Harry none whatever. Even to Ashby he would have yielded, for prejudices die out quickly in a castle of Spain. And so, as we have seen, the good Russell interrupted the happy lovers in a paternal way, and did the "heavy father" to perfection—with outstretched hands, moistened eyes, and "Bless you, bless you, my children!"

The subject of flight was already before them, and this was for Russell the most acceptable possible. He felt that he could give valuable information, since he himself had been a fugitive. Every step of the way was well remembered by him. In a few minutes he had made them acquainted with the story of his former escape, and the adventurous Harry at once decided that this would be the very way by which he could carry off Katie and himself from their embarrassing surroundings. For various reasons he wished to go away in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, without ostentation or vain display, and in no other way could he do it so effectually as in this.

Harry at once decided that his best course would be to spend the hours of closing day in making himself acquainted with this passage. He did not feel inclined to be altogether dependent upon Russell. Circumstances might arise which might make it desirable to fly without him. That good man might become suddenly unwell, or there might be an attack by the enemy, or other things might occur, under any of which circumstances Harry would have to rely upon himself alone.

Russell had no objections; in fact, he himself preferred going over the way once more. About this there was no difficulty. There were very few in the castle, and these had no idea of watching each other; in fact, each party seemed only too anxious to keep out of the other's way.

Katie now retired to that room which she had last occupied, and Harry went off with Russell. The daylight befriended them so that they were able to find their way along the lower passages, until at length they came to the opening under the arch of the ruined bridge. Here they both went down one side of the chasm and up the other until they reached the

tower. Harry was delighted with this discovery, and felt fully capable of traversing the path himself even in the darkest night; while Russell, though a little out of breath, was quite willing to bear the fatigue in return for the additional knowledge he had gained.

On regaining the castle, Harry went to tell Katie the result, and to prepare her for their coming flight.

Russell now had leisure to attend to the great work of securing the hidden treasure. He decided that he ought to do this in perfect secrecy, so that none of his friends should know where he was going, or even suspect it.

First of all he followed Harry to the upper story, where he took an affectionate leave of him. Then he prowled about until he discovered Ashby, who was with Dolores in a remote part of the court-yard. The six Carlists were still at the gate. The other two inmates of the castle, namely, Brooke and Talbot, were in the room in which the recent stormy events had taken place. They had been attending to the wounds of the prisoners, and were still so engaged that they did not look up as Russell entered. He said nothing, but hastily retreated, and went into the opposite room—the very one in which he was to conduct his operations. But he was too cautious to begin just yet; so he waited, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing these two go down-stairs and out of the castle.

And now at last the time had come. There was no eye to behold him, and no one to suspect.

An old torch was in the fire-place. This he picked up, and then, going back to the door, looked all around stealthily and warily. All was still.

Thereupon he returned. His manly heart was throbbing fast—violently, even painfully. The sense of loneliness was oppressive. Had his purpose been less important he would certainly have turned and fled. But too much was at stake. Before him there arose the vision of that vast treasure—thirty thousand pounds—and its attraction was irresistible. He must go forward; and now was the time to win, or never.

He stood for a moment gathering up his courage.

What if Rita should be concealed somewhere up there!

Such was the awful thought that sud-

denly occurred to him and made him quail.

The idea suggested itself of going back to Harry and getting his aid. But no, that would never do. He would let it be supposed that these bonds had been taken from him. If he were to tell his secret to Harry, all would be lost. No, he must go, and alone.

Once more he went to the door and listened. All was still.

He now nerved himself up for a supreme effort. If he were to delay any longer, some of them would be sure to return. Now or never.

He struck a match against the stone floor. It kindled.

In another moment the torch was blazing brightly; and, holding this in one hand, Russell used his other hand to clamber up the projecting stones.

Up he went, higher and higher.

And now he reached the opening, and his knee was resting upon it, and he was just about to raise the torch, so as to peer in.

At that instant there was a sudden rush, and a spring that sent a thrill of sharp agony to his heart. A pair of strong arms were flung about him. The torch fell, and the smoke blinded his eyes. He felt himself dragged forward helplessly into the gloomy hole, while a fierce whisper hissed into his despairing ears words that made him almost die out of sheer fright:

"Hah! base traitor, I haffa you! I haffa you! You salla not escapar from Rita again!"

At this Russell gave a wild, long, piercing yell, and fainted.

## CHAPTER LV.

IN WHICH BROOKE AND TALBOT PREPARE TO BID EACH OTHER AN ETERNAL FAREWELL.

ON turning away from that eventful meeting with old friends both Brooke and Talbot felt very greatly depressed, and neither could say a word. This feeling was experienced by both to an equal degree, and neither of them could see any possible way out of this new difficulty that could commend itself to an honorable mind.

The conversation with Harry had quite overwhelmed Talbot. He had been so

eager to explain, and the explanations had shown such fidelity on his part, he had seemed so true, and his vindication had been so complete, that she had not one word to say. For the fact remained plain before her mind that the cause of his failure to receive her at Barcelona was his very eagerness to meet her, which had sent him flying in all haste to England. If he had ever been in fault, the fault was one which had arisen from excess of love. To a generous mind like Talbot's this was a very distressing thought.

Still, there was another thought which was worse, and that was this, namely, that Harry could no longer satisfy her. Whether she had ever really loved him or not she did not now stop to inquire, nor was such an inquiry worth making. It was only too evident now that Harry had declined to nothingness, and less than nothingness, in her heart, and that in the course of the tragical events of the last few days Brooke had grown to be more than all the world to her.

The feelings and thoughts of Brooke were of the same description. It had seemed to him that Dolores had been faithful; and as he had all along felt firmly convinced of her passionate love for himself and unalterable fidelity, it never entered into his head now to suspect any change in her. At the same time he felt that, whether he had ever loved her formerly or not, he certainly had no feeling of love for her now; for Talbot had utterly effaced that former image, and all the world would now be as nothing to him without Talbot.

For some time they devoted themselves to the wounded men, and then, having finished this task, they retreated to a rude bench, upon which they seated themselves, and remained thus for a long time in utter silence.

"You saw my meeting with—with that—young lady," said Brooke at last. "Did you understand who it was? It was—Dolores."

"I know," said Talbot, with a heavy sigh. "And did you observe my meeting with that gentleman? Did you understand that?"

"What!" cried Brooke, in amazement at the suggestion which was conveyed by Talbot's words. He had not had leisure to notice or think of any one except Dolores.

"It was Mr. Rivers," said Talbot.

"The devil!" cried Brooke, with a groan.

At this Talbot very properly said nothing.

"Well," said Brooke, after a long pause, "I didn't know that things could possibly be more infernally embarrassing or more confoundedly complicated than they were; but this is certainly a little beyond what I dreamed of. And—and—"

He turned with a despairing look, and took Talbot's hand.

"What, Brooke?"

"Am—am I—to—to congratulate you—and all that?" he stammered.

"What!" said Talbot, reproachfully.

Brooke was silent.

"Oh, Brooke," said Talbot, "what are we to do?"

"Give it up," said Brooke, in a dismal voice.

"This," continued Talbot, "is worse than when we were prisoners, and dying by turns for one another."

"I wish," said Brooke, "that I had died when I wanted to."

"And must we now give one another up?" sighed Talbot.

"Don't see what else we can do," said Brooke. "We've got to keep our confounded promises."

"Which promises, Brooke?"

"I don't know."

"Brooke!"

"What?"

"What ought I to do?"

"I don't know."

"Ought I to keep my promise?"

"Which promise?"

"Why, my promise to—to Mr. Rivers?"

"Confound Mr. Rivers!" growled Brooke, turning away.

"That," said Talbot, mildly, "is not an answer to my question."

"But how do I know?" said Brooke, in a voice like a wailing child.

"But how can I?—how can I?" cried Talbot. "And when *you* are here—*you*, Brooke, who know all my heart! Can I give you up? I can not. You may give me up if you like."

"Why don't you say, if I *can*?" said Brooke.

"Oh—any way," said Talbot, wearily.

There was another silence.

"Marry *him*!" cried Talbot at last, breaking the silence with vehement abruptness. "I can not! I can not! It would be wicked. I should desecrate the

holy sacrament. I could not utter that vow before the holy altar. Never! Yet I can't stay here where *he* is. He will be wishing to see me. He will be coming soon—he may be coming now. I will *not* see him; I will not speak with him again. I will write to him. I will leave this place, and at once."

"Leave this place!" repeated Brooke.

"Where can you go?"

"Why, I'll go home," said Talbot, firmly.

"Home?"

"Yes."

"How can you? You don't know the way."

"I know one place where I can go—to that tower—that sweet tower; it is not far away; it must be easy to get there. I will go there—there, Brooke, where I first became acquainted with you; and then—"

Here Talbot paused, and turned away her head.

"But you can't live there," said Brooke, in a harsh voice.

"I can find my way back to the road," said Talbot, in a tremulous tone—"to the road where I first met you, Brooke; and then—why, then I shall be no worse off than when you found me and assisted me."

"It's all nonsense," said Brooke; "you can't go alone."

"Yes, I can."

"You'll be taken prisoner."

"I don't care."

"Or, if not, you'll die of starvation."

"Very well," said Talbot, in a calm voice, and looking at Brooke out of serene eyes, with a face from which all traces of emotion had departed—"very well; I have already showed that I am not afraid of death; and death by starvation is not more terrible than death by bullets."

Brooke looked at her for a moment in silence, and then said,

"You are not in earnest?"

"I am in earnest," said Talbot, looking at him fixedly, and speaking in a resolute tone—"I am in earnest, and I mean to go this very night."

Brooke looked away, drew a long breath, and subsided into silence.

"How can you find the way?" he asked at length, in a gruff voice, and without looking up.

"I don't know," said Talbot; "I can try again, as I tried before."

Brooke looked up hastily, then looked away, and finally said,



"I think, Talbot, you might ask me to show you the way."

At this Talbot's face flushed, and all her expression was suddenly changed from one of dull dejection to animation and delight.

"Will you?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Oh yes," said Brooke, "that isn't much to do—oh yes, I can easily show you the way to the tower. After all, it is as safe there as here; and if you are determined to go, why, we can start, you know—at any time, you know."

"But will you—can you—will you, really?" said Talbot, who seemed quite overwhelmed at this unexpected offer. "Then you have your human weakness, after all, have you, Brooke? You will not sacrifice me to a punctilio, will you? you will not let your poor Talbot go away all alone?"

"No," said Brooke, softly; "I will not let my Talbot go away all alone."

Talbot cast a swift glance at him, as if to read his soul. Brooke's eye met hers, but only for an instant. Then he looked away. Again there was quick and active within him that old vigilant feeling that kept him on guard against being surprised and overpowered by passion. Within his heart there had already been a fierce struggle between love and honor. Love had once conquered, and that completely; but the appearance of Dolores had roused his conscience, and made him once more aware of the bond that lay in his plighted word. Could he again break that word? Could he sacrifice his honor almost in the very presence of her whom he supposed to be his loving and faithful Dolores? Could he do such a deed as this, and sully his soul, even for Talbot? Yet, on the other hand, how could he bring himself to give her up? Give her up!—the "lad Talbot," whom he loved as he had never loved any other human being! How could he? And thus love drew him impetuously in one direction, while duty sternly and imperiously drove him back; and so there went on in the breast of this newspaper correspondent a struggle the like of which does not often come within the experience of gentlemen of the press.

"You will see me as far as the tower?" said Talbot, pathetically.

"Yes," murmured Brooke.

"And there," continued Talbot, in the same tone, "we can say to one another our last farewells."

Brooke said nothing. The struggle still

raged within him, and was as far from a decisive end as ever. The prospect of parting with Talbot filled him with a sense of horrible desolation, and the one idea now in his mind was that of accompanying her wherever she might go. He did not look far into the future. His plans were bounded by that tower to which Talbot was going. This much he might do without any hesitation. It seemed to him no more than Talbot's due. She only wanted to go as far as that. She wished to be out of the reach of Rivers. She didn't know the way there. He could certainly help her thus far; in fact, it would be impossible for him not to do that much. If Dolores herself were present, he thought, she could not object; in fact, she could do nothing else but approve.

Silence now followed, which lasted for some time, and at length Talbot said, with a heavy sigh,

"How strange it is, and how sad!—isn't it, Brooke?"

"What?" said Brooke.

"To bid good-by."

Brooke was silent.

"To bid good-by," repeated Talbot, "and never meet again."

Brooke drew a long breath, looked at Talbot, and then looked away.

"Shall we, Brooke?" asked Talbot.

"Shall we what?" said Brooke, harshly.

"Shall we ever meet again?"

"How do I know?" said Brooke, snappishly.

"And yet you gave your life for me," said Talbot, pensively.

"I didn't," said Brooke. "It was you that gave your life for me."

"The offer was made," said Talbot, mournfully, "but it wasn't accepted. I wish now that the offer had been accepted."

Brooke raised his head and looked at her with his pale, haggard face, whereon was still the impression of that great agony through which he had so lately passed. He looked at her with all his unspeakable love in his earnest, yearning gaze.

"Do you really wish that, Talbot?"

"I do," said she, sadly.

"Oh, my darling!" cried Brooke—"my own love, and my only love! What shall I do? Help me to decide."

He caught her in his arms, and held her pressed convulsively to his heart, while Talbot laid her head on his shoulder and wept.

At length they rose to go.

Brooke was conscious of a sense of profound relief as he went out of the castle and away from Dolores.

On reaching the gate Brooke explained to the guard that he and the lady were going out for a little walk.

The guard suggested that there might be danger.

Brooke said that he was not going far away, and that he would be back. In this he was not deceiving them, for he himself thought that he would be coming back again. He had a vague idea of keeping Talbot in the tower, and conveying her food, etc., from the castle, as he had done once before.

He now passed through the gates, accompanied by Talbot. The course which he took was the same that he had taken on the occasion of his first visit to the Carlists in his disguise of priest. After walking for some distance they descended into the chasm, and at length reached the bottom. By this time it was dusk, and twilight was coming on rapidly.

They then began the ascent, and reached the tower without any difficulty.

Here they paused to take breath.

But no sooner had they stood still than they were aware of a noise without. It was a noise rather distant, yet well defined, and sounded as if a multitude were approaching the place.

"Some one's coming," said Talbot.

"Yes," said Brooke, "we must go back."

They hurried back. But as they stood at the opening they heard something which once more startled them.

There were voices and footsteps down the chasm, as of some one coming up the pathway.

"We are pursued!" said Brooke.

"We are captured!" said Talbot; and then she added, as she took Brooke's hands in hers, "But, oh, Brooke, how I should love to be captured, if you are only captured with me!"

Brooke said nothing, but a thrill of joy passed through him at the thought.

Ashby had been prompt in decision, and had taken all responsibility from Dolores. She meekly acquiesced in his decision, was all the happier for it, and prepared with the briskness of a bird to carry out their purpose of flight. She led Ashby down by the same way through which she had formerly conducted "his Majesty," starting from that lower room in which Ashby had been confined. Had she gone from one of the upper rooms, they might, perhaps, have encountered the lurking Rita, and thus have rescued the unhappy Russell from his vengeful captor and from his coming woe. But such was not to be their lot. It was from the lower room that they started; and on they went, to the no small amazement of Ashby, through all those intricate ways, until at length they emerged from the interior, and found themselves in the chasm. Here the moon was shining, as it had been during all the eventful days in which all these wonderful and authentic adventures had been taking place, and gave them ample light by which to find the path. Their way lay along the lower part of the chasm, where the brook was foaming and bubbling and dashing on its way. Before long they reached the place where the path ascended toward the tower. Up this they proceeded.

As they went up they heard voices. Thus far they had been talking with one another quite merrily and carelessly, but these sounds at once arrested them. They stopped for a moment, and listened in deep anxiety.

The sound of the voices seemed to draw nearer, and to come up from some point in the pathway behind them, as though others were advancing in the same direction.

"We are pursued," said Dolores.

"Who would pursue us?" said Ashby.

"Mr. Brooke," said Dolores, in a tone of alarm. "It must be Mr. Brooke. He has been looking for me. He has seen us, and is pursuing us."

Ashby muttered a curse.

"Confound him!" said he. "Let him keep his distance. We must hurry on faster."

They hurried on.

In a few moments they had reached the tower. Inside that tower were Brooke and Talbot, who had reached it some time before, and now heard the sounds made by these new-comers, though the darkness of the interior prevented them from seeing who they were. On entering, Dolores

## CHAPTER LVI.

IN WHICH SOME OLD FRIENDS RE-APPEAR.

DOLORES and Ashby had experienced none of that inner conflict that had disturbed the souls of Brooke and Talbot, for

drew Ashby carefully on one side. Brooke and Talbot waited in breathless suspense.

But now other sounds startled the occupants of the tower—the sounds as of an advancing crowd. Dolores clung in terror to Ashby, and drew him still farther on one side.

They were caught—that was plain. They could neither advance nor retreat; for now already they heard new-comers at the opening through which they had just passed. They shrank back still farther, and Dolores clung more closely to Ashby.

These new-comers, however, were not very formidable. They were merely Harry and Katie.

Harry had waited for some time in expectation of being joined by Russell. To his surprise, that worthy person did not put in an appearance. He could not account for this, and finally concluded that Russell must have gone ahead, so as to take his time about it and save himself by daylight. In this belief, Harry resolved to delay no longer, and congratulating himself that he knew the way so well, he started off with Katie.

He went with all the caution in the world, first reconnoitring to see that no one was within view, and then, on reaching the side door which gave entrance to the cellars, he cautioned Katie to keep silence. In this way they went on silently enough until they emerged from the opening. Then they began to descend the chasm, and here Harry felt safe. On their way down and up they talked and laughed quite freely, and these were the voices which had startled their predecessors.

At length they reached the tower and clambered in. The moment they found themselves inside they were startled by those noises which had already terrified the others, and which had now drawn much nearer.

Katie gave a low cry of terror, and stood trembling in every limb.

Harry was quite bewildered at this sudden and unexpected shock. For a moment he thought of flight; but that was impossible, for Katie, in her terror, was almost fainting, and he had to support her, while she clung breathlessly to him. And so they stood, unable to move.

The noises were now just outside—voices, cries, songs, and wild laughter—all the indications of a lawless crowd.

Suddenly some one burst inside.

"Ha!" he cried, in Spanish, "here it is; but it's all dark. Bring lights, some one. We must wait here till the others come round to the front; but there's no reason why we shouldn't have lights. We can't be seen from the castle: the walls here are too thick to be transparent. It's just the place for a little supper."

A number of others now came forward and entered. The fugitives stood clinging to one another as before, expecting the worst, and awaiting with intense anxiety the moment when lights would be introduced.

There was now the flash of sudden flames—some of them were striking matches. The flames leaped forth, and soon half a dozen torches were kindled, and then, blazing and smoking, they were held aloft, throwing a bright light upon the whole interior, while those who held them looked around without any other purpose, just then, than to find some convenient place where they might place them, so as to save themselves the trouble of holding them.

In that one instant the whole scene stood revealed.

There stood Brooke, with Talbot clinging to him; there Harry, with his arms round Katie; and there Ashby, supporting Dolores. And as Ashby and Harry stared at these noisy new-comers, they saw the familiar face of no less a person than "his Majesty."

At this sight they were filled with amazement and consternation. Yet their amazement, great though it may have been, was not greater than that of "his Majesty." For an instant he stood like one transfixed, and then exclaimed, in that peculiar English which he spoke,

"Howly Moses! but this bates the worruld!" and then stood staring at each of them.

At this exclamation Katie started. She recognized the voice at once; and, strange to say, all her terror fled. From that man she felt as if there was nothing to fear. She looked up, and showed her sweet face all smiles, with all its anxiety and all its terror vanished. Dolores also heard the English words, and looked up in surprise, recognizing at the first glance that familiar face. Harry and Ashby made the same discovery.

But there were other discoveries to be made. Their eyes, as the lights shone around, took in the whole scene; and it

was with the deepest dismay and confusion that, on looking around, each one caught sight of his or her old lover; and, what was more, the feeling of each one was that the other had come in pursuit, to claim that vow which each was breaking.

Harry saw Talbot, and felt sure that she had come after him to demand a new explanation, and to reproach him for this new perfidy. She had suffered, he felt, wrongs that were intolerable at his hands, and his heart sank within him at this new meeting. He seemed to himself base beyond all expression, and no words could be found with which he might excuse himself.

Brooke saw Dolores, and his only thought was that she had suspected him, had watched him, had tracked him, and had now come to overwhelm him with dishonor, and he felt that he must be dumb before her.

Ashby saw Katie, and thought that she had surely come in pursuit of him; that perhaps his suspicions had been unfounded; that she loved him; that she had only been trifling with Harry, and had come to tear him from Dolores.

Talbot saw Harry with guilty terror. She had fled from him, and intentionally. He had pursued; he had come to claim her hand—her promised hand!

Dolores saw Brooke with the same feelings. She knew him as the chivalrous American who had saved her life and that of her mother in their direst need, who had won her heart and the promise of her hand. She had broken her word—she had fled. What now? With what eyes could she look at him? with what words could she speak to him?

Katie's face had lightened up with joy at the sight of "his Majesty," but the moment afterward it clouded over with fear and apprehension at the sight of Ashby. "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all," and conscience told her that she had treated Ashby very, very badly, and that he had followed her to make her keep her plighted word. And so she only clung to Harry more closely than ever.

And so, in fact, did the other couples. They all clung to one another more closely than ever. There was a moment of embarrassment—intense, awful, tremendous.

The deep silence was broken by the voice of "his Majesty."

"Herself!" he cried, with his eyes fixed on Katie—"herself! begorra, it's herself! Shure an' it is! an' oh, but it's meself that's the lucky man this day! An' shure an' may I dhrop dead if I iver saw sich a mayting as this! Shure ye've forgotten all about me offer av the crown av Spain, an' the sceptre, an' the throne. Begorra, ye've given up all that same for that bit av a boy that's a-howldin' av ye. An' shure we're all together again, so we are. Here's welcome to yez all—Messrs. Rivers an' Ashby, an' the ladies, one an' all. Niver fare, I'll take good care av yez this toime. Only what's become av Lord Russell? Begorra, it's meself that 'ud loike to have another look at that same!"

Talking in this way, with frequent pauses, "his Majesty" succeeded in expressing his feelings, which had at first seemed quite too strong for utterance.

Meanwhile the soldiers who had been inspecting the interior had found convenient places for fixing the torches, which now flared up, throwing a bright light around, and filling the tower with smoke.

During all this time the prisoners had been agitated by various feelings. Harry and Ashby saw in "his Majesty" a remorseless brigand, whose only idea was plunder, and who would now hold them to ransom as before. They despaired of escape. This new capture seemed far worse than the former one, yet each one thought less of himself than of that dear one whom he had tried to save. Thus Harry clung to Katie and Ashby clung to Dolores more closely than ever. Brooke and Talbot, on the contrary, had less fear, yet they had anxiety. Brooke recognized in "his Majesty" the unscrupulous Carlist whom he had visited, and was somewhat uneasy about a recognition; while Talbot, seeing his uneasiness, felt something like fear herself.

Yet, in the midst of all this, they all alike made one discovery. It was this: each one saw that his or her old love had become strangely indifferent.

Harry saw that Talbot was clinging to that strange man whom he had never seen before, but who now, as he thought, seemed uncommonly sweet on her.

Brooke saw that Dolores was clinging for support to another strange man. She had evidently no thought for him.

Ashby saw at once that Katie thought of no one but Harry Rivers.



Talbot saw that Harry was devoted to that lady whom he was so assiduously supporting and consoling. She was utterly amazed at the discovery, yet inexpressibly glad.

Dolores, in her delight, saw that Brooke took no notice of herself, but devoted himself to the lady with him, and in such a fervent manner that she understood it all without being told.

Katie also saw that Ashby had forgotten all about her, and thought of nothing but Dolores.

And at this discovery, which flashed almost simultaneously upon them, each one felt the most inexpressible joy. At the same time the whole truth came upon them. Each one, instead of pursuing the other, had been trying to fly. Each lover had found a new and more congenial friend, and with this dear friend had left the castle. Each one felt equally guilty, yet equally glad; but then as to guilt, there was Brooke, who didn't feel guilty at all—oh, bless you, no!—he had only come with Talbot *as far as the tower!*

In the midst of all this Harry and Ashby and Brooke were amazed at the Irish brogue of the Carlist chief, who had formerly spoken to them in Spanish.

And now, while they were thus wondering, who should come in but a certain female in a very peculiar dress—for this female wore what looked like a military cloak, and she wore also an officer's "kepi," which was perched upon the top of her chignon—which female took a glance around, and then exclaimed:

"Well, goodness gracious me! I never! Did I ever! No, never!"

"Auntie!" screamed Katie; and with this she rushed toward the aforesaid female, who was no other than Mrs. Russell. She flung her arms around that lady, and almost smothered her with kisses.

"Dear child," said Mrs. Russell, "how impetuous you are! But it's natural—it's touching—it's grateful—we deserve it, dear. We came to seek and to save. Bless you, my child, and may you be happy! 'His Majesty' has a tender heart, and often talks of you. We also cherish for you a fond affection, child; but in future try to be a little less boisterous, and respect the majesty of Spain."

At this reception Katie was quite bewildered. It was only by a strong effort that she could comprehend it. She then

recalled that old nonsense with which she had amused herself when she had suggested that Mrs. Russell should marry "his Majesty"; but now a great terror seized her: was it possible that Mrs. Russell had done such a thing?

"Oh, auntie!" she said; "oh, auntie! you haven't—you haven't—done—done it?"

"Done it!" said Mrs. Russell, who seemed at once to understand her; "no, child—not yet; but as soon as the affairs of state will allow, 'his Majesty' says that the ceremony shall be performed; after which comes the coronation, you know, and then, dear, I shall be queen, and you may be princess, and may marry the proudest of all the Spanish chivalry."

At this Katie was so terrified that she did not know what to say. The only thought she had was that "auntie" had gone raving mad. She knew that Mr. Russell was alive and well, for she had seen him only a short time before. The old joke about marrying "his Majesty" had been almost forgotten by her; and to find "auntie" now as full as ever of that nonsensical piece of ambition was inexpressibly shocking to her. Yet she did not know what to say. To disabuse her seemed impossible. She did not dare to tell her that Mr. Russell was alive; it might be dangerous. "Auntie" had so set her mind upon this insane project that any attempt to thwart her would certainly draw down vengeance upon the head of the one who should dare to make it. That one certainly was not Katie. She liked, as far as possible, to have things move on smoothly around her; and so the only thought she now had was to chime in with "auntie's" fancy; to humor her as one would humor an insane person, and to hope that something might turn up in time to prevent anything "dreadful."

In this state of mind Katie went on talking with "auntie." But "auntie" was hard to humor; she was altogether too grand and lofty for little Katie. In fancy she already wore a crown, and talked of the throne, the sceptre, and the majesty of Spain as though they had always been her private property.

"I've been two or three days," said she, "with 'his Majesty.' He has been most kind. His royal will is that I should wear this hat. Do you think it is becoming? Under other circumstances I should be



talked about, I know; but where the welfare of Spain is concerned, I don't care for public opinion. When I am seated on the throne, all will be explained."

At such a torrent as this, poor Katie could only take refuge in silence.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### HOW A SURPRISE PARTY IS VERY MUCH SURPRISED.

DURING these remarks "his Majesty" had been fumbling, with a thoughtful expression, in his coat pocket, as though trying to extricate something, the bulk of which prevented it from being drawn forth without some difficulty; and as he tugged and fumbled he began to speak.

"I came here," said he, "on a surprise party, an' begorra I niver was so surprised in me loife, so I wasn't. An' be the same token, as it's a long march we've had, an' as we've got to wait here an hour or so, an' as we're on the ave av an attack, an' may niver live to see another day, shure there's ivery raison in loife"—and with this he fumbled still more vigorously in his pocket—"why"—he gave a thrust and a pull—"why we should all wet our whistles"—he gave a series of violent twists—"wid a dhrop av somethin' warrum;" and with this he succeeded in getting the object of his attempts extricated from his pocket, and proudly displayed before the eyes of the company a black junk-bottle.

The others looked at this with some surprise, but no other feeling. The whole proceeding seemed to them to show an ill-timed levity; and if it was serious, it certainly seemed very bad taste. But "his Royal Majesty" was in a very gracious mood, and continued to run on in his most gay and affable strain. He wandered round among the company and offered the bottle to each in turn. When they all refused he seemed both surprised and hurt.

"Shure it's whiskey, so it is," he said, as though that would remove all objections; but this information did not produce any effect.

"Perhaps it's a tumbler ye'll be wantin'," said he. "Well, well, we're sorry we haven't got one; but if ye'll take a taste out av the bottle ye'll foind it moighty convaynient."

Here the monarch paused, and raising

the bottle to his own royal lips, took a long draught. As he swallowed the liquid his eyes closed and his face assumed an expression of rapture. He then offered it to all once more, and mourned over them because they refused.

"Oh, but it's the divoine dhrink!" said he. Then he grew merrier, and began to sing:

"Oh, Shakspeare, Homer, an' all the poets  
Have sung for ages the praise av woime;  
But if they iver had tasted whiskey,  
They'd have called it the only dhrink divoine.

"Oh, wud ye have a receipt for toddy?  
Av whiskey ye take a quart, I think;  
Thin out av a pint av bilin' wather  
Ivery dhrop ye add will spile the dhrink."

Ashby had been talking with Dolores for some time. He now came forward, Dolores hanging on his arm.

"Sir," said he to "his Majesty," "I suppose we must again consider ourselves your prisoners?"

"Divil a doubt av it," said "his Majesty," with a wink at Dolores.

"The other time," said Ashby, "you named a ransom, and said that on the payment of that sum you would allow us our liberty. Will you now name a sum again—some sum that I can pay? I engage to have it in less than a week, provided that you send this lady in safety to Vitoria. She can procure the money for me, and until then I shall remain your prisoner."

"Well, that's fair," said "his Majesty."

"Will you do it?"

"Begorra, I will."

"Will you name the sum?"

"I'll think about it."

At this Ashby went back with Dolores to his former position, and they resumed their conversation. But Harry had heard every word, and he now came up, with Katie clinging to him.

"Sir," said he, "will you allow me to procure my ransom in the same way? Will you allow this lady to go in company with the other, so as to procure the amount needed for my deliverance?"

"But I won't go," said Katie, hurriedly.

"What!" said Harry. "Oh, think—it's for my sake, my life."

"But I can't," said Katie. "I know I shall never see you again. Besides, what could I do alone?"

"You can go with this other lady, or with your aunt."

"Oh, she can't go with me," said "auntie." "Nothing would induce me

to leave 'his Majesty.' The royal cause is just now in a critical condition, and we need all our resources."

"Then you can go with the Spanish señorita," said Harry.

"But I'm afraid," said Katie.

"Afraid!" said Harry. "Why, there will be no danger. You will be sent with a guard."

"Oh, it's not that—it's not that," said Katie; "it's because I'm afraid I shall never see you again. And it's cruel—very, very cruel in you."

At this "his Majesty" wiped his eyes. Then he raised his bottle and took another long pull. Then he heaved a sigh.

"Arrah, ye rogue," said he to Harry, "ye've deludhered that poor gyerrul intoirely. She's yours out an' out—no doubt av that; an' sure but it's dead-bate an' heart-broke intoirely I'd be, so I would, if it wasn't for the widdy here, that's a frind in time av nade, an' has a heart that's worth its weight in goold sovereigns."

"His Majesty" now took another long, long pull at the black bottle.

"If it wasn't that I had that other noble heart til fall back on," said he, as he wiped his royal eyes with the back of his royal hand, "I'd be fairly broken-hearted, so I would. But I'll be loike Tim in the song:

"Oh, a widdy she lived in Limerick town,  
Not far from Shannon water,  
An' Tim kept company wid her,  
A-coortin' av Biddy, her daughter.  
But Micky McGraw cut in between,  
And run away wid Biddy.  
"Begorra," says Tim, "the daughter's gone,  
So, faix, I'll take the widdy!"  
The widdy!  
Not Biddy!  
The fond and faithful widdy!  
Whooor!"

Singing this, the jovial monarch caught Mrs. Russell's hands in his, and proceeded to dance in a manner which was far more boisterous than dignified. Mrs. Russell, always fond and indulgent, lent herself to the royal whim, and danced much more vigorously than could have been expected from a person of her years. Katie clapped her hands in childish glee. The Carlists all applauded. The others looked puzzled. "His Majesty" finally concluded his little dance, after which Mrs. Russell clung to him in a languishing attitude, and looked like a caricature of each of those other younger ladies who were all clinging so fondly to their respective lovers. The sight of Mrs. Russell in that languishing

attitude came home to the hearts and consciences of the younger ladies, who all relinquished their lovers' arms, and insisted on standing by themselves.

Brooke had listened thoughtfully to all that had thus far been said. The Carlist chief was a puzzle to him, but he saw that there was talk of holding to ransom, which to him had an ugly sound.

"Sir," said he, "are we to be kept prisoners in this tower?"

"This tower, is it?" said "his Majesty." "Begorra, I hope not. There's another tower a dale betther nor this. It's meself that 'ud be the proud man til let yez all go, an' yez 'ud all be prouder, I'll go bail; but in that case, shure to glory, I'd be a loser; but I hope to find yez comfortable quarters in a foine stone house not a thousand moiles from this. Ye'll all be as comfortable as ould Dinny McDivitt in the song:

"In a beautiful palace av stone  
Resoied ould Dinny McDivitt;  
He wore a most beautiful ring  
That was fixed round his wrist wid a rivet.  
'Twas the judge, shure, that sintinced him there,  
An' there all the boys wint til view him,  
For the jury considhered him dull  
At discernin' twixt "mayum" and "chuum."  
So fill up for the toast an' I'll give it:  
Here's a health to bowld Dinny McDivitt!"

At this the monarch raised the bottle to his mouth and took another long, long pull.

From this Brooke gathered that they were to be taken to the castle. He asked "his Majesty" if this were so.

"Begorra, ye've hit it," said "his Majesty."

"Is there anything to prevent our being taken there at once?" asked Brooke.

"Bedad, there's iverything in loife. Shure I've come on a surprise party til capture the castle."

It occurred to Brooke that this was a curious way to surprise a castle—by kindling torches, dancing, and singing songs; but he made no remark upon that. He saw that the chief supposed the castle to be defended, and so he hastened to deceive him.

"His Majesty" listened in amazement to Brooke's story.

"Begorra," said he, "here's another surprise! Didn't I say we were a surprised party? Shure an' ye've all showed pluck, ivery man jack av yez, includin' the ladies. An' that same 'll have to be considhered in our thraitmint wid yez about the ransom.

Shure I'll deduct five per cint., so I will. Nobody shall say we're not magnanimous. But bein' as there's nobody there, shure the best thing for us to do is to go over at onst and raysume possission."

With these words the monarch retired to give orders to his men, and in a short time the whole band, together with their prisoners, had passed over and had taken possession.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

### IN WHICH THE KING COMES TO CLAIM HIS OWN.

THE party of prisoners was conducted by "his Majesty" to that upper room which had formerly been occupied by the ladies. Mrs. Russell clung to the royal person as fondly as ever. It was a critical hour in the destinies of Spain.

"Where's Rita," cried "his Majesty," "that cook of cooks? It's starvin' we are. I haven't seen her annywheres. I'll go an' hunt her up."

With these words he hurried out, followed by Mrs. Russell. They descended the stairs, and their footsteps died away in the distance. No one was now with the prisoners except the wounded Republicans.

"Let us fly!" said Harry, in a quick, sharp whisper.

He hurried Katie to the chimney, and clambering up, drew her after him. The others followed at once. Dolores came next to Harry.

"I know a secret way out," said she. "I will show the way. Let me go ahead. I know it in the dark."

"Do you?" said Harry. "Oh, then go ahead."

Upon this Dolores took the lead, along with Ashby; Harry and Katie came next, while Brooke and Talbot brought up the rear, these last wondering at this unexpected revelation of the passageway.

By this time each member of the party had gained a full and complete comprehension as well as appreciation of the present state of things, both with reference to the old lover and also the new one. Embarrassment had now passed away, and all were full of hope, joy, and enthusiasm.

Suddenly a hollow groan sounded through the darkness.

"Who's there?" cried Ashby, in Spanish.

"Help! help!" said a faint voice, in English.

"An Englishman!" cried Ashby, speaking in English. "Who are you?"

"Oh, help! help! I'm a prisoner. A fiend has me in her power. Once I was named Russell, but now — oh! oh! my name is Rita!"

Full of wonder, Ashby felt his way forward, and found a man on the floor. His legs and arms were tied. He was almost speechless, partly from terror and partly from joy. In a few words he told his story, which need not be repeated here. Rita had bound him, and had only left him a short time before, at the sudden noise of their approach. It was not until afterward that they understood the whole story, for just then they were in too great a hurry to ask questions. A pull from Ashby's brandy flask partly restored Russell's strength, but more was accomplished by his joy at this unexpected deliverance. Terror also came to his aid and lent him strength, and he was now more anxious than any of them to fly from this awful prison-house.

Dolores now led the way as before, and they all followed down long steps and crooked passageways until at last they reached the outlet. Here they found themselves in the chasm. A hasty consultation ended in the decision not to go to the tower for fear lest Carlists might be there. They concluded, therefore, to go along the chasm for some distance, and then ascend to the open country above, and after this to go forward as far as possible that same night.

They traversed the chasm in this way, and at length reached the top, where they found themselves to be about a mile away from the castle. Here the ground sloped gently, descending into a broad valley, to which they decided to go. In this direction they therefore proceeded as carefully as possible, and had gone about two miles in safety when suddenly they became aware of a great noise, like the quick trot of numerous horses. It was advancing so rapidly that they had no time to take measures for escape, and before they could consult together a troop of horsemen came over a rising ground in front and galloped straight toward them.

A wild look all around showed them the hopelessness of their situation. The country was open. There was not a house, or a fence, or a tree, or a bush, that might afford

a hiding-place. Flight was useless. They could do nothing now but trust to the faint hope that they might be deemed unworthy of attention. But soon this hope proved vain. They were seen—they were surrounded—they were again prisoners.

They soon learned that this new band consisted of Carlists; that they were on the way to the castle to join the King, who had gone on before.

The King!

Katie knew who that was. Harry was puzzled, as he always had been, about "his Majesty." Dolores also was mystified, since she had never believed that "his Majesty" was what he pretended to be. Ashby also had not believed it, and now was more puzzled than any of them. Brooke and Talbot, however, were strangers to the pretensions of that singular being who called himself King, and therefore hoped that this would turn out for the best. As for Russell, he was in despair, for to him "his Majesty" was more dread than any other human being, with the single and terrible exception of Rita. And now he felt himself dragged back to meet him—worse, to meet Rita. Despair took full possession of him. All his strength left him, and one of the troopers had to give up his horse to the world-worn captive.

It was with such feelings as these that the party reached the castle, and were led upstairs into the presence of the King.

The first glance which they gave around showed them that there had been a slight mistake somewhere.

Down below, the court-yard and the lower hall were full of men. Here there were twenty or thirty, all in the uniform of officers; all men of distinguished air and good-breeding; all gentlemen, and far different from the ragged gang whom they had last encountered here.

In the centre of this company stood a man who at once attracted to himself the eyes of the party of prisoners. He was of medium size, with heavy black mustache and dark, penetrating eyes. He had the air of one who had always been accustomed to the respectful obedience of others; an air of command which rested well upon his bold and resolute face. It was the face of one who lived in the consciousness that he was the centre and strength and hope of a gallant party; of one who believed himself to hold a divine commission to regenerate a fallen country; of one who

knew that he alone in all the world held up aloft at the head of an army the proud banner of Conservatism; of one who, for this mission, had given up ease and luxury and self-indulgence, had entered upon a life of danger, hardship, and ceaseless toil, and every day lived in the very presence of Death; in short, they saw before them the idol of the Spanish Legitimists—the high-souled, the chivalrous Don Carlos.

The quick, penetrating glance which he threw upon the party soon faded into a pleasant smile.

"Welcome, ladies," said he; "welcome, gentlemen. Some one spoke of a party of prisoners; I had no hope of such good fortune as to meet with guests. But you must have met with some misfortune, in which case let me help you."

He spoke in Spanish, of course—a language which is usually spoken in Spain: and a very pretty language it is, too, and one which I should advise all my readers to learn; for they would find it uncommonly useful in case they should ever find themselves in a castle in Spain.

It was Harry who replied. He told the whole story, as far as it was known to himself, dwelling especially upon the character and actions of that strange being who had played the rôle of monarch. Harry's light and playful nature threw a tinge of comicality around the whole story which was highly appreciated by his hearers. And so it was that a smile began to go round, until at length it deepened and developed into laughter, and so went on deepening and broadening and intensifying, until at last the laughter grew, if not Homeric, at least loud enough and long enough for a castle in Spain.

"It's the Irishman!" cried Don Carlos—"it's the Irish guerrilla! It's O'Toole! The villain! he shall hang for this."

Harry was too good-natured to feel revengeful, and was just beginning to beg for O'Toole's life, when suddenly there arose behind them the sound of hurried footsteps, followed by wild cries. All turned, and a strange figure met their eyes.

It was a woman. She wore a military cloak and an officer's kepi. She looked wildly around.

"Where is he? Where is my own one?" she cried—"his Majesty? Where is the hope of Spain?"

Russell saw her.

He threw out wide his manly arms—he opened his mouth: “Jew—li—ar-r-r-r-r!”

With a long, loud cry he shouted this name, and rushed toward her.

Mrs. Russell saw him coming—her lost, lamented lord! the one whom she had mourned as dead! Was this his ghost? or was he indeed alive? In any case, the shock was awful for a woman of delicate nerves; and Mrs. Russell prided herself on being a woman of very delicate nerves.

So she did what a woman of delicate nerves ought to do—she gave a loud, long, piercing shriek, and fainted dead away in her fond husband’s arms.

Don Carlos gave a grin, and then pulled at his mustache.

“Another victim,” said he to the laughing company. “Oh yes; O’Toole shall certainly swing for this. Discipline must and shall be maintained. Send out and catch the fellow. Have him up here at once.”

They sent out and they hunted everywhere, but nowhere could they discover any traces of the brilliant, the festive, the imaginative, the mimetic, the ingenious O’Toole. He was never seen again.

Some say that in the dead of night two figures might have been seen slowly wending their way up the path toward the tower; that the one looked like O’Toole and the other looked like Rita. It may have been so; many things are possible in this evil world; and if so, we must suppose that these two gradually faded away among the mists of cloud-land that always surround a castle in Spain.

## CHAPTER LIX.

### IN WHICH THERE IS AN END OF MY STORY.

THE illustrious host received his guests with large and lavish hospitality. The best that could be afforded by a bounteous commissariat was placed before them. The table was laid, the banquet was spread, and all the company sat down together.

At the head of the table was Don Carlos.

On his right was Talbot, with Brooke beside her.

On his left was Katie, with Harry beside her.

Next to Harry was Dolores, with Ashby beside her.

Next to Brooke was a priest in some-

what martial attire, whom Don Carlos introduced to them as—*The Curé of Santa Cruz!*

He was a broad-shouldered, middle-aged man, with strongly marked features, eagle eye, and bold and resolute face. This was the very man whom Brooke had once personated; but Brooke was just now silent about that particular matter, nor did he care to mention to any of his Spanish friends the fact that he was an American, and a newspaper correspondent. In spite of the passports and credentials with which his wallet was stuffed and with which his pockets bristled, he had not been recognized by any one present; a fact that seems to show that those papers had been obtained from some of the inferior officers of Don Carlos, or perhaps from some other correspondent who had fallen in the practice of his professional duties.

The Curé of Santa Cruz said grace, and the banquet began.

Don Carlos was a man of joyous soul and large, exuberant spirit, with a generous, romantic, and heroic nature. He also knew how to lay aside, on occasion, all the cares of his position; so now he was no longer the commander of a gallant army, the banner-bearer of a great cause, the claimant of a throne. On the contrary, he was the simple gentleman among other gentlemen—*primus inter pares*—the hospitable host, chiefly intent upon performing the pleasing duties of that office.

He had also showed such an amiable interest in the adventures of his guests that they had frankly told him all that was of any interest. Harry had a more confiding disposition than the others, and after the ladies had retired he disclosed more and more of their affairs, until at last their gallant host had obtained a very clear idea of the sentimental side of the story.

“Gentlemen,” said Don Carlos at length, “to-morrow we shall resume our march, and I shall be happy to do for you all in my power. I shall be sorry to part with you, yet glad to restore you to your liberty. A company will take you to the nearest railway station, from which you can proceed to your respective destinations. But before you go allow me to offer you a suggestion, which I am sure you will not take amiss.

“You, gentlemen, are looking forward



to the time when these lovely and amiable ladies shall sustain the closest possible relation toward you. You will pardon me, I trust, if I hint that their position just now is a very embarrassing one, travelling as they are without proper chaperonage. In Spanish eyes that is a calamity. Now, the suggestion that I was about to make is this, namely, that you should free these ladies from this embarrassment by persuading them to accept you now as their legal protectors. Surely nothing can be more desirable on all sides. No place can be more fitting than this; no hour more convenient; no scene more romantic. As for the priest, here sits my reverend friend the Curé of Santa Cruz—a warrior-priest, an eccentric character, yet a brave and noble soul; and he, let me assure you, can tie the knot so tight that it could not be made tighter even by the Holy Father himself, assisted by the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

This suggestion came as sudden as thunder from a clear sky; yet after the first shock it was considered by all present, and especially by those most concerned, as—first ingenious, then happy, then most excellent, and finally, glorious. When this unparalleled and matchless royal speech was ended, the whole company burst forth into rapturous applause.

Ashby and Harry, in wild excitement, forgot everything but their old friendship and their latest love. They grasped one another's hands with all their olden fervor.

“Hurrah, old fellow!” cried Harry.

“Glorious, isn't it, old boy?” cried Ashby.

“I'll do it; won't you?” cried Harry.

“I will, by Jove!” cried Ashby.

And thus that quarrel was settled.

Brooke said nothing, but his eyes grew moist in his deep joy, and he muttered and hummed all to himself the words of some strange old song which had no connection with anything at all. For this was his fashion—the odd old boy!—whenever his feelings were deeply stirred, and he fell into that fashion now:

“I never knew real happiness  
Till I became a Methodess;  
So come, my love, and jine with me,  
For here's a parson 'll marry we.  
Come for'ad and jine,  
Come for'ad and jine,  
This night come for'ad and jine.  
A-A-A-A-men!”

During the banquet and the subsequent proceedings the virtuous Russell had been silent and distraught. Though restored to the arms of the best of wives, still he was not happy. There was yet something wanting. And what was that? Need I say that it was the lost package with the precious bonds? Ah, no, for every one will surely divine the feelings and thoughts of this sorrowful man.

And he in his abstraction had been trying to think what could be done; for the bonds were lost to him: they were not in the place where he had concealed them. What that place really was he now knew only too well. Had that fiend Rita found them? Perhaps so—yet perhaps not. On the whole, as a last resort, he concluded that it would be best to appeal to Don Carlos. His face indicated goodness, and his whole treatment of the party invited confidence; there surely he might meet with sympathy, and if the package had been found by any of the Carlists it might be restored.

And so, as the uproar subsided, Russell arose, and walking toward Don Carlos, suddenly, and to the amazement and amusement of all present, flung himself on his knees, crying,

“A boon! a boon, my liege!”

These preposterous words had lingered in his memory from some absurd reading of his boyhood.

Don Carlos smiled. “What does he say?” he asked.

Harry came forward to act as interpreter.

Russell now told all. Harry knew in part the fortunes of the bonds after they had left Russell's hands; but then they had again been lost, so that he could not tell what had finally become of them. Of his own part in finding them, and then concealing them again, he thought best to say nothing.

Ashby, however, had something to say which was very much to the purpose. It seems that Dolores had found the bonds, had kept them, and had finally handed them over to Ashby for safe-keeping. He at once concluded that they were Katie's, and was waiting for a convenient opportunity to restore them. The opportunity had now come. This was his simple story, but as it was told to Don Carlos in Spanish, Russell did not understand one word.

“Where are they now?” asked Don Carlos.

"Here," said Ashby, and he produced the package from his coat pocket.

"Give them to me," said Don Carlos. "I will arrange it all. Do you know, gentlemen, this is the happiest moment of my life. I seem like a kind of *Deus ex machina* coming in at the right time, at the end of a series of adventures, to produce universal peace and harmony."

"I hope and trust," said Ashby, "that your Majesty may be the *Deus ex machina* for all Spain, and interpose at last to produce universal peace and harmony here."

"Señor," said Don Carlos, "you talk like a born courtier; yet at the same time," he added, in a solemn tone, "what you have just said is the high hope and aspiration of my life."

After this creditable little speech Ashby handed over the package, and Don Carlos took it. At this sight the lower jaw of the venerable Russell fell several inches. This Don Carlos seemed to him not one whit better than the other. The bonds were now lost to him forever. That was plain enough. Yet he dared not say a word. After all, they were not his, but Katie's. Harry knew that, and Ashby also. What could he say? He was dumb, and so he crawled back, discomfited and despairing, to his seat.

"Gentlemen," said Don Carlos, "you must use your utmost efforts with the ladies. Everything shall be done that can be most fitting to the occasion. We shall have music and festivities. It is not often that I have adventures like this. Let the old castle renew its youth. Let these walls ring to music and song. Don't let the ladies escape you, gentlemen. If anything is wanting to your persuasions, tell them—as that rascal O'Toole, my double, would say—tell them that it is 'our royal will.'"

Another burst of applause, mingled with laughter, followed, after which Harry, Ashby, and Brooke hurried off to see the ladies.

What passed between the different couples on that memorable occasion, what objections were made, on the one hand, by shrinking modesty, and what arguments and entreaties were put forth, on the other hand, by the ardent lovers, need not be narrated here. Whether it was meek compliance with a loved one's wish, or dread of Spanish etiquette, or respect for the "royal will," or whatever else it may have been, suffice it to say that at last the delighted swains won a consent from the

blushing maidens; after which they rushed forth in wild rapture to spend the remainder of the night in prolonged festivities with their gallant host and his festive band of cavaliers.

There was one, however, who took no part in all this. Excusing himself from the festive board on the plea of ill health, he held aloof, a prey to dark and gloomy suspicions. These he communicated to Harry before the "evening session" began. It seemed that the much-afflicted Russell, believing the true Don Carlos to be no better than the false one, held the firm conviction that the bonds had been appropriated by him for his own purposes, and that their proceeds would be squandered on the extravagant schemes of the hopeless Carlist insurrection. But Harry scouted the idea. "Keep them? He keep them?" he cried. "Never! Don Carlos is a gentleman!"

At this Russell groaned and turned away.

Meanwhile the preparations for the coming event were diligently carried on. Before morning the ancient chapel of the hoary castle was decked out with evergreens brought from the neighboring forest, and everything was made ready for the marriage feast.

Morning came. All gathered in the chapel, which in its robe of evergreens looked like a bower.

The three buglers and one drummer belonging to the troop played in magnificent strains the stirring notes of the "Wedding March."

The Curé of Santa Cruz presented an unexceptionable appearance in his ecclesiastical robes.

There, too, was the man who claimed to be the rightful King of Spain, surrounded by men who represented some of the noblest families of the nation—an illustrious company, the like of which none of the principals in this ceremony had ever dreamed of as likely to be present at his wedding.

The bridegrooms came, looking, it must be confessed, slightly seedy.

Then came the brides, resplendent in their best attire, procured from the luggage which had been brought here at the time of their capture by O'Toole.

There were no bridemaids. But Mrs. Russell was present, leaning on the arm of her beloved husband, all in tears. And why? Was it from regrets for the lost

crown of Spain? or was it merely from the tender sentiment which is usually called forth on such an occasion? or was it from the thought of that one whose fortunes she had followed for many eventful hours with a view to such a conclusion as this?

No matter.

Reader, let us draw a veil over the emotions of this afflicted lady.

The marriages went on. The knots were all tied.

Then came the wedding breakfast.

Don Carlos was in his best mood. He jested, he laughed, he paid innumerable compliments to the ladies, and finally gave the whole party an invitation to visit him on some future day at this royal court in Madrid. Which visit, it may be stated parenthetically, has not yet been paid.

After this little speech Don Carlos handed over to Harry the Spanish bonds.

"I understand," said he, "that your lady will soon be of age, but, under any circumstances, according to Spanish law, the husband is entitled to receive all the property of his wife. Take this, therefore, and you will thus relieve our aged friend yonder,

the venerable Señor Russell, from all further responsibility as guardian."

Harry took it, and could not help casting a triumphant glance at Russell, but that good man looked away. He afterward told his wife that he had lost all faith in Providence, and felt but little desire to live any longer in such an evil world. Since the bonds were lost to him, it mattered not who gained them—whether Bourbon, bandit, or bridegroom.

At length the hour of their departure came. The luggage was heaped up in a huge wagon. Another wagon was ready to take the ladies, and horses were prepared for the gentlemen. With these a troop of horsemen was sent as a guard.

As they passed out through the gates Don Carlos stood and bade them all farewell.

So they passed forth on their way to liberty and home and happiness; and so they moved along, until at length the castle, with its hoary walls, its lofty towers, its weather-beaten turrets and battlements, was lost in the distance.

THE END.

### THE THRUSH IN THE OLD CONVENT GARDEN.

GLAD prophet hidden in the leaves,  
Thy sudden flute strikes through the rain;  
The air a thrill of hope receives,  
The day begins to breathe again—  
The dull day weeping ceaseless rain.

The world may weep, yet sound of tears  
But faintly stirs this cloistered space,  
Where noiseless feet of passing years  
Fall on soft lawns and leave no trace,  
But cast fresh spells about the place.

Ah, not for us such green repose,  
Gray wall-girt stillness, brooding air.  
Where floats the soul of each dead rose  
The endless years have seen unclosed,  
And pass, sweet ghost, to haunt the air.

Sing loud, and bid us dream no more  
In this fair prison of the soul,  
But rise and gird us, and before  
The sun sets hasten toward the goal,  
Break loose these sweet bonds of the soul.

Sing 'mid the falling leaves thy song  
Of hope, though Autumn's breath is here;  
The day is short, the way is long.  
Up! let us labor and be strong,  
Nor falter till the end appear.