

The Firebrand.

By S. R. CROCKETT.

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Ramon Garcia, known as El Sarria, has been induced to believe that his wife, Dolores, is unfaithful to him. He is a man of some wealth and influence, and his wife has been seen with another man. The story follows the discovery of the plot, the escape of Dolores, and the various attempts to bring her back. The story is a tale of love, jealousy, and revenge.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Holy Innocents.

With small compunction El Sarria turned Don Tomas over with his foot and coolly appropriated the cloak he had discarded, as also his hat, which was handed with gay colors and in the shape affected by the dandies of Seville. Then swinging the cloak about him and setting the hat upon his head, he strode to the garden door.

Above he could hear the angry voice of a woman, with intervals of silence, as if for a low toned imprecation. Then came a wail of despair and grief that nearly sent him up the stairs at a tiger's rush, that would have scattered his enemies before him like chaff. For it was the voice of his Dolores he heard for the second time. But of late El Sarria had learned some of the wisdom of caution. He knew not how the woman might have within the house, and he might only lose his own life without benefiting either Dolores or his son.

Then there was a slow foot on the stairs, coming down. The light went out above and he heard a heavy breathing behind the closed door by which he stood. "Tomas—Tomas!" said a voice, "here is the baby. It is asleep. Do it quietly so that the mother may not be alarmed. I cannot stir without her hearing me and asking the reason."

And in the arms of Ramon Garcia was placed the breathing body of his first-born son. The door was shut before he could move, so astonished he was by the softness of that light burden, that his Elvira's unamplified groan escaped safe for that time. And indeed, afterwards turned out to be just as well.

So at the door of his enemy El Sarria stood dumb and stricken, the babe in his arms. For the fact that this child that was his and Dolores' annihilated for the moment every revenge from his soul.

But a hand was laid on his shoulder. "Haste thee, haste," hissed the witch-wife, La Giralda, Elvira's friend and rival, "has thou smitten strongly? She lies behind the door. I cannot hear her breathe, so all must be well. I saw thee stoop to the floor, well done, well done! But come away, come away! Presently Don Luis will miss the Tia and give the alarm. Give me the babe!"

But this Ramon would not do, holding jealously to his own. "What can you, a man, do with a babe?" she persisted. "Can you stop its mouth from crying. In the milk in your breasts to feed its little blind mouth? Give it to me, I say!"

"Nay," said El Sarria, shaking her off, "not to you. Did not this murderous woman come from your wagon? Is not her place under your canvas? Am I not here place under your wings?"

"It shall be so no more, if you stroke prove true," said the gypsy. "I shall be the queen and bring up this youngling to be the boldest horse thief betwixt this filthy Aragon and the gypsy barrio of Granada, where La Giralda's cave dives deepest into the rock."

"No, I will not!" said the man, grasping the babe so tightly that it whimpered and stretched its little body tense as a bowstring. "I will take him to the hills and suckle him with goat's milk! He shall be no horse thief, but a fighter of men!"

"Ah, you are a mad dog—a lad of the hills? I thought so," chuckled the woman, "come away quickly. Then, brave manslayer, I knew a better way than either. The sisters, the good women of the convent, will take him at a word from me. I know the night watch, a country woman of mine, little Concha, she will receive him through the wicket and guard him well-being well paid, that is, as a quard his honor can pay!"

"And how soon, think ye, could your wife be moved?" asked Rollo.

Ramon shrugged his shoulders helplessly and turned to La Giralda. "Dolores is as a dove and weak from long trouble of heart. On your head I ask of you, could we move her in twenty-four hours and yet risk nothing of the life?"

"Yes, as the Virgin sees me," asserted La Giralda, holding up her hands. "If so be I have the firming of the hands about her of linen, wide and strong, they must be made to his mind's own afterward. And then she must be carried between four stout men, as I shall show you how."

"It shall be done," cried Rollo. "I will find the men, do you provide the linen, El Sarria. I will find the men, do you provide the linen, El Sarria. I will find the men, do you provide the linen, El Sarria." (Text continues with Rollo's plan and the search for men.)

And with Rollo in the van, El Sarria following a little behind and La Giralda bolting the doors and generally protecting the rear, the party of Dolores, with the key of the mill house and her friend, Tia Elvira, and is at his old tricks again.



A KNIFE WAS AT HIS THROAT, A FIGURE STOOD BEFORE.

There—take it then," said the man impatiently, and a heavy string of beads was slid across the table with a clanking noise. "I had not thought you so good a Christian, Tia."

"Oh, it is not that," chuckled the hag, clutching the necklace firmly, as a starving dog might fall on a bone, and concealing it instantly beneath her skirts. "But each link hath the stamp of Seville upon it—the mint stamp of Seville—and will pass wherever it goes for a good ducat wherever one may chance to be. With that necklace one can never be in want."

- Axinister Rugs, Oriental designs in beautiful soft color effects—characteristic of these goods:
- 8 feet 3 inches by 10 feet 6 inches... 18.50
- 5 feet by 12 feet... 20.50
- Extra quality, 9 feet by 12 feet... 24.95
- 10 feet 6 inches by 12 feet... 25.50

- Velvet Sofa Rugs—45x75 inches, durable and effective... 3.75
 - Three-ply Ingrain, extra quality, per yard... 65c
 - Granite Carpet, colors well set, not run... 25c
- A complete line of Art Squares and small rugs at equally low prices.

Remember 10c apiece for your choice.

W. R. BENNETT COMPANY.

"Ramon," he said, his voice, which had been full of chuckling laughter, rising suddenly to a thin shriek. "God in heaven, Ramon Garcia."

And with a trembling hand he tried to cross himself.

"What?" said Ramon in a hollow voice, and mechanically the miller placed the papers in his hands.

Picture Dept. Second Floor. Special for Monday. 10c each—Remember 10c

Sizes 14x19 inches, some choice subjects in scenery, fruits and flowers, etc.; the mat on this picture alone is worth 20c. Take advantage of this genuine bargain, as few opportunities are offered like this in the line of pictures.

Drug Dept. We carry a line of HARD RUBBER, leather covered steel and ELECTRIC Trusses and at PRICES that will astonish you. WE GUARANTEE you a PERFECT FIT.

THE NEW YORK ELASTIC Web Truss, enamel lined, pad single but reliable to either side... 1.25

THE NEW YORK ELASTIC Truss, double with black enamel pad... 1.50

CHASE'S STEEL SPRING leather covered Truss, single... 1.00

IMPERIAL Truss, the newest and most improved truss—pad can be held in any position, single... 2.50

Hardware Dept. We WANT you to have a thermometer and we are going to MAKE you a price so low that you cannot afford to buy without one. So here goes:

Manhattan... 15c

Artistic... 12c

Casey's Reading... 10c

Reliable... 15c

8c

Trunk Dept. We carry a complete line of Trunks, Telescopes, Suit Cases and fine Leather Bags in all sizes and latest shapes. A SPECIAL MONDAY price on all these goods. BAGS in Oxford and Oxfords, in 2-1/2 sizes, from \$2.49 to \$2.99.

CHAPTER XV. Rollo intervenes. With eyes injected, wide-open mouth and dropped jaw, the man sat all fallen together in his seat, the gold ornaments still strewn about him, a pencil with which he had been checking them fallen from his nerveless grasp.

"I have accounted for the old lady," said Rollo, who with the eager professional assistance of La Giralda had been goggling and securing the Tia.

CHAPTER XVI. Don Luis is willing. So saying, Rollo went out and locked the door behind him, leaving La Giralda seated beside it with a loaded pistol to prevent any egress in case Fernandez had some way of opening the bolts known only to himself.

When Rollo returned from arranging these matters he found El Sarria's place vacant. But the young man, following the direction of La Giralda's nod, went out and in a chamber about which hung a peculiar atmosphere, and in a line you will remember as his knees by a woman's bedside.

CHAPTER XVII. Ramon Garcia clasped Rollo's hand. "By the Virgin and all the saints," he cried, "I will do to the line and letter all that you desire of me in every particular. I know well that I have no other hope."

CONSULT YOUR OWN INTEREST WHEN BUYING

IS **Bennett** ADVICE

W. R. BENNETT COMPANY.

OMAHA & ST. LOUIS R.R.

SUMMER SPECIALS.

\$44.00 New York and Return Daily
\$25.75 Buffalo and return daily.
\$21.50 Louisville, Ky. and return on sale August 24, 25 and 26.
\$24.75 Cleveland, O. and return on sale September 7 to 10.

Home-seekers' Excursion

On sale first and third Tuesday each month. Tourist Rates on sale DAILY to all summer resorts allowing stop-overs at Detroit, Niagara Falls, Buffalo and other points. For rate, lake trips, Pan-American descriptive matter and all information, call at CITY TICKET OFFICE, 145 FARNAM STREET, (Paxton Hotel Block), or write HARRY E. MOORE, G. A. P. D., Omaha, Nebraska.

SANTAL MIDY

Relieves Kidney & Bladder troubles at once. Cures in 48 Hours URINARY DISCHARGES.

"Lay down that pistol, mother; we shall need it for a while, and do give me a hand with this rasical's sore head. What think you of it?"

"The whole of it," said La Giralda, with a strong arm. "I don't think the man will die—unless—unless—she fingered the keen little knife she carried lovingly—unless matters are a little as I bid you and help me to take and bind up the scoundrel's pate."

"The old woman did so with an air of protest, finally, however, consenting to make a plaster of certain herbs which she found in the cabinet of simples, and, having boiled them, applied it like a turban to Don Tomas' unconscious crown.

"Now," said Rollo, "if you are ready, I in my turn should like to have my little interview with Don Luis!"

Rollo nodded.

"Why not?" he said cheerfully. "We shall need his assistance very often today! Open the door, La Giralda."

Ramon carried the limp body of Tomas, at the sight of which Luis Fernandez flung up his hands in dismay.

"You have killed him, then—as you will kill me!" he moaned and ran toward the door of the strong room.

"Not so," said Rollo, stopping him with composure. "Your brother is, as I think, as comfortable as the circumstances will permit, and more likely to recover than he deserves. Be good enough to tell La Giralda where to find a lamp or candle-box, so that in taking care of him you may not be hindered by darkness."

As he spoke Rollo had been arranging a couch of boxes and pillows, on which, without the slightest regard to his enemy's comfort, El Sarria flung his burden down.

But Rollo did his best for the unconscious man's comfort, and then when La Giralda had returned with a lamp he turned sharply upon Don Luis.

"Sir," he said, "you know the causes of quarrel between yourself and Don Ramon Garcia, for whom I am acting. You know also what chances you have if I do not use the utmost discretion in commencing other and milder methods. Are you, then, willing to be guided entirely by me or do you prefer to be dealt with by my principal upon his own account and without regard to my advice?"

Luis Fernandez clasped Rollo's hand. "By the Virgin and all the saints," he cried, "I will do to the line and letter all that you desire of me in every particular. I know well that I have no other hope."

"God," said Rollo, "then you will today also surrender about the Casa as usual. You will give any necessary orders to your fellow-man when he comes at the accustomed hour. This you will do in your own chamber and in my presence, urging a slight calumny as a reason for not venturing out. You will speak to La Giralda as to your servant, and in fine you will comport yourself as if nothing had occurred, and as if no such man as Ramon Garcia were within a thousand leagues of the mill house of Sarria! Do you agree?"

"I agree to anything, to everything!" said Fernandez eagerly.

"But remember," continued Rollo, "in order to compass this I am stretching a good many points. I saw your eye brighten just now when I spoke of giving orders. Now, remember, if there is the slightest attempt and with it our lives, but first of all, and quite suddenly, one man shall die, and that man is—Luis Fernandez."

He added this asseveration:

"And this I, Rollo Blair of Blair Castle, in the name of the Lord, swear by Almighty God and the honor of Scotland's gentlemen."

(To be Continued.)