

The Firebrand.

By S. R. CROCKETT.

The door of the porter's lodge was opened

clogging itself about unwontedly hasty

"The mother superior waists!" gasped the

portress, opening the great door suddenly

and the young man found himself forthwith

within the Convent of the Holy Innocents.

mouth slightly pulled down at the corners,

lovial countenance.

contradicting the first impressions of her

"You are young, colonel," she said, frown-

ing upon Rollo's good look with a certain

affectation of gloom quite foreign to her

nature, "very young to be the messenger of

"I can, indeed, hardly claim that honor,"

The prioress rose from her seat indig-

"He is a murderer-in intent, if not in

"Many men have been called so," said

Rollo sadly, "who for the king's sake

have borne reproach gladly-of whom this

Ramon, called El Sarria, is one. What he

has done has been done by order of our

"Indeed, that is true, my lady," inter-

jected a very pretty and unconventional

young person, rising suddenly from behind

certain frames of embroidery, where she

had been at work unseen; "the gentlemen

refers to that same Ramon Garcia whose

letters recommendatory I had the honor

were soldiering a sin and your reverend

worthiness knows that, shriven or un-

shriven, the soldiers of Carlos Quinto go

that while on earth a handsome uniform

'Hush, child, hush," cried the abbess

holding up her hands in horror; "your talk

savors of the world, and, indeed, that re-

minds me-how in the world came you

yourself to be ready for our Lady of the

"Well, child, well, you can go now,

"I would speak with this young man

The girl cast a look at Rollo which re

He held up his hand almost involuntarily

"If this damosel is by chance the Senor-

ita Concha Cabezos, as I have some reason

to suppose, though I have never seen the

young lady, it might be advantageous if

she remained. She was formerly, as I am

informed, in the family of Don Ramon Gar-

Then Rollo opened out his plans in

prioress how important it was for

far as they concerned Dolores, showing the

success of the arduous mission on which

they have been dispatched that El Sarria

The prioress considered a while, and,

"It is indeed gravely irregular," she

"And if it be your will I will arrange

Rollo, promptly. "I need not, in that case,

The lady superior bent a quick, sharp

look upon the pair, but Rollo was grave

'You will do your best, Concha,'

said gravely admonishing that maiden with

her forefinger, "to further the objects of

"Yes, my lady superior!" said little

were the king's own high majesty in per-

"A very proper spirit!" said the prioress.

nodding and going out. "Cultivate it, my

a curtsy behind her back, which, alas, was

not without a certain wicked suggestion of

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Flutter of Red and White.

"At your ambassodorial service!" said

the Senorita Concha, bowing still lower

and holding out her skirts at either side

ence, "what commands has your Scottish

mands as-as-I thought you might be

"Ahem" said Rollo, more than a little

"Now we are getting at it!" said Concha

"I must be on my guard with this girl!"

thought Rollo, "I can almost bring myself

to believe that-yet it seems impossible-

"I wished to see you!" he went on.

The girl curtaied again, bringing her

was a new one. He began to think of what

with a prettyish exaggeration of defer-

excellency for poor little Concha?"

puzzled, "they were not so much

Caberos, nodding with a wise air.

that-the girl is chaffing me-me!"

"I will," said little Concha, and dropped

ery as demure as a mouse.

after many dublous shakings of the head.

said the abbess, with a nod of dismission

"I was scated at the embroidery."

the girl, demurely; "you set me the

Pillar's festival on Tuesday next.

mained with him long.

Dolores Garcia.'

young friend.

their emissaries.

able to help me."

covers a multitude of sins."

here?

alone!

said Rollo, smiling and bowing, "but I have

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters,

Ramon Garcia, known as El Sarria, having been induced to believe that his wife. Polores, is unfaithful, stabs a village fop, Rafael Flores, whom he finds presumably kissing Dolores through the window. His estates are conflocated and he becomes a hunted man. At the same time a young Scotch adventurer, Rollo Biair, comes to Spain, and during an inn quarrel is aided by John Mortimer, an Englishman. The two start to visit Don Baltasar, about of the monastery of Montblanch. Blair and Mortimer are entertained lavishiy by the abbot, and meet Etlenne St. Pierre, a French gailant who is studying for holy orders. These three, with El Sarria, who has found protection at the monastery are commissioned by the abbot to capture the queen regent and her little daughter in the interests of the church. Enroute for the camp of Cabrera, the Carlist general, they pass the home of El Sarria, who learns that Dolores was not false to him and that his downfall was plotted by Luis Fernandez. Delores is imprisoned in Luis home and the son to whom she has just given hirth is about to be buried alive by Luis brother. Tomas, when El Sarria falls upon him. El Sarria rescues his child and takes it to the Convent of the Holy Innocents, where Ramon Garcia, known as El Sarria, hay tight curb!" mentor had vanished. and he caught the heavy rustle of cloth

El Sarria rescues his child and takes the Convent of the Holy Innocents, where Conchas is also staying. Then, aid d by Rollo Blair and his companious, he captures Fernandez home and rescues his wife.

The lady superior proved to be a woman of about 55 or 69 years of age, in person stout and rubicund, a smile of good humor tures Fernandez home and rescues his wife. (Copyright, 1901, by S. R. Crockett.)

CHAPTER XVII.

A Grave Irregularity.

With Rollo now for a time the tale runs more briskly. He set off for the venta, a king!" where he found Etlenne and John Mortimer sitting at meat.

"Good morning, friends of mine," he the honor to belong to the army of Carlos cried, "you are in excellent case, I sec. Quinto, and to be entrusted with a most John, I have made arrangements for you to serious mission on his behalf. My good go and visit some vineyards today. Old friend, Don Baltasar Varcia, prior of the Gasper will guide you with his gun over his Abbey of Montblanch, a name probably valiant shoulder. You can pick up points known to you." about wine buying without doubt. As to "How can I assist you!" she said; "comyou, Etienne, mon vieux, I have found your mand me. There is nothing consistent with Concha and I am going to see her myself the order and discipline of this house that in half an hour. Shall I give her your I will not grant to you." Rollo bowed

grandly "What!" cried Saint Pierre, "you jest-it | "I thank you in the name of my master," cannot be my cruci, cruci little Conchita he said; "the king will not forget fitly to who fled from me and would not take the reward his faithful servants. I ask what smallest notice of all my letters and mes- is, indeed, somewhat irregular, but is sages. Where is she?" nevertheless necessary. There is a man

'She is at the nunnery of the Sisters of of this place who for the king's cause has Mercy outside the village. Poor Etienne, become an outcast, one Ramon Garcia-" I am indeed sorry for you. With your religious views it will be impossible for you nantly.

to make love to a nun!" "Would I not," cried Etienne eagerly, act," she said. "He is no true man, but "mon Dieu, only procure me a chance and I a villain-" will let you see! But a nunnery is a hard nut to crack. How do you propose to man-

"I intend to make friends with the lady superior," said Rollo, confidently. "You have a letter of introduction to her, Don Carlos-"

doubtless?" said Etienne. "I do not at present even know her name, but all in good time!" said the youth,

"For stark assurance commend me to a Scot," cried Etienne with enthusiasm.

"Etienne," said Rollo, suddenly checking his glass in midair as an idea occurred to of submitting to you this morning. To kill him, "lend me that ring of your sainted in the king's name is surely no sin, else uncle's, the one with the picture of Don

The young Frenchman indolently drew it from his finger, laid it on the polished straight to heaven. And none can deny marble top of the table and with his forefinger flipped it across to Rollo. What shall I say to your Concha-that

is, if I chance to see her?" said Rollo, as he brushed his clothes and saw to the neatness of his neck ribbon.

Etienne held down his head. "Indeed," he said a little rejuctantly, "I am not so anxious that you should say anything at all about me. The little minx did not treat me so very well when I came this way on my last visit to my uncle. And to tell the truth, there is an exceedingly pretty girl living only three doors from the venta. I have already spoken to her and

she has smiled at me thrice over the fence." "That leaves me a freer hand with Concha, then," murmured Rolio to himself. as he stuck his hat on the back of his head and strode out into the stable yard, smiling to himself.

He had his horse brought out and saddled. Then he mounted and rode down the village street toward the convent of the pious cia and can assist my mission very ma-Sisters of Mercy. He smiled to himself as tertally." he rode, for he wondered how he would succeed with this good mother superior, and what manner of girl he would find that wicked, tricksome Concha to be, whose name was in all men's mouths with a certain approving flavor, as of a pleasant naughtiness to be alternately scolded and beseeching her for the sake of the king's cajoled. One thing this Master Rollo was cause to receive Dolores within the convent as sure of as that he was a Scot. And that as she had already received her child. was-he pever could, would or should fall in love with such a girl.

So Rollo rode up with a clatter of spurs finally agreed. and accoutrement to the gate of the convent. Dismounting he advanced briskly to said. "but in these untoward times the the gate and knocked loudly upon it with king's service overrides all. I will receive his riding whip.

In a few moments a sour-faced portress opened the little square wicket and looked the details with Senorita Concha," said through at him.

"I must see the mother superior immedi- further detain the noble and reverend ately on important business," quoth the prioress!" brisk youth, slapping his waistcoat and settling the hilt of his sword in a businesslie manner, as if he had all his life been and high of demeanor as became the envoy in the habit of making early morning calls of a king, while Concha sat at her embroidupon mother superiors.

The portress laughed. "A likely story," she said, "that I am to trail across the yard and leave my business . here to fetch the lady superior from her devotions to see a young man at the gate. "If you do not admit me," Rollo went on unabashed, "not only the lady superior

will suffer, but the cause which all good Christians have at heart.' He suddenly thrust his bare hand close to

the wicket and showed the ring which Etienne had given him. "Do you know this?" he said.

At his first threatening motion the woman had mechanically withdrawn, but now curiesity brought her again closer to the grating, on perceiving that Rollo made no attempt to intrude his hand within.

These are the royal arms of Spain, are they not " she said, and dropped an involuntary courtesy.

Then Rollo played his trump card. The ring was made with a certain secret spring beneath the stone, which, when touched sprang up like the lid of a box and a beautiful little miniature was revealed, en circled with hair of a dark brown color.

"Do you know who this is?" he said. His absolute majesty, Carlos Quinto! said the portress with a deep reverence.

"Well, then," Rollo went on, "take this ring and with it the bair of the ancinted and Christian king. It is a great trust, but I gave it into your hands. Carry it revenently as a token to the lady superior that a messenger from the king waits to speak a word with her!"

The head of the portress disappeared from the young man's sight with the profundity and compass of the reverence with which she received the image of the sovereign of all Catholic hearts

As the young man stood drumming his

least as much of it as he had not left in right."

heart instantly disturbed within him, for young foreign soldier with the handsome that he come!" he was a merciful man by nature and con- face and the excellent opinion of himself sistently merciful to his beast. Then he had been but fair game to Concha; a prey turned about, loosened the curb and looked marked down, not from any fell intent, but over his horse, noticed that the tail strap for the due humbling of pride. For Concha also lathered the animal, whereupon he was interested in bringing young men to eased that. Then with a smiling counten- a sense of their position, and, mostly, ance he turned for approval to the face at may be confessed, it did them a vast deal the wicket, but he was too late. His of good.

been traduced. Not that it mattered in La Giraida, "and, Don Luis, in an hour I Etienne de Saint Pierre rise in a leisurely the least to him. He was cased in triple will trouble you to take a little four of the manner, dusted the knees of his riding steel. His heart was adamant. Or at premises with me, just to show that all is breeches, twirfed his mustache and looked

the possession of Peggy Ramany-and when So Rollo Blair and his companion with-he came to think of it-several others! See Rollo Blair and his companion with-frew into the cool salcon of the Mill Well, what in the devil's name brings But the girl's expression aftered as soon house without having seen the little waving you here?" he demanded. as she heard the service that was required strip of red upon the roof. As soon as they The mirthful moed in which he had of her and she followed with rapt atten- were gone, however, Don Luis leaped up, tion the tale of the garrisoning of the Mill and with a long fishing pole he flaunted a past with Rollo. house of Sarria and the circ need of her strip of white beside the red, waving it former mistress and friend, Dolores Gar- this way and that for a long time, till in said, and without making any further ex-

Little Concha's coquetry, her experiment- the sweat rained from him in great drops. ing upon all and sundry who came near Then he leaped down at last, muttering. Vente, and out into the sunlit road. her, her moods and whims, transient as the "If the general is within twenty miles, as horse," a pair of red lips said in the soft flaws that ruffle the ripple, breathe upon I think he is, that ought to bring him to tinued to scowl, he said abruptly, "Where shutters, dark window squares took on the southland speech of Andalusia. "The and again set sparkling the surface of a Sarria. The angels grant that he is in is Mortimer?" entero is chafing himself to pieces on a too | mountain tarn-all these dropped from the time"-there he paused a moment, and Andalusian maiden at the thought of then added with a bitter smile-"or the other meal, suppose," answered the little idle. Ramon Garcia and Rollo had con-"Thank you, senorita!" said Rollo, his another's need. A moment before this devil's either. I am not particular, so be prenchman, shrugging his shoulders, one structed a carrying couch for Dolores,

CHAPTER XIX.

"Signals of Storm."

at Rollo, who stood on the path regarding swering signal.

watched his comrade kneel was aircady

"Come outside and I will tell you," he the close atmosphere of the strong room planation or asking for any from Etienne, he strode back through the courtyard of the Then turning to his friend, who still con-

"Nay, that I know not-looking for an-

higher than the other.

gloomy brows. "Noy," he said, "this is serious. I need your help. Do not fall me tonight, and belp me to find Mortimer. I had not the smallest A long strip of Moorish-looking wall and intention of intruding upon you. It is not certain towers that glittered white in the for myself," and forthwith, in a low voice, locked the doers of the Mill house, and by

Meanwhile in a hushed chamber the outnew day had come.

CHAPTER XX.

The Butcher of Tortosa.

Upon the village of Sarria and upon its treling mountains night descended with Oriental swiftness. The white houses grew blurred and indistinct. Red roofs, green same shade of indistinguishable purple.

where, on a light and pliant framework of Rollo glanced at him from under his the great bulrush canes that grew along the canal edges, her mattress might be laid. Very gently, and, as it were, in one

piece, like a swaddled infant. Dolores was lifted up upon the hastily arranged ambulance. The four bearers fell in. La Giralda a circuitous route which avoided the village and its barking curs they proceeded in the direction of the convent buildings.

As often as the feet of any of the bearers slipped upon a stone Ramon grew sick with apprehension, and in a whisper over his shoulder he would inquire of Dolores if all was well.

"All is well, beloved," the voice, weak and feeble, would reply. "You are hereyou are not angry with me. Yes, all is

They moved slowly through the darkness. La Giralda with many crooping encouragements waiting upon Dolores, now lifting up the corner of a coverlid and now anxiously

adjusting a pillow. They were soon passing under the eastern side of the convent.

'Ah, I can smell them." murmured John Mortimer; "a hundred tons if not more. I wonder if I could not tackle the old woman touight about them?"

At last they were at the little white cowl of the porter's lodge, out of which the black bars of the wicket grinned with a semblance of ghastly mirth.

Rollo knocked gently. The panel slid back noiselessly and there was the face of Concha Cabezos dimly revealed. No longer mischievous or even piquant, but drawn and pale with anxiety. "There are bad people here," she whis-

pered, "who have persuaded the lady superior that you are imposters. She will not receive or keep Dolores Garcia unless but your own."

"What?" came from the rear in a thunderous growl. "Hush, I bid you!" commanded Rollo

sternly. "Remember you have put this in my hands." And the outlaw fell back silenced for the moment, his heart, however, revolving death and burnings. Trust me with your papers-your credentials," said Concha quickly. "These will convince her. I will bring them to you at

the Mill house tomorrow morning!"

Rollo ran his knife round the stitching of his coat where he carried these sacre lest possessions. "There," he said, "remember-do not let them out of your sight a moment. I am

putting far more than my own life into "I will cherish them as the most precious thing in the world. And now I will go and show them to the lady superior."

"Not till you have taken in my Dolores as you promised," came the voice of El Sarria, "or by heaven I will burn your convent to the ground. She shall not be left here in the damp dews of the night." 'No, no," whispered Concha, "she shall

be laid in the lodge of the portress, and La Giralda shall watch her till her own chamber is prepared, and I have eased the mind of the lady superior."

gave back with many creakings and thr ugh the great black gap of the main gate they village in the direction of the Convent of carried Dolores into the warm, flowerthe Holy Innocents, and they were almost scented darkness of the portress' lodge. lons. He had just discovered that he had under its walls when the little Frenchman She was laid on a bed and the moment most scurvily neglected them, and now he looking up suddenly, recognized with a start after Concha turned earnestly upon the four men.

"Now go," she said, "this instant! I also have risked more than you know! Go

"Can I not stay with her tonight? pleaded El Sarria, keeping the limp hand. wet with chill perspiration, close in his. "Go, Go, I say!" said Concha.

t may be too late. See yonder." And on a hill away to the west a red light burned for a long moment and then vanished.

The three young men went out, but El Sarria lingered, kneeling by his wife's bedside. Rollo went back and touched him on his shoulder.

"You must come with us-for her sake!" you ever see the like of that?-a hundred he said. And he pointed with his finger, of John Mortimere's method of doing busi- double strings hung from the ceiling to the And obediently at his word the glant arose floor right across. And the factory nearly and went out. Rello followed quickly, but 150 yards long. There's a shipload of onions as he went a little palm fell on his arm and low voice whispered in his car "You trust me, do you not?"

> Rollo lifted Concha's hand from his sleeve and kissed it.

With my life-and more!" he said. "What mere?" queried Concha. "With my friends' lives," he answered.

And as he went out with no other word Concha breathed a sigh softly and turned toward Dolores. She felt somehow as if the tables were being turned upon her.

Outside there was a kind of waiting hush in the air, an electric tension of expectation, or so, at least, it seemed to Rollo, As they marched along the road toward the Mill house they saw a ruddy glow toward the south.

"Something is on fire there," said John Montimer. They are more like campfires behind the hills," commented Etienne, from his larger

"I think we had better clear; experience: out tonight." "That," said Rollo firmly, "is impossible

o far as I am concerned. I must wait at the Mill house for the papers. But do you three go on and I will rejoin you tomorrow." "I will stay," said El Sarria as soon as Rollo's words had been interpreted to him. "And I." cried Etienne, "shall it be said that a Saint Pierre ever forsook a friend?" "And I," said John Mortimer, "to look

The Mill house was silent and dark they had left it. "Let us go and see that all is right," said

Rollo, and led the way into the large room where they had found Luis Fernandez. He walked up to the window, a dim oblong of blackness, only less Egyptian than the chamber itself. He stopped to strike his flint and steel together into his tinder box. and even as the small, glittering point winked Rollo felt his throat grasped back and front by different pairs of hands, while others clung to his knees and brought him to the ground.

open!" he cried to his companions, as well as he could for the throttling fingers. But behind him there arose the sound of a mighty combat. Furniture was overset or

broken with a sharp, crashing noise as it was trampled under foot. n a tone of command

com, and there on the floor in the grasp of their captors were Ramon Garcia, still heaving with his mighty exertions, and Rollo the Scot, who lay very quiet so soon distance would do no good.

a June hayfield. No, she she must have "Dring wine and water!" cried Rollo to and disappeared into a neighboring house. red and white pennen was still flying from tured in the hall white trying to unlock the he roof of the Mill house of Sarria, and outer door, were roughly hauled fato the on the hills to the south, through the white room. Rollo was permitted to rise, but the

sun glare, flickered at intervals an an- giant was kept on his back while they fastened him up securely with ropes. Then Luis Fernandez came in, an evil law sat with his wife's hand in his and smile on his dark, handsome face, and bethought on nothing, save that for him the hind him a little, thick-set, active man in some military dress of light material. The

uniform was unfamiliar to Retlo, who for a moment was in doubt whether he was in the hands of the Cristines or in those of the partisans of Don Carlos. But a glance about the chamber eased his mind. The white boinss of the Basque

provinces mingled with the red of Navarre told him that he had been captured by the Carlists.

"Well," said the little dark man with the curly hair, black and kinked like a negro's, "give an account of yourself and of your proceedings in this village."

We are soldiers in the service of his excellency, Don Carlos," said Rollo, fearlessly, "we are on our way to the camp of General Cabrera on a mission of import-

Luis Pernaudez looked across at his companion, who had seated himself carelessly n a large chair by the window

"Did I not tell you he would say that?" he said. The other nodded. "On a mission to General Cabrera," repeated the chief of Rollo's captors, "well, then, doubtless you can prove your statement by papers and documents. Let me see your credentials."

"You shall," said the man in the chair. "I am General Cabrera, in the service of his absolute majesty, Carlos V. of Spain. I shall be glad to receive your credentials.

"I can indeed give you a message and that instantly," said Rolle, "but I am unfortunately prevented from showing you my credentials till the morning. They are at present at the-, in the hands of a friend-"

Here Rollo stammered and came to a full ston. Luis Fernandez laughed scornfully. "Of course," he said. "What did I tell you, general? He has no credentials." Cabrera struck his clenched fist on the

Rollo saw that to refer to the Convent of

honor from revealing the name of my friend, or why the documents were so entrusted. But if your excellency will wait till the morning I promise that you shall be

to the occasion and perhaps may prevent any delay whatsoever." Cabrera leisurely rolled and lighted a

the latent cruelty of his nature came out. Their captors with no great delicacy of handling began to overhaul the contents cept the fragment of

by the nationalist general offering a reward for his capture. But in the outer pocket of Rollo Blair was found a far more compromising document. When the searcher drew it forth

Cabrera took the paper and glanced it over carelessly, but as soon as his eye fell upon the signature the fashion of his counenance changed. He leaped to his feet.

respondence with Nogueras, the villain who in cold blood shot my poor old mother for no crime but that of having borne me! Have the fellows out instantly and shoot

Rollo stood a moment dumfounded, then he recovered himself and spoke. "General Cabrera," he said, "this is a

Negueras. I had not even heard his name. service of Don Carlos and I have had no communication with his enemies."

"To the young Englishman of the Poreign legion, pretending service with Don Carlon, Cabrera and his men by penetrating into their district and if possible joining organization. You will report the same to me and this pass will hold you safe with all servants and well wishers of the

"NOGUERAS The Carlist commander, whose voice had

More than one Carlist soldier glanced at his neighbor with a look which said, plain as printed proclamation, "It is all over with the foreigners!"

At last Cabrera stopped his promenade. He folded his arms and stood looking up at

" "The morning"-I think you said-well. I will give your friend till the morning to be ready with proofs of your innocence. But if not, so soon as the sun rises over the hills out there, you four shall be shot

for spies and traitors. Take them away!" (To be Continued.)

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ROLLO LIFTED CONCHA'S HAND FROM HIS SLEEVE AND KISSED IT. "WITH MY LIFE AND MORE," HE SAID.

Rollo was impatient to find his compan-

eager listener, the ready,

reliable as any brother. "Let me see-let me see," she murmured, thoughtfully. "Wait-I will come with you. (She took a glance at the young cavalier armed cap-a-pic and thought doubtless of the horse chafing and shaking its accoutrements in the shade of the porter's lodge. No, I will not come with you. I will follow immediately and do you, sir, return as

swiftly as possible to the Mill house of Sarria! And without the slightest attempt at coquetry. Concha showed Rollo to the door and that arrogant youth, slightly bewildered and uncertain of the march of events, found himself presently riding away from the white gate of the monastery with Etienne's ring upon his finger-and a belief crystallizing in his heart that of all the maligned and misrepresented beings on

the earth the most maligned and the most innocent was little Concha Cabezos. The Mill house remained as he left when he rode away. The sunshine fell broad and strong on its whitewashed walls and green shutters, most of them closed hermetically along the front, as was the custom in Sarria, till the power of the should leave no anxieties behind him and

sun was on the wane. As Rollo went down the little slope past the corner of the garden, where Ramon had spoken first with La Giralda, it seemed to him that over the broiling roofs of the Mill house he caught the glimmer of something cool and white. He halted his horse and stood momentarily up in his stirrups. whereupon the glimmer upon the roof

seemed to change suddenly to red and then as swiftly vanished. Certainly there was something wrong. Rollo hurried on, giving the three knocks which had been agreed upon at the closed outer door of the house. It was opened

by La Giralda. "Who is signaling from the roof?" he asked hurriedly. The old gypsy stared at him and the glanced apprehensively at his face.

had grown white with sudden anxiety. "A touch of sun-you are not accostomed -you are not of the country to ride about this young man. And, above all, be sure at this time of day. No one has been sig to show him the deference due to his rank naling. Don Ramon is with his wife, waiting for you; and, as I think, not finding the time long. I will bring you a drink of Concha Cabezos, "I will treat him as if he wine and water with a tisane in it, very

judicious in cases of sun-touch!" But Rello was not to be appeared till he had summoned El Sarria and with him examined the strong room where the prisoners were kept. As before, Luis sat listlessly by the table, his brow upon his hand. He did not look up or that moment being passionately kissed by of custom calmly reading and old newsspeak when they entered. But his brother some person unseen. contempt for kings and dignitaries and mouned on about his wounded head and complained that La Tin had drunk all the his heel, adding as an afterthought, "and water. This being replenished, Don Tomas wandered off into muttered confidences con cerning his early travels, how he had made love to the alcalde's daughter of Granada, at Ronda fair-with other things too inti- voice attracted him. mate to be here set down, ever returning, however, to his plea that the Tia Elvira

> water jug. "Nay, not so," said the Tia soothingly "every drop of the water you have drunk. Don Tomas. But it is your head, your poor head. I turned the poultice and with the

afresh. Had Rollo but followed the direction her gaze he might have had his doubts of thrust forward and downward-as it were cause had El Sarria for trusting her? None La Giralda's theory of sunstroke to explain the signaling from the roof For the path was Monsieur Etienne, lately hated the Tia Elvira. Then that flicker of there, clearly to be seen out of the halfopen trapdoor, was a little scarlet strip of kissing the hand of reluctant beauty. hands together in a little appeal almost cloth stirred by the wind and doubtless

"Better that you should look to your the mouth-all scented of fresh youth like was already turning to be gone.

the Venta of Sarria. Without that building! a nod of the head as each point was ing comrade, the friend as faithful and might have passed for the palace of a clear to him. grandee; within-but we know already what it was like within.

> was all eagerness to make amends. But the house place of the Cafe de Madrid was tenanted only by the valiant and a clean si lently moving maid. Rello's questioning produced nothing but sleepy grunt from Don Gasper Perico.

"My companions-where are they?" said Rollo hastily. He had much on his mind and wished to dispatch business. "Your companions-nay, I know nothing of them," said the veteran. "True it is he of the old witch at the gate slammed it in my the stoutness desired to buy my wine, and face." when I gave him a sample, fine as jeed Man-Looking around they saw John Mortime zanilla, strong as the straw wine of Jerez, standing on one leg to eke out his stature he spat it forth upon the ground and vowed and squinting through a hole in the white-

robbers of the highway!" Rollo laughed a little at this description ness, but he was eager to find his comrades.

so he hastily excused himself. But as he passed into the arcaded "patio" with a flash of white cotton gown. Her grass shoes made no noise on the pavement. She was beckening to him to follow her. There could be no doubt of that. She turned To satisfy his friend Rollo applied his eye abruptly through a low doorway, upon the to the aperture and saw that one of the con-

The Scot followed down a flight of steps, eneath blossoming oleander bushes, and ound himself presently upon a narrow terace walk, divided from a neighboring garden by a lattice of green-painted wood. The silent maidservant Jerked her thumb little contemptuously over her shoulder.

elevated her chin, and turning on her heel disappeared again into her own domains. little to the right the path bent some what, and round the corner Rollo could hear bere to be removed there after dark, and hum of voices. It was in this direction also that the silent bandmaid of Gaspar Perico's kitchen had jerked her thumb.

resently he came in sight of a pretty dam- said Rollo, smiling. et on the farther side of the trellis paling. deeply engaged in a most interesting conversation. Her hand had been drawn through one of ness is business." the diamond-shaped apertures of the green trellis-work, which proved how small a and just as they passed the cetroi gate hand it was. And, so far as the young Don Scot could judge from various contributory he entered he tossed his hand casually to-

Rollo moved slowly along the path and

"What foels!" he muttered, turning on especially at this time of day." He was walking off in high dudgeon, pre-

"Fairest Maria, never have I loved beere," the voice was saving. "I have wandered the world heretofore, careless and of Sarria to the south. heartfree, that I might have the more to offer to you, the pearl of girls, the all in-

on the pathway, but the lover's grasp was too firm. As Rollo looked a head Brother Hilarie of Montblanch, fervidly

babyish smiles wickered and dimpled about fort to the Convent of the Holy Innocents, stant, fled upward through the rose and Venta.

Unconsciously they had strolled out of the

whither he was being led. "Let us turn back," he said hastily. have forgotten an engagement." hey had not left the white walls of the back!" convent behind before they were hailed in

English by a stentorian voice. "Here, you fellows." it said, "here's whole storehouse of onions as big as a factory-strings and strings of 'em. I wanted to go inside to make an offer for them, and

that as to price he preferred the ordinary washed wall. "Just look there!" he cried eagerly, "did there-a solid cargo, I tell you, and I want of the inn the silent maidservant passed him to trade. I believe that I could make my thousand pounds quicker that way, and

unions are as good as wine any day! Look in-look in! top of which Rollo nearly knocked out his vent buildings was indeed filled with onions as John Mortimer had said. "A thousand pounds, Rolle," moaned John Mortimer, "and that old wretch at the

wicket only laughed at me and snapped the

catch in my face." Rollo took his friend's arm and drew him nway. "This is not the time for it," he said scothingly; "wait. We are going to the Convent tonight. The mother superior has permitted the lady on whose account we are

we want your help." "Can I speak to the old woman about the onions, then?" "Certainly, if there is an opportunity.

"Very well, then," said Mortimer, "I'm

your man. I don't mind doing a little cloak-and dagger for trimmings-but busi-The three friends proceeded Ventaward, muleteer went in before them. And as dovements on the woman's part, it was at | ward Gasper Perico, who sat in the receipt

> "Now, that's curious," said John Mortimer; "that fellow had a red and white cloth in his hand. And all the time when I was skirmishing about after those onions in the nuns' warehouse, they were waving red and white flags up on the hills over there-wigwag, like that!"

And with his hand he illustrated the irregular and arbitary behavior of the flags upon the hills which overlooked the village And at the sound of his words Rollo started, and his countenance changed. It

was then no mere delusion of the eye and The fair hand threst through the lattices brain that he had seen when he entered violently agitated at this point. Its the precincts of the Mill house of Sarria, as water he speaks of moistened the leaves awner had caught sight of Rollo standing La Giraida would fain have persuaded him. The thought started a doubt in his mind. Who was that old woman? And what into the picture. And there, kneeling on at all, as far as Rollo knew, save that she red and white on the hillside to the south among the scattered boulders and juniper bushes, and the favor of the same color in the muleteer's hand as he went through

Mortimer and Etienne, having been cap- Sts., Omaha, Neb.

"Treachery-out with you, lads-into the

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"I must know first to whom I have the honor of speaking," said Rollo, firmly,

H. P. .. Then it flashed upon Rollo that all his papers were in the hands of Concha

table. "Sir." he said. "you are a strange messenger. You pretend a mission to me, and when asked for your credentials you tell us that they are in the hands of a friend. Tell us your friend's name, and how you came to permit documents of value to me, and to the cause for which you say that you are fighting, to fall into any hands

the Holy Innocents or to mention Concha's name, would infallibly betray the hiding place of Dolores to her enemies, so he could only reiterate his former answer. "I am unfortunately prevented by my

abundantly satisfied." "I am not accustomed to wait for the norning," said Cabrera, "There is no slackening of rein on the king's service. But I have certain information as to who you are, which may prove more pertinent

cigarette, giving great attention to the closing of the paper in which it was enwrapped. "Search for them," commanded Cabrera suddenly in a sharp tone of anger, in which

of the pockets of the four. They examined their boots, the lining of their coats and ripped up the seams of their waistcoats. Upon Ramon nothing at all was found handbill issued

from his coat the eyes of Luis Fernandez gleamed with triumph.

"Nogueras!" he cried. "You are in cor-

trick. I have had no correspondence with This has been dropped in my pocket by some traitor. I hold a commission in the

Cabrera took up the letter again and read aloud: You are ordered to obtain any information as to the movements of the brigand

government of the queen regent. been rising as he read, shouted rather than uttered the name of the murderer of his nother

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But at any rate the sensation about the village of Sarria. But Rollo, eager to get to his task of

pared to give the eilent maid a piece of his mind, indeed a sample most unpleasing. how he bad fought with a contrabandista when something in the tone of the lover's had defrauded him of his fair share of the comparable Maria of Sarria!"

As Rollo, unwilling to intrude, but sechildish. It looked natural, yet Rollo was | conspicuous from all the neighboring hills | cretiy resolving to give Master Lovelnes no peace for some time, was turning away, a

the gate! Varily Rollo had some matter for reflecfingers upon the window sill suddenly the he had heard in the Venta. But no-the arranging transport for the evening, so that kneeling lover to look up. She snatched tion as, with his comrades on either hand most piquant face in the world appeared at girl looked so sweet and demure such Dolores might be taken in safety and com- her hand through the interstices on the in- of him, he strolled slowly back to the

fuchsis bushes with a swift rustle of skirts. And outside, though they knew it not, the

as he had assured himself that present re "Bring to the others." commanded the roice again, 'and let us see what the dogs